

"From Inside Whatever Clothes He Was Wearing, He Projected The Same Remarkable Quality Of Being Both Untouchable And Accessible"

My Style Icon

Steve McQueen



Steve McQueen,
Park Avenue,
New York City, 1962
Photograph by
William Claxton

Choosing actor Steve McQueen as a lifelong source of inspiration makes perfect sense for Detroit-born designer John Varvatos. Prior to successfully launching his eponymous menswear label in the late 90s, he honed his craft at Polo Ralph Lauren and Calvin Klein – two brands as all-American as the Hollywood hero himself. For Varvatos, the template of masculine cool established by McQueen remains unbeaten.

"Steve McQueen was the ultimate man's man. He had such an ease about him, so much sex appeal. No wonder he was known as The King of Cool. His unique persona made him a legend in his own time, a time when the concept of cool was fast becoming an essential part of the American dream. From humble small-town beginnings and a broken home, he evolved into an amazing actor and an accomplished sportsman – one of the most emulated, adored and lionised superstars of all time.

I have wanted to look like him since I was a kid. Even in the most

simple white t-shirt and jeans, he projected the kind of relaxed confidence and smooth intensity that he brought to every role.

I first saw him in an early episode of *Alfred Hitchcock Presents...* and then in this campy little sci-fi film, *The Blob*, and already he was the anti-establishment, hot-rod-loving dude who forever remained at the core of the more polished screen icon he became. He loved fast motorcycles and faster cars, and the kind of clothes that can take the beating those dish out: weathered denim, seasoned leathers. His style was really American in its practicality, very natural and uncalculated.

From inside whatever clothes he was wearing, he projected the same remarkable quality of being both untouchable and accessible. His influence on me continues to be pervasive. Every pair of biker boots I design, every three-piece suit and denim jacket is, in some way big or small, a tribute to him. Long live the King."

Interview James Anderson