

Back to School  
with  
Perry Ellis

We go back to school with the Virginia-born fashion designer, traveling to his alma mater, Portsmouth's Woodrow Wilson High.

Photography by Robb Scharetg

Styling by Neely Barnwell Spruill



If ever there were an expression of classic Virginia style, it would be the fashions of the late Perry Ellis. Born in Portsmouth, educated at Old Dominion University and William and Mary, Perry Ellis took classic looks and updated them without changing their eternal appeal. • This year, his company, Perry Ellis International Inc., celebrates its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary. • In a season of reinterpreted classics, we look backward and forward to the past and future of Perry Ellis with a visit to his alma mater, Woodrow Wilson High School in Portsmouth, where Ellis attended in the 1950s. The school's fate is uncertain (it was de-accessioned by the school board), but its spirit lives on, and is a perfect setting for current Perry Ellis fashions—and fashions with Perry Ellis' spirit.

Perry Ellis charcoal-wool one-button windowpane suit (\$1,295), olive suede vest (\$395) and white cotton jacquard shirt (\$295), all from [PerryEllis.com](http://PerryEllis.com)



Ellis entered Woodrow Wilson in 1953; it was known as one of the most rigorous high schools in Virginia. One Girl Who ivory cable and big-buttoned cardigan (\$175), Strenesse by Gabriele Strehle wool and angora pants (\$395) and black and gold cuff bracelet (\$125), all from Frances Kahn, Richmond, Roanoke and Virginia Beach. Opposite page, Perry Ellis caramel and gold silk and cashmere plaid overcoat (\$495) from PerryEllis.com. Jhane Barnes silk turtleneck (\$125), Boss by Hugo Boss brown herringbone pants (\$175) and Gucci boots (\$585), from Saks Fifth Avenue, Richmond.



# FICTION







Opposite page, on him, Perry Ellis night sky double-breasted jacket (\$295) from PerryEllis.com. Truzzi pink cotton oxford (\$340), Armani Collezioni ribbed side-zip sweater (\$345) and Armani Collezioni cotton jacquard pants (\$385), all from Saks Fifth Avenue, Richmond. On her, Marc Jacobs striped shawl collar sweater (\$1,600) and True Religion spiral seam jeans (\$172) from Coplon's, Richmond.

