

Wall Street's Shirtmaker, Mel Gambert, Reprises Michael Douglas's Power Shirts That Stoked 90s Craze

Mel Gambert Bespoke Shirtmakers To Reprise Michael Douglas's Wall Street Power Shirts That Stoked 1990s Fashion Craze; Includes Iconic, Horizontally Striped, "The Gekko." Slates Its "Wall Street Commemorative Collection" To Fete Sequel

Dec. 1, 2009 - [PRLog](#) -- Wall Street's Shirtmaker, Mel Gambert Bespoke, To Reprise Michael Douglas's Power Shirts That Stoked 1990's Fashion Craze; Slates Launch Of Its "Wall Street Commemorative Collection" To Fete Blockbuster's 2010 Sequel, Money Never Sleeps. "The Gekko," Gambert's Now Iconic, Black-and-White Horizontal Striped Dress Shirt To Anchor Its Commemorative Collection.

Like Cher, or Madonna, "The Gekko" is so renown that it, too, needs but a single sobriquet to identify its persona. And like Madonna and Cher, The Gekko, too, can thank pop-culture for its fame as a global fashion icon and an Americana legend.

In a pivotal scene from 1987's Wall Street, Oliver Stone's blockbuster pop cult paean to ravenous greed that uses the villainous immorality of ruthless, cut-throat robber barons to illustrate how the seductive intoxication of financial power and its promise of unimaginable wealth corrupts even the most virtuous intentions of honest souls, the dashing Gordon "Gordie" Gekko, a fierce and merciless financial tycoon flawlessly portrayed by Michael Douglas, is ensconced at his table in New York's tony 21 Club, impatiently waiting to "do-lunch" with Bud Fox. A young but enterprising rookie Wall Street broker played by Charlie Sheen, Fox has ambitions to trade the mogul's stock portfolio. Foolishly, Fox thinks he's "bagged the elephant."

As the awe-struck Fox slides into the table, cameras shift to the dashing Gekko, elegantly dressed in a dark, double-breasted custom-bespoke pinstripe suit with a "nickel-dot" tie paired to a daringly unconventional but visually striking, black-and-white, horizontally striped dress shirt. Between small talk, Gekko, gives Bud trading instructions, then leaves him to eat alone. "And buy a decent suit, pal," commands Gekko on his way out. "You can't come in here looking like this."

Boasting suave, slicked-back hair and oozing seductive charm, the Machiavellian-to-the-core Gekko then casually saunters through 21, shaking hands and making small talk with friends and admirers, alike, before leaving. The scene symbolizes young Bud Fox's transformation from innocence to unconscionable corruption that will include the eventual betrayal of even his own father.

But it's Gekko's visually dramatic, black-and-white, horizontal striped dress shirt – not Stone's allegorical nod to **Crime and Punishment** – that proves the scene-stealing attention-grabber.

Hence was born The Gekko, a dress shirt design and power shirt *nom de guerre* that instantaneously shot into a fashion sensation and became an enduring trademark of the ruthlessly immoral financial tycoons whose unscrupulous shenanigans signed the 1980s "greed-is-great" mantra. The Gekko's own mystique has since eclipsed even the pinstriped suit and gray flannel fabric as fashion's ultimate symbol of power and influence.

Stripped down to its basic, design essential, The Gekko is a common and simply executed, black-and-white striped shirt. But proof that location-location is everything, its star billing and soon-to-be overnight fashion phenomena, along with its renown as a timeless fashion classic, were all earned by a ingenious, 90-degree tilt that dramatically transforms its conventional, vertical stripe motif into an unconventionally flamboyant,

horizontal stripe. Despite a bevy of designers who falsely claim its design provenance as their own – most of whom weren't even in business in 1987 -- the now iconic Gekko was born from a long-standing design collaboration between Newark-based, Mel Gambert Custom-Bespoke Shirtmakers and noted American luxury menswear designer, Alan Flusser, the creative talent Oliver Stone hand-picked to wardrobe both Michael Douglas and Douglas's English rival, Terence Stamp.

