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ferent comfort levels. The Western dress shirt, that can be worn with a suit or alone, has a tapered cut that falls close to the body, long sleeves, long tails and a button-down collar so it can be worn with a tie or bolo. A more casual dress shirt has a fuller cut, but still has the longer sleeve, long tails and button down collar so it can be worn with a tie or bolo as well. The casual shirt has a slimmer cut, long sleeves or short sleeves and long tails that can be tucked into pants or jeans. With so many options, the current designs for men's shirts are made to make men of all shapes, sizes and ages look good. Helping customers find the right fit may well be the difference between them buying one shirt or a closet full.

FUNCTION

A man's last, but still important, piece of criteria is always going to be the function of the shirt. Can I wear this to work, riding or out to dinner? Is this shirt okay to wear with slacks and jeans? From ranchers to executives, men want shirts they can wear in any work or play situation, and the practical side of their shopping thought process will not be overruled by how good they look and feel in a shirt. They will have gone into the store with the purpose of buying a shirt for a specific reason, and they will want to make sure that the shirt fits their purpose and many others if needed.

Special occasions, meetings, work shirts and replacement shirts for everyday wear are common reasons why men need to buy a new shirt.

While the attitude that they want something that is currently in style is becoming more prevalent, the majority of male shoppers are looking for a new shirt out of need instead of want. The lines that clothing companies offer are fulfilling this characteristic and more.

Higher-end dress shirts, that can be worn with a suit or sport jacket and slacks and have quality fabrics, convey the importance of the occasion or the stature of the man and yet preserve his lifestyle, whether he enjoys a Western lifestyle or is a high-ranking English discipline equestrian.



Rockmount Ranch Wear

Mundee said the need for a high-end Western dress shirt was very apparent when RMCC came up with a line that incorporated the quality fabrics in men's dress shirts with the yoke, flap pockets and snap buttons that are traditional characteristics of a Western shirt. (See sidebar for more about the development of this line.)

The more casual dress shirts can meet the function of the work environment, a special occasion where business casual is appropriate or paired with jeans and heading out to dinner. Everyday Western-style shirts are a classic signature of the lifestyle. These shirts offer the comfort of everyday wear, the style to be dressed up for the evening, yet are rough enough to wear out in the barn or in the ring. For every facet of a man's lifestyle, there is an appropriate shirt.

Across the board, men's fashion is becoming more personal. Designers are looking more at men's lives and aspirations as a catalyst for future clothing designs. They want to give men the variety they deserve to show off their multifaceted personalities and lifestyles. The fact remains that men are becoming a bigger factor in the shopping force. They are starting to care more about what their clothing says about them and the impression they give to those they encounter. The satisfaction of finding what they need, making a good invest-



Essex Classics

ment and looking great as an end result is motivation for them to repeat the process. Their satisfaction as customers will give them a reason to come back to your store, looking good when they come in and looking better on the way out.

Taking a Cue From History

Recently, Rocky Mountain Clothing Company (RMCC), a division of Miller International, saw the need for a new kind of shirt and developed a branded collection to add to its existing four lines. The inspiration for this shirt was the men who built the Western lifestyle from the ground up. The need for the shirt was the men living that lifestyle. To tailor a design to suit these men, the company looked to its own history.

By listening to the needs of the customer, founding father Philip Miller and his son Ben created clothing that fulfilled customer demands. They began Miller International, to meet and exceed their customer's expectations with jeans, shirts and a host of other products. The clothing lines were progressive and defined a standard in the Western apparel industry. That helped create a brand that was so well established, it is still recognized 89 years later. It was from this history that the inspiration for the name of the new line, Miller Ranch, came. RMCC believes that the name instills confidence, stability and quality, the exact characteristics that the company was looking for.

The demand for a men's high-end Western shirt became evident with the realization that today, men are more aware of their appearance and the picture they portray. They want their clothing to be a reflection of their lifestyle and their status in the world. Miller Ranch combines the features of fine dress shirts and classic Western shirts to epitomize these two important aspects of the company's male demographic. By using fine-quality woven fabrics and classic detailing, such as the distinctive "MR" logo on the buttons that is representative of the company's native Colorado Rocky Mountains and rivers, RMCC produced a sophisticated line of shirts that appeals to all of its customers. The shirts come in tonal colors that look great with a suit, a sport jacket or alone.

From conception to production to market, RMCC has created a line that honors where it came from and where it will go in the future.