

THE LEADER  
Style issue

## HOMeward BOUND —London

### Preface

As we embark on our second style special of the year, we've noticed that an increasing number of fashion labels are moving their production closer to home. Could it be that outsourcing has had its day?

### WRITER

Andrew Tuck

### ILLUSTRATOR

Jeff Östberg

### Autumn treats

Fresher weather means cosy clothes: head to our womenswear edit. (page 202)

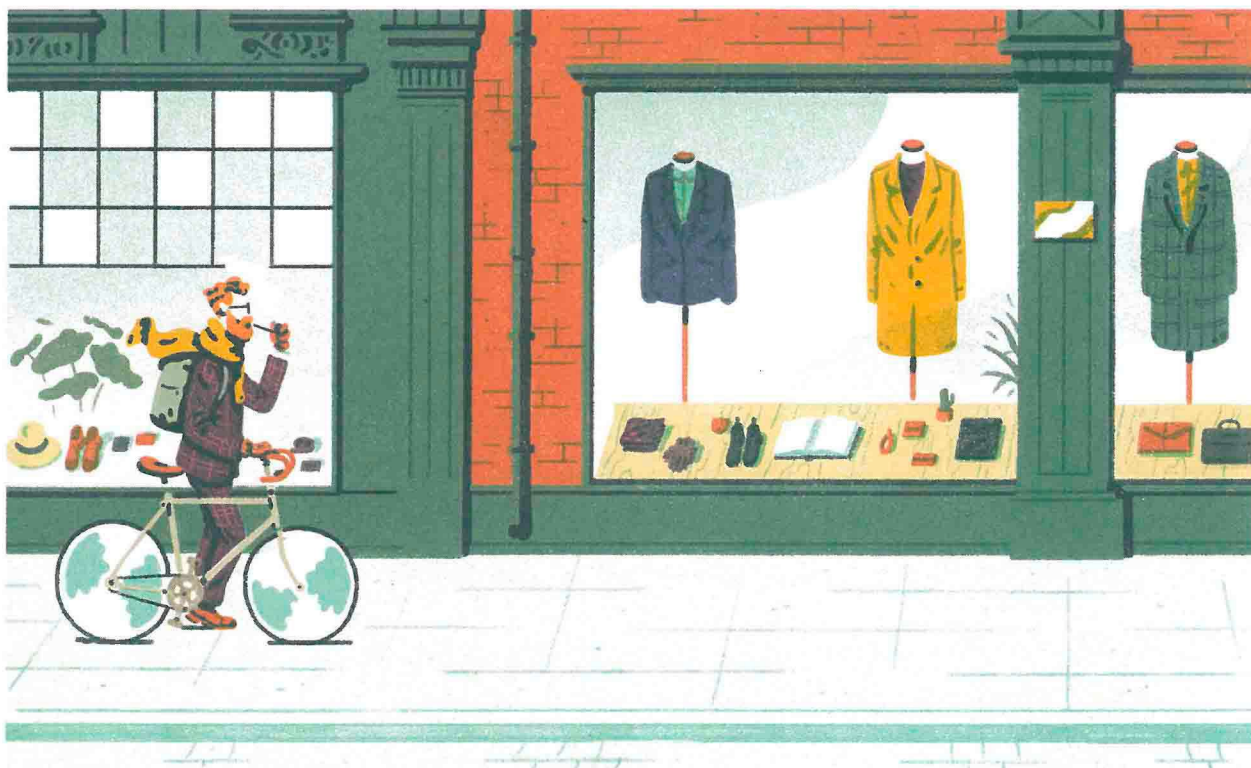
There are some brave people working in the world of fashion. A few weeks ago we were talking to an old friend of MONOCLE who runs a Savile Row tailor and also an edgier fashion line. He told us that when one of the factories that makes clothes for him was recently put up for sale he stepped in and bought it. Now, this is a factory in a part of England that has seen tough times and a seemingly unstoppable decline in its old core industries. But Patrick Grant saw an opportunity to not only keep his supply lines open but also make the factory a vibrant success by making clothes for his lines and other fashion firms. And without whipping out the tambourine and getting all Salvation Army on us, Grant also wants to do something for the town of Blackburn (see the full report on page 172).

At MONOCLE what we liked about this story was how it marked a change in how fashion brands see their role. Over the past 10 years we have charted the outsourcing of fashion production, then its subsequent reshoring to the likes of Portugal and Poland when the results



proved disappointing (and labels finally felt uncomfortable about how workers were often being treated). And now we have fashion companies putting cash into buying factories in their own markets (as you will see from our report, Grant is part of a trend). It's a remarkable change in fortunes – and attitudes.

That's the thing about the word "style": it sounds all surface but the people who work in this world are makers and employers, the bedrock of communities. And on top of that they make nice things





### Fashion forward

Style has always been about more than just the classic fashion behemoths. We chat to five beguiling brands creating a buzz with ventures from Milan to Los Angeles and beyond. (page 179)

to wear, as you will see in this month's Style Directory and also on the pages of our Retail Top 20.

