

LIFE

PHOTO



KEITH BEATY/TORONTO STAR

From left, Samson Weiss Willis, Brandon Sherman, Kyle Wright, Jordan Duffield and Jordan Ullman in Tip Top Tailors suits. Joe Fresh sneakers. Grooming by Dylan K. Hanson, Ford Artists.

Rising to the occasion of prom

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As prom season begins, a familiar shopping ritual will take place in certain dress boutiques across the city.

The prom girl, armed with a posse (for support and advice) and her mom (for usage of her credit card) will descend on a store to buy her first big dress.

She will have surfed a multitude of shopping sites, brushed up on all the red carpet trends and know exactly which celebrity's style she will want to emulate.

This shopping excursion might take hours, if not a series of weekends.

But what about the prom boy?

Where is he shopping? Who is accompanying him? And does he know what he wants to wear on prom night? You

certainly don't see teams of bros hitting up the stores for a prom suit.

Like another big day that might take place in his life — his wedding — the male prom date is relegated to being a prop. Luckily, some retailers are stepping up to make the hunt for a prom suit a pretty simple process. Tip Top Tailors is currently offering a perfect prom package: slim fitting black suit, along with a jewel toned shirt and coordinating tie for \$200.

The Canadian retailer promoted the deal on Facebook with a 'Prom Squad' contest, giving teen males a chance to win the suit package plus a \$300 Visa gift card. Our photo shoot features five winners from the GTA.

The retailer's one-stop-shopping process addresses the reluctance of some teenage boys to spend copious amounts of time shopping for clothes. And when they do go shopping for that prom suit, they display some peculiar behaviour.

Unlike girls who might preen in front of the mirror and attempt to strike a model pose, the teen boy will emerge from the fitting room differently.

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GIRLS' FASHION: Red-carpet worthy looks, L4

Identical suits not a big deal

PROM from L1

He'll wear the suit either with his hands extended like Frankenstein, or with his shoulders hunched and fists cuffed like he's ready to rumble.

"You can watch this on any Saturday in the stores," laughs Walter Dimini, divisional merchandise manager at **Tip Top** Tailors. "I want to say to them, 'You're not going to wrestle in it. You're not going to do parallel bars in it. You don't need a ton of room.'"

And they tend not to shop in packs.

"It might be a cultural thing," says Franco Rocchi, senior VP of sales and marketing at Le Chateau. "The girls can articulate their insecurities about how they feel in a dress, but the guys would never do that. They want to appear like they don't care. They might be happy with the suit, but they are not going to say it or ask someone how they look."

While two identical dresses showing up at prom can be cause for tears and teenage trauma, identical prom suits is a non-issue for the males.

"Same suit, same shirt — it's not that big a deal," says Dimini. "That's only because you have ushers at a wedding or uniforms all looking the same."

As for who accompanies boys during their shopping trip — besides a wallet-carrying parent — Dimini says it is the best girl friend of the date. Like a bridesmaid, she would have seen her friend's prom dress and can advise the colour the boy should buy for shirt and tie. Matching shirt or tie to a date's dress is the single trend in boys' promwear.

"That's the big and important thing," says Dimini.

Master that and the only thing left for the prom boy to do is relax and accept that when it comes to prom night, it really is about the girl.