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## Upscale men's shop opens in Porter Square

By **Ann Collette**/ Correspondent  
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"Porter Square is undergoing a renaissance," says men's apparel retailer Gary Drinkwater, whose eponymous upscale men's clothing store recently opened in North Cambridge. "It's a viable marketplace for restaurants and better retail locations now. The historic, pristinely restored Henderson Carriage building offered a space that's comparable to the quality of the clothing in my store. And it has parking."

A forerunner to the renewal promised by the city's Porter Square reconstruction project slated to begin later this summer, Drinkwater's inviting 1,124-square-foot retail store was designed, in part, to address "the invisible wall that presents itself in high-end retail locations," Drinkwater said. "I wanted to create a place where people aren't too intimidated to shop, one that gets past their inability to walk in and find out what's behind the doors. I want my clients to feel comfortable here."

To that end, a rear wall has been painted a shade called "mellow yellow" while others have wall systems on industrial tracks, resulting in movable walls where merchandise can be changed continually. Cork flooring adds to the welcoming feel of the store.

Fitted out with antique furnishings, including three French country dining tables where merchandise is displayed, plus breakfronts and armoires, the store also features two plush leather armchairs. "Many of my clients live in the neighborhood, so I also came to Porter Square because it will be convenient for them to shop here," he said.

Drinkwater built up his clientele during the 30 years he's spent working retail. "After college, I started freelance window designing. In the late 1970s, I landed on the doorstep of Louis, in Boston, where owner Murray Pearlstein took me under his wing. He taught me everything he knew, and I'll be forever indebted to him." Drinkwater spent 13 years at Louis, before moving on to "all the other better menswear stores, eventually winding up at Stonestreet's in Harvard Square, until October of 2003, when I left. Growing up, my father, who was an insurance salesman, had a business in Cambridge, and I spent the '60s and '70s involved in Harvard Square's vibrant, left culture. Cambridge is where I first had a perception of myself as artistically motivated, so when my research showed North Cambridge didn't have a menswear store such as the one I had in mind, naturally I was interested in establishing my store in this location.

"I'm prepared to sell a man his entire wardrobe here," continues Drinkwater, "and I'll also have the ability to custom make his clothing if the situation presents itself."

The store features American, hand-made clothing, footwear from France and England, belts, socks, and jewelry. It also sells French soap, shaving items and colognes from England.

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Hours of Operation:

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday: 10 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Thursday: 10 a.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Saturday: 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Photo Gallery



Gary Drinkwater has opened an upscale men's clothing store, recently opened in Porter Square. (Staff photo by Michael Manning)

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