
Leading the Line: Belstaff's take on Goodwood Revival

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Old rockers would struggle to believe it, but the wax cotton motorcycle jacket has now been elevated to aristocratic heights following a deal between Lord March and Belstaff which will see the launch of an entire range of Goodwood-inspired clothing in the spring of 2013.

As historians of motorcycle attire will know, Belstaff started life in Staffordshire in 1924. It was the first company to make garments from wax cotton and its products became the default choice of bikers throughout Britain, with the legendary 'Trialmaster' jacket being an essential part of every rider's kit. The firm went on the slide during the textile crisis of the early 1990s before being rescued by Franco Malenotti, one of its designers, who took the sad remnants of Belstaff and stitched them back together at a factory near Venice. A smart marketeer, he played on the protection and functionality which had made Belstaff's name and adapted it to become a fashionista's favourite. Soon, everyone from Angelina Jolie to George Clooney was spotted in Belstaff and it became a globally recognised brand.

Last year, however, the company was bought by the Labelux group led by U.S. multi-millionaire 'home fragrance' king Harry Slatkin, who quickly brokered the deal to create the Goodwood Sport and Racing line, which will include everything from a silk scarf featuring the tartan favoured by motor circuit founder Freddie March to a special Goodwood-ised version of the Trialmaster called the Woodcote (after the final turn on the track).



There will also be Richmond, Fordwater and Glover coats as well as 'Ecurie' cotton race overalls and a biker jacket in blue rubberised leather dubbed the 'Ronnie', with many of the garments featuring built-in crash protection.

Belstaff will, of course, go head-to-head with Barbour which has lately been riding the crest of the 'biker chic' wave with its Steve McQueen collection, inspired by the Hollywood legend wearing a Barbour waxed cotton jacket when he took part in the International Six Days Trial back in 1964.

Not to be outdone, Belstaff has recruited its own motorcycle-mad movie star to promote its wares in the form of Ewan McGregor, who helped to announce the collaboration with Goodwood by performing parade laps on a Belstaff-branded Manx Norton at the Revival meeting.

Dressed in a shiny new Belstaff leather jacket, pudding bowl helmet, sunglasses and lace-up Doc Marten boots teamed with white wool seaman's socks, McGregor clearly wasn't out to break any lap records. But he certainly looked the part.

Photos: Belstaff

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