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Ties, from page 21

You don't have to spend an exuberant amount of money to buy a tie of good quality. While most ties are made of silk, there are differences in the quality of the various types of this fabric. To help make sure you get what you are paying for, De Laura offers the following suggestions when looking at ties.

"Always buy silk, but look at the weight of the fabric," he says. "The heavier, or thicker, it is, the worse it ties." With heavier silks, it's harder to tie a clean knot, he says, and the front of the tie will have a tendency to roll over rather than lie flat against the chest. Crepe is a good light-weight silk for ties. Look, too, for silk linings to help keep the shape of the tie. Cotton linings tend to change shape during dry-cleaning and end up ruining the look of a nice, slick tie.

Most ties have a bar tack across the back of the tie, through which you slide the end of the tie. But this too, has its marks of quality. The looser the tack, the better the tie will lie.

A tie might make the man, but how do you pick a tie the man will like or suits his profession? Besides the solid tie — good for the simple man who doesn't like any kind of frill at all (we all know one!), there are some basic tie patterns.

One type is the repeat pattern. Whether it's a small paisley print, rows

of ducks or ink-like splotches resembling a psychological test, the repeat pattern is the most common style and most men are comfortable with it. Just try and match the style of the pattern to the recipient's personality — loud patterns begging for attention probably won't match a shy and quiet personality.

The dot pattern can match many a personality. Just remember that the smaller the dot, the more formal the tie. With woven ties, the texture of the fabric's weave serves as the pattern. While this solid tie is not as popular these days, it might be perfect for the man with the rugged personality who will wear a tie only when he has to. Stripes, of course, are regimental and perfect for the formal and uncompromising personality. In regards to color, De Laura recommends muted tones for the conservative man.

So don't think that giving a tie this season is a cop-out when it comes to shopping for men. With a little thought, care and imagination, you can give more than just a tie, you can help create an image.

"A tie that works well and coordinates with a suit," De Laura says, "tells others that he is a well-organized person and cares about himself."

What better message to send?
—Suzanne L. Parker

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