



Customers can design their own suits in My.Suit's "design studio." Metal halide track heads recessed in ceiling slots provide ambient illumination and highlight a wall of fabric "pods." Topped with LED cove, the TV tower displays moving imagery for design inspiration.



Once a client has designed his suit, he can order it at the iPad bar. Opposite the bar, LED-illuminated, glass-enclosed cases display merchandise and vintage electronics for a touch of humor.

Photos: Christophe Randall Photography

# A Suitable Style

**M**ade-to-measure men's suits were once a luxury for the privileged few—let's call them the one percent. My.Suit is hoping to change that. The company, which has four stores in the New York City area—including a new Broad Street location across from the New York Stock Exchange—allows customers to create their own bespoke suits for prices the 99 percent can afford. Customers can select everything

from fit and fabric down to details like buttons and stitching for the cost of an off-the-rack suit from a department store.

The concept takes customer choice one step further: clients can even decide *how* they want to shop. After the initial in-store measurement, My.Suit creates a profile for each customer that houses his measurements and other details. Tech-savvy shoppers can access their profiles on the My.Suit website, order suits using the

Simple lighting and sleek, multifunctional displays are the canvas for a custom tailored shopping experience at My.Suit

BY ELIZABETH HALL

company's digital suit builder and view previous purchases in their virtual closet. Customers that want an in-store experience can get it too. At the 2,600-sq ft Broad Street store, for example, shoppers that need guidance can work with the sales staff, while do-it-yourselfers can utilize the store's "design studio," where they can check out the seasonal fabric choices on the display walls, get inspired by images on a 360-deg video display tower, peruse lining at the fabric

"bar" and order the finished product at the iPad station.

With so many choices, interior architect Ji Rook Kim, president, UnSPACE, New York City, didn't want the store interiors to overwhelm clients. "The goal was to keep it as simple as possible," says Kim, who designed the interiors for the Madison Avenue and Broad Street locations along with lighting designer Ryoko Nakamura, principal, Vera Lighting Design, New York City. "We tried to



A square ceiling recess lined with warm-white LED cove frames the combination consulting station/fabric bar. Single metal halide track heads provide concentrated light for measuring tasks.

eliminate everything that was decorative—everything should be functional and beautiful at the same time. If this were a woman's jewelry shop, I would have done it completely differently. But here it's all business. The customer becomes the suit designer and the stylist." Metal halide and LED lighting from Jesco Lighting was a perfect fit for the store's minimalist aesthetic.

#### DESIGN IT YOURSELF

Choice is central to My.Suit's retail concept and it forms the core of its Broad Street store too. Customers enter directly into the design studio, where everything from fashion inspiration to fabric is at their fingertips. In the center of the room, LCD TV screens mounted in rows form a virtual clothing display inspired by My.Suit's website, which Kim also helped redesign. "Its website is interactive and innovative and we wanted to bring that interface to our tangible world," he notes. The screens display stop-motion imagery of a moving model clad in a My-Suit outfit. Kim used photographs—taken on a high-resolution camera at six frames per second—displayed in a loop rather than video because they more accurately

capture the detail of the fabric. The TV tower is topped by a circular ceiling recess lined with warm-white LED cove lighting.

LEDs were also used in the two wall-mounted, glass-enclosed suit displays, which are illuminated from the side by strip lights and at the top by tiny LED puck lights. Color temperature was a consideration, "so we tried to stay around 3,000K," says Kim. "We wanted the color to be as natural and warm as possible. The puck lights are a little cooler to achieve a balance."

Another crisp, warm-white light source—PAR 20 20-W metal halide—was recessed in rectangular ceiling slots to provide general ambient and merchandise lighting throughout the store. "We selected metal halide because if we had used a traditional source—like halogen—we would have had to use double the amount of fixtures. Fewer fixtures kept the design simple and they generate less heat," explains Kim. The metal adjustable halide lights accent the movable magnetic fabric "pods," which offer customers a chance to feel the fabrics and experiment with different combinations. The pods are arranged on magnetic panels along the left side of the studio; white LED cove light grazes the walls behind them.

#### HERE COMES THE GROOM

To the left of the design studio is the main sales floor where first-time customers get measured and fitted for their new suits. The one-room space is also a design consultation station, fabric bar, accessories display room and cash wrap. So many functions could make the space feel cluttered and chaotic, but "it's clean and minimal. Everything that you want to see is exposed and everything else is hidden," says Kim. Custom modular cabinets made from durable metal, wood and stone serve as both concealed storage space and clothing and accessories displays. The same type of LED strip used in the design studio displays and coves illuminates the merchandise in the cabinets and backlights the frosted glass atop the cabinets for a gentle, ambient glow.

While the store does display several sample suits and accessories, like cufflinks, that are available for purchase, "we tried to minimize suit display as much as possible to distinguish it from an off-the-rack store," says Kim. "We also simplified the design by combining a lot of functions into one." The center tables, for example, are a combination consulting space, measuring station and fabric bar. "Sales associates can pull out a table and sit their laptop down and pull out the chair that is integrated into the bar to have a consultation with the customer. They can also pull out two built-in



The fitting areas were inspired by a bridal shop. Lighted by metal halide downlights, they combine three functions—three-way mirror, dressing room and measuring station. The custom modular cabinets are illuminated from within and above by LEDs.

tables in the center to create a table a measuring station," he notes. The area is set off by a square ceiling recess lined with white LED cove lights. Single metal halide track heads provide a concentrated dose of illumination for measuring tasks and fabric selection.

Other multifunctional areas include the combination fitting rooms/measuring stations, which came from a surprising source of inspiration: bridal boutiques. "In bridal shops, brides model their dress and get fitted in front of a three-way mirror. I wanted My.Suit's customers to have a similarly special experience," explains Kim. At the Broad Street store, the fitting areas combine three functions—three-way mirror, dressing room and tailoring station. The three-way mirror forms the walls for the rooms, which are sectioned off from the main sales floor by a mesh curtain and are illuminated by metal halide accents overhead.

Kim wanted the simple, streamlined sales floor to be minimalist, but he didn't want it to be cold: "That's why I incorporated vintage electronic items into the store and window displays; for example, Game Boys from the '80s and '90s, as well as vintage collectible

TVs. Guys who come to the store love them." The quirky TVs are an art piece, but they also display a four-minute video that explains My.Suit's process. Functionality has found a sense of humor. ■

#### METRICS THAT MATTER

**My.Suit**  
Watts per sq ft: 1.0  
Illuminance Levels: 30-40 fc  
Lamp Types: 2  
Fixture Types: 9

#### THE DESIGNERS



Ji Rook Kim is the founder and president of New York City interior/architectural design studio UnSPACE.

Ryoko Nakamura is the principal of Vera Lighting Design in New York City.