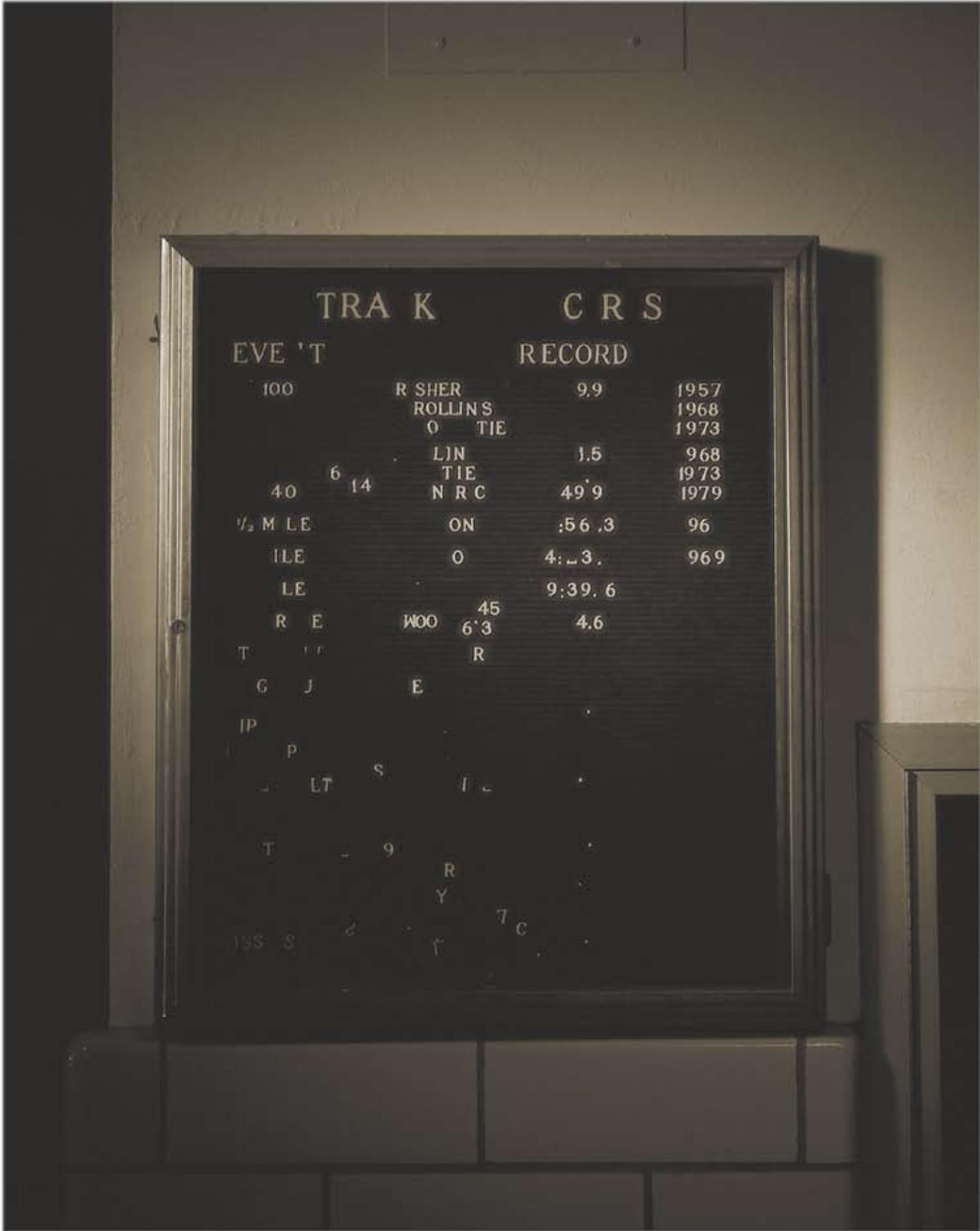


Moschino overscale houndstooth coat (\$1,670) from Coplon's, Richmond. Opposite page, Ellis was a strong believer in the humanities, creating an endowment for faculty at William and Mary. Pink Tartan berry-velvet jacket (\$448), light pink satin cuff shirt (\$278) and Prince of Wales check pants (\$298), all from Frances Kahn, Richmond, Roanoke and Virginia Beach. On him, at Woodrow Wilson, Ellis was standout in English and history. Perry Ellis iridescent-brown trench (\$1,875), striped button-down shirt (\$265) and tan paisley-embroidered corduroy pants (\$325), all from PerryEllis.com.





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LITERS.  
G.M.V.



Despite Perry Ellis' artistic talent, at Portsmouth's Woodrow Wilson High School, Ellis only took art for one year. Perry Ellis charcoal-wool one-button windowpane suit (\$1,295), olive suede vest (\$395) and white cotton jacquard shirt (\$295), all from PerryEllis.com



Ellis was a big fan of Frank Sinatra; at William and Mary, he loved to dance to his music. Michael Kors military trench (\$2,300) from Neiman Marcus, McLean. Jean-Michel Cazabat patent boots (\$745) from Coplon's, Richmond. On him, Perry Ellis was voted "Best Dressed" at Woodrow Wilson. Perry Ellis charcoal pinstripe suit (\$995) from PerryEllis.com. Armani Collezioni blue and white striped shirt (\$285), Salvatore Ferragamo belt (\$145) and Gucci boots (\$585), all from Saks Fifth Avenue, Richmond.

Special thanks to Portsmouth Public Schools for opening up the old Woodrow Wilson High School, most recently Hunt-Mapp Middle School, to *Virginia Living*. The school operates in a new 1993 building; the 1955 version seen here is closed. Perry Ellis' 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary will be celebrated at department stores across the nation, including Macy's and Dillard's. Info at PerryEllis.com. Curious about Ellis' life? Johnathan Moor's 1988 biography is an authoritative source. Models: Michael Wagner, Modelogic | Wilhelmina, Kate Robertson, Modelogic. Hair and make-up by Susan Millar, Modelogic, catering provided by Brutti's of Portsmouth, lodging provided by Hawthorn Inn and Suites, Portsmouth.





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