The Gekko was neither new or novel when it made its 1987 box office debut. Provenance of early-1900s custom shirt makers, it was originally a vertically striped bib shirt adventurously tipped to its side for a splash of visual drama.

To celebrate Wall Street's upcoming sequel, **Money Never Sleeps**, Mel Gambert Custom-Bespoke Shirtmakers has faithfully reprised the dress shirts it created for Douglas's 1987 role, including their now iconic, Gekko.

Dubbed the "Wall Street Commemorative Collection," Gambert's resurrected tribute collection is anchored by the movie's original design -- a horizontal stripe body finished with a "self" striped collar and French cuffs that match the shirt's body motif. Uniquely, the collar and cuff stripes of Gambert's original tilt vertical, opposite the horizontal direction of the shirt's body and sleeves. Called a "reversed collar and cuff stripe" in haute-fashion shirt-speak, the unconventional direction of both collar and cuff stripes reprises a design accent faithful to the '20s-era classic.

A second version -- and historically the most popular -- is finished with a solid white, "contrast collar" and matching, solid white French cuffs, still another look favored by Gordie Gekko.

According to Mitch Gambert, the third-generation Gambert to head the now 81-year-old custom shirtmaker, the Wall Street Commemorative Collection will be offered in eight different stripe colors, all against a white ground. All eight stripe colors, tells Gambert, are amped brights, from lipstick red and lemon yellow to royal purple.

Wall Street's Untold, Secret Anecdote: Michael Douglas's Shoulder Pads

Despite faithfully resurrecting its original, 1987 Wall Street shirt designs, one element noticeably missing from Gambert's new Wall Street Commemorative Collection – its legendary Gekko, included – are the last minute shoulder pads Mel Gambert ingeniously added to Michael Douglas's shirts, just before filming.

Although no secret, a little known Wall Street anecdote is that custom shirt maker, Gambert, had to re-engineer Douglas's shirt pattern, then re-create every shirt, to accommodate the addition of sizable shoulder pads. Douglas's shoulders, it turned out, were so narrow and sloping that Alan Flusser's signature braces kept sliding off.

Since Wall Street wardrobe consultant and designer, Alan Flusser, insisted that braces were instrumental for Douglas's portrayal of the ruthlessly Machiavellian financier, Gordon "Gordie" Gekko, Gambert ingeniously suggested shoulder pads, a savvy solution that not only kept Flusser's braces at high-muster, but also added a broad shouldered and powerfully chiseled masculine image that was critical to Douglas's portrayal of Gekko.

Before gyms were commonplace and today's physical fitness craze routinely wrought broad-shouldered he-hunks, shoulder pads were a ploy the elder Gambert used time-and-again throughout the '30s, '40s and '50s to give his rakishly dashing clientele – a *creme de la creme* of America's well-heeled dandies and bon vivants that included debonair screen stars and matinee movie idols, entertainment celebs, noted politicians

and captains of industry, and even a fair share of boulevardiers – a more visually powerful image ala a broad shouldered and chiseled, he-hunk macho look.

About Mel Gambert Custom-Bespoke Shirtmakers

Founded in 1933 by Joseph Gambert and nicknamed "America's Charvet" thanks to its reputation for meticulous, Old World artisan handcraftsmanship, the now 76-year-old Mel Gambert Custom-Bespoke Shirtmakers (<http://www.gambertshirts.com>) ranks America's oldest, still-family-owned custom-shirtmaker.

In addition to true, men's and women's custom-made shirts, Mel Gambert offers made-to-measure (MTM) shirts as well as a just launched, limited-edition ready-to-wear (RTW) collection, Mel Gambert Bespoke. All are retailed by over 400 of America's premier, luxury-niched specialty stores.

Mel Gambert Custom-Bespoke Shirtmakers is headquartered in Newark, New Jersey at 61 Freeman Street. Zip code is 07105. Telephone is 973-344-3440. Website is <http://www.gambertshirts.com>.

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