



## EMPIRE INTERNATIONAL CUSTOM TAILORS LTD.

# A Gentleman's Garb

ANTHONY ASAF shares his hopes for the noble art and profession, the services of which have only continued to grow in demand.

**E**mpire International Tailors began with Anthony Asaf in 1983. In the early 1980s, young Anthony developed a fascination for British style tailoring.

The sharp suits worn by Sean Connery and Roger Moore as James Bond often caught his attention, leading to his involvement in the suiting business. He knew that suits would always be demand, forever remaining a timeless, iconic fashion statement.

After his father retired from the Hong Kong police, Asaf and family opened a small tailoring shop in East Tsim Sha Tsui, where it still stands today. For the first few weeks, business was hopelessly dry. One day, two American customers walked into the shop and, pleased with their reception by brothers Anthony and Andy, each ordered a set of suits and shirts. On the day of the pick-up, the pair called saying they could not collect their outfits, as their busy schedules had them both running late. The suits were nonetheless needed that evening for an important cocktail event, so the brothers immediately delivered the clothing to their customers' hotels.

Two days later, the two returned to the shop with ten people in tow – employees of Kodak in town for a big conference, taking place the following week. The next few days were busy as more Kodak staff came to Empire Tailors through sheer word of mouth, practically assuring the business' survival. Today nearly 100 business cards of those Kodak employees are framed on the wall in the Empire Tailors shop. "From 1 customer you can get 10, from 10 you can get 100, from 100 you can get 1000," says Anthony, a principle the brothers have run their business by for the last 30 years.

### A Noted Locale

"Our market has grown locally and internationally," shares Anthony. Western



countries have shown an exponentially growing interest for custom-made suits. Popular TV shows *Suits*, *Mad Men*, *Boardwalk Empire*, and movies such as *Kingsman* and *Skyfall* have contributed to a renaissance in men's suiting fashion. Tailoring however is not widely available throughout the world. It is difficult to have a suit made from scratch in the US or UK without costing a fortune. Hong Kong has a global reputation for affordable yet skilled tailors. Buying a suit while in Hong Kong has become highly popular, and Empire International is a favored stop.

"Also, due to a large following abroad, we do annual trunk shows through hotel rooms in multiple cities across the US and other countries, fitting customers and taking orders. The suits are made back in Hong Kong based off clients' measurements and fittings done during the trips, and mailed to them within a few weeks."

The company's methods are straightforward. "We focus less on our competition, and more on ourselves and how we can do better. Our experience has taught us that gaining the trust of your customer is the most important thing in this business. We invest everything into the quality of our product and our service to our customers. Those matter the most.

We have our own workshop, our own tailors. We never seek the easy way out when serving our customers."

### Continuing the Heritage

Anthony Asaf is proud of the tradition and ponders the future, as the number of highly skilled tailors slowly dwindles. Regardless, Empire International's contributions to the industry have cemented it as a bastion for quality tailoring. So long as it stays the course, it will undoubtedly preserve Hong Kong's brand of artisanship and pass the skills to the next generation.

"As a family business, everything we do on a daily basis is personal. We go by principle; we have our values and our ways by which we run our business, serve our customers, and face the challenges in the industry. I think our loyalty to each other and our commitment to our principles are the two things responsible for our success." ■

For additional information please visit [www.empiretailors.com](http://www.empiretailors.com)

**EMPIRE**

EMPIRE INT'L TAILORS LTD.