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## Why Pay for Canvas?

As many readers know, suit jackets and sport coats mainly come in three types of construction: fused, half canvassed, and fully canvassed. A fused jacket will have a lightweight fusible interlining sandwiched inbetween the two outer shell fabrics, and a canvassed one will have a canvas made from animal hair (usually horse or camel) mixed with either cotton or wool. Generally speaking, canvassed jackets will cost considerably more than fused ones. So why pay for them?

Well, one of the reasons is that a canvassed jacket will have a lot more three dimensional shape. Animal hair can be molded using steam, heat, and pressure, much like how a woman's hair can be shaped using a hot curling iron. With that shape, you get a much more beautiful garment.

Take a look above. The top most photo is of Alan See with his lovely wife at the Mens wear trade show Pitti Uomo. He's seen here wearing a three piece suit by Liverano & Liverano, a bespoke tailoring house in Florence, Italy. Notice how his lapel line "blooms" as it moves from the buttoning point to his shoulders? It has a "roll" to it, rather than being pressed flat against his chest. Similarly, just below him are Jeffery D and MostExerent, both of which also have nice, shapely lapels that "roll" near their buttoning points.

To understand how this is achieved, look at the bottommost photo above (also taken from Jeffery D). Moving from left to right, the first material is haircloth, which is made from wiry horsetail strands. This is used to add shape to the chest and shoulders (ever put on a Tom Ford suit and feel like you're wearing a prosthetic chest? This is because he puts in a ton of haircloth into his suits). The second material is wrapped haircloth, which is a softer, more affordable alternative. Next, we have a wool canvas (the brown material) and a fusible (the black material). These are added on top of the haircloth and extend from the shoulders to the hem (the haircloth is only in the chest). Notice that the brown wool canvas has a natural roll to it while the black fusible is limp. This natural roll is what gives those lapels their "bloom."

Of course, this isn't to say that fused garments aren't worth buying. They're considerably more affordable, which is nice if you're on a budget or if your tastes are still developing. It can take a long, long time for your tastes to settle and for you to develop an eye for what truly fits and flatters you the most. It would be a shame if you had to make your mistakes on much more expensive garments.

If you have the money, however, and you feel confident in your choices, canvassed garments can be much more handsome. And once you own some, know how to best preserve their shape (after all, that's what you paid for). Make sure your jackets aren't smashed against each other in your closet and use hangers with wide, flared out shoulders. Our advertiser The Hanger Project sells some really

nice ones, but if you want something more affordable, check out Wooden Hangers USA. Also, stay away from bad dry cleaners, as they can really press the life out of your jackets' lapels, shoulders, and chests. I ship my stuff to [RAVE FabriCARE](#), but you can look for someone more local. Finally, be careful with garment steamers, and don't hang your jackets in the bathroom while taking a shower. Steam will take out the wrinkles, it's true, but it'll also take out the shape. If that ever happens, you can send your jacket to a place that gives a good handpressing. That should be done every once in a while anyway, just so your jackets can maintain their form.