



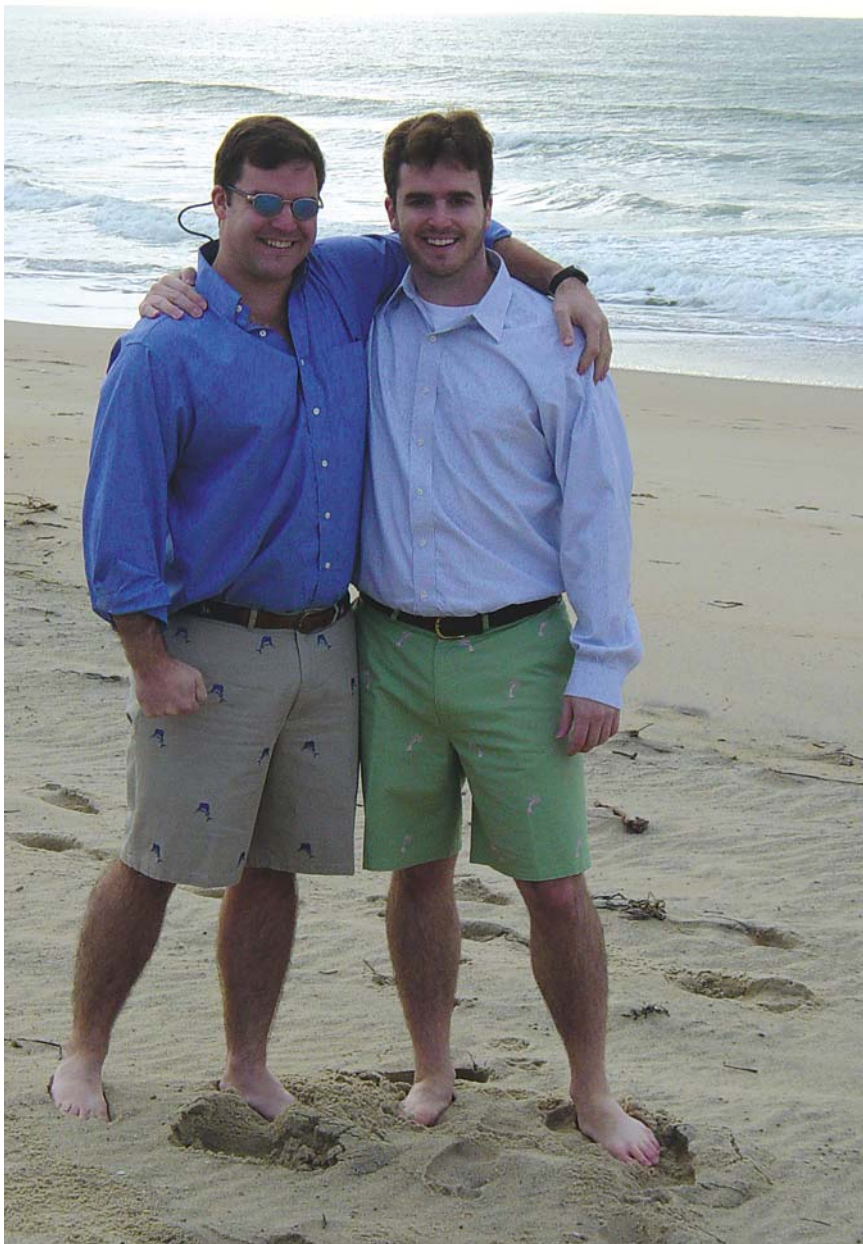
Uncommon *Threads*

BY TOM KEER



Fourth-generation Nantucket clothiers remain true to their genes.

Thomas Wolfe was wrong. You *can* go home again. Andrew and Matthieu (Matt) Bridier did exactly that when they scrapped their big-city jobs, returned to their Nantucket roots, and launched Cast-away Clothing. Founded in 2005, the apparel company offers spring and fall lines of island-inspired embroidered shorts and pants for men, and cocktail skirts and corduroy jeans for women. Comfortable and fun to wear, each item is named for a Nantucket spot for which the brothers have fond memories, like Cisco shorts and a Great Point cocktail skirt. Heck, even the models used for the company's photo shoots are friends and customers, some of whom were enlisted for work in between sunbathing stints on the beach.



Andrew and Matt Bridier model the canvas shorts they created for their unique line of island-inspired clothing.

Castaways' pinwale corduroy Bermuda shorts for women, opposite, in lime green with embroidered cosmopolitan cocktails.

The Bridier brothers are old hands when it comes to the clothing business. They are great-grandsons of Philip Murray, founder of Murray's Toggery Shop. Their grandfather, Philip Chase Murray, who passed away in February, trademarked the original Nantucket Reds, the weathered red trousers, originally made from worn sailcloth, that have become a summer clothing staple nationwide. "Before we moved off-island we worked

in our family's business," says Andrew. "We learned about all aspects of the clothing business—materials, construction, fabrics, weaves, dyes, design, merchandising, buying, advertising, you name it. Matt and I considered our tenure an apprenticeship." Forming their own company was a natural progression, says Andrew. "Matt drew from the financial skills he learned on Wall Street, and I applied the practical business and sales

experience I developed working for Fidelity in Boston." Last year, their hard work paid off as the company came full circle. "Murray's, where we got our start, is now one of our customers," says Matt.