There are other gems in this issue and one of them has a style connection too. Well, if men the size of boulders dressed in burlap shorts count as style in your books. Robert Bound, our Culture editor, headed to Swiss mountains to watch the national sport of Schwingen: a kind of wrestling that involves chucking your adversaries around a sawdust-covered arena. It's highly entertaining – the sport and the report. And we have even put up with Mr Bound's attempts to carry off said shorts back in London.

There are examples of good taste in our report on the Danish embassy in London and the offices of *Gazeta Wyborcza* in Warsaw. But somehow those shorts win the day. — (M)

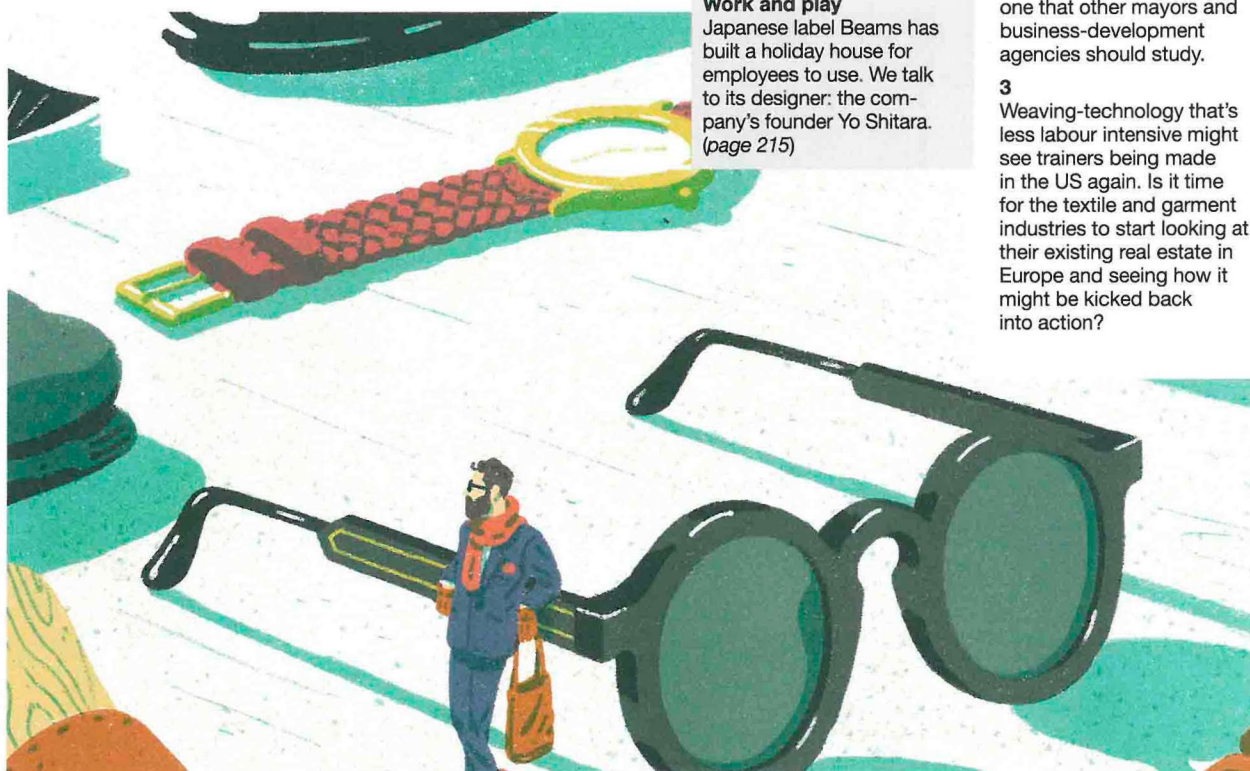
### Fall kit

October doesn't mean an end to enjoying being outdoors. Our pick of men's accessories will get you raring to go for a run. (page 209)



### Work and play

Japanese label Beams has built a holiday house for employees to use. We talk to its designer: the company's founder Yo Shitara. (page 215)



### Further thinking

We've seen mass brands in the electronics and tech space re-evaluating production and logistics and bringing production closer to HQs in San José and Dallas. Now it's time for bigger brands to start squaring cost with both the social and environmental impact of products being made in unhappy factories and too far away from core markets. At the same time there's the creative upside of keeping designers a bit closer to the production rather than tucked away in an atelier. Monocle's had a few further thoughts on the topic.

1

Do all of those cotton eco totes that have become a retail-packaging standard really need to be sewn in India? Couldn't there be social-employment programmes to also stitch them in Manchester, Manitoba and the outskirts of Melbourne?

2

The government of Vienna has done a good job of not only promoting apprenticeships but also encouraging premium manufacturing in and around the city. Its Wien Products initiative is one that other mayors and business-development agencies should study.

3

Weaving-technology that's less labour intensive might see trainers being made in the US again. Is it time for the textile and garment industries to start looking at their existing real estate in Europe and seeing how it might be kicked back into action?