Their cut-and-sewn fabrics are made from enzyme-washed cotton canvas, a process that creates a soft hand as well as weathered colors. "Twill shorts and skirts are offered by many companies," Matt says. "We drew from our island roots to

create a more unique canvas product line, adding embroidered images that depict coastal living or have seasonal accents." Their island-inspired collection features sperm whales, lobsters, and silhouettes of Nantucket Island, whereas seasonal motifs include golden retrievers, red crabs, and dancing Santas.

Castaway Clothing is available at fine clothing retailers from Massachusetts to Mississippi. While the Northeast represents a significant percentage of their

ed for a dominant men's category, the company has seen exponential growth in their women's line. The brothers are planning an expansion in women's products for this fall, and hope to continue expanding their offerings.

Says Trish Bridier, mother of the Bridier brothers and part of the family-owned Murray's Toggery Shop, "Andrew and Matthieu started working in our store in jun-



WHERE TO FIND CASTAWAYS

Murray's Toggery Shop, Nantucket

Murray's of the Vineyard, Edgartown

Puritan of Cape Cod, Hyannis and Chatham only

Watson's Men's Store, Orleans

Island Outfitters, Oak Bluffs, Martha's Vineyard

Islands, in Hyannis (women's only)

business, the brothers have found a strong reception in other markets. "We've done trade shows along the entire eastern seaboard, and there is tremendous interest in Castaway Clothing in the Mid-Atlantic and Southeast regions," says Matt. "I suspect that we'll see expanded regional growth in the near future."

There have been other pleasant surprises along the way. While sales projections for the initial product set account-

ior high school. They started the old-fashioned way, unpacking boxes, stocking shelves, and selling clothes. I thought the quicksand surrounding their high school beach parties would surely swallow them up, but it didn't. Together they make a great team. We're very proud of them."

As evidenced by triple-digit sales growth and increasing numbers of visitors to the Castaway Clothing Web site, there is no denying the clothing's allure.

Some see Castaway Clothing as a fond reminder of time spent on Nantucket, while others enjoy the traditional appeal. "Anyone with an appreciation of the coast identifies with our themes," says Matt. "While they can buy similar items from mass merchants, many buyers equate originality and authenticity with a boutique company."

By all means, the fourth-generation Nantucket haberdashers are the real deal. Even the company name has island roots. "Castaway is both a nautical and a fishing term," explains Matt. "A castaway is either a shipwrecked person or something that is cast adrift. Anglers also use the term to signal the start of a fishing trip, as in 'Cast away!' We positioned our logo of a surf fisherman casting a plug on a backdrop of Nantucket to combine the two meanings. When you live on an island far off the continent, the name seemed fitting." 🦁

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Nantucket native Thatcher Spring sports a quietly elegant look topped off by one of his company's silk ties.





The safari-themed series of ties features playful images of African animals such as giraffes and rhinos.

Tied to the Rock

A Young Nantucket Sailor Starts a Designer Neckwear Company

By Tom Keer

Visitors to the Cape and Islands look for ways to savor their memories long after the summer has faded away. But what happens when you grow up in a place like Nantucket? You take your show on the road.

Twenty-five-year-old Nantucket native Thatcher Spring, a former competitive sailor who spent a year as an intern for Senator Bill Frist, founded his Thatcher Spring, Inc. necktie business on the island in 2005. Sales of the designer-quality ties have skyrocketed, going from a start-up business to 75 retailers nationwide in one year. If you think a tie from Nantucket might be made from fishing nets or canvas sailcloth, think again. These ties are 100% silk, equally at home at an island garden party or in a Manhattan boardroom.

"All of my ties are printed in Como, Italy, the epicenter of the necktie world," says Spring. "They're made from the finest silk. Attention to detail is a critical focus for me. First, I went with a sleeker cut of 3 5/8 inches as opposed to the standard American width of 3 3/4. Then, I lined the tips with silk instead of

the standard nylon. Finally, my labels are tone-on-tone for a tasteful look, and they, too, are made of silk." Every Thatcher Spring tie is cut and sewn in New York City.

Spring offers his ties in two distinct styles. For the 'new traditional' series, Spring uses bold color and design to offer fresher, more contemporary paisleys, stripes, and polka dots. A whimsical series of prints features favorite past-times and animal designs, such as a new safari-themed series of rhinos, lions, elephants, hippos, and other African animals. Look closely at one of his ties to see if you can pick out the subtle thematic variations.

"Most people view Nantucket as a destination," says Spring, who donates a percentage of proceeds to various charities. "But when you grow up and live here, you look at the island as a starting point. My designs are inspired by freedom, the outdoors, and the brightness of life."

With more than 100 ties available for 2007, you can bet we'll see more Thatcher Spring apparel in the near future.