



Everyone needs a neighborhood tailor they can trust. When a hem comes undone, a button goes missing, or getting your favorite garment ready for a big event, your tailor is the one you turn to. In this modern world we live in, the future of the tailoring business is in the technology. I recently discovered Los Angeles-based STITCH and was blown away by their high-quality alterations and design services. They have re-invented the tailoring experience. Whether you drop in to the LA shop, or they come to you, this is no back-room shop with a fleet of grandma's working 100 year old sewing machines. They make house calls and do it all with the utmost style.

Alex Harden is the founder, owner and visionary of STITCH and he took the time to talk with me to give our Luxe Beat Magazine readers the inside scoop on their innovative approach to the classic tailoring service.

**Sherrie Wilkolaski: In this day and age, where does STITCH find a seamstress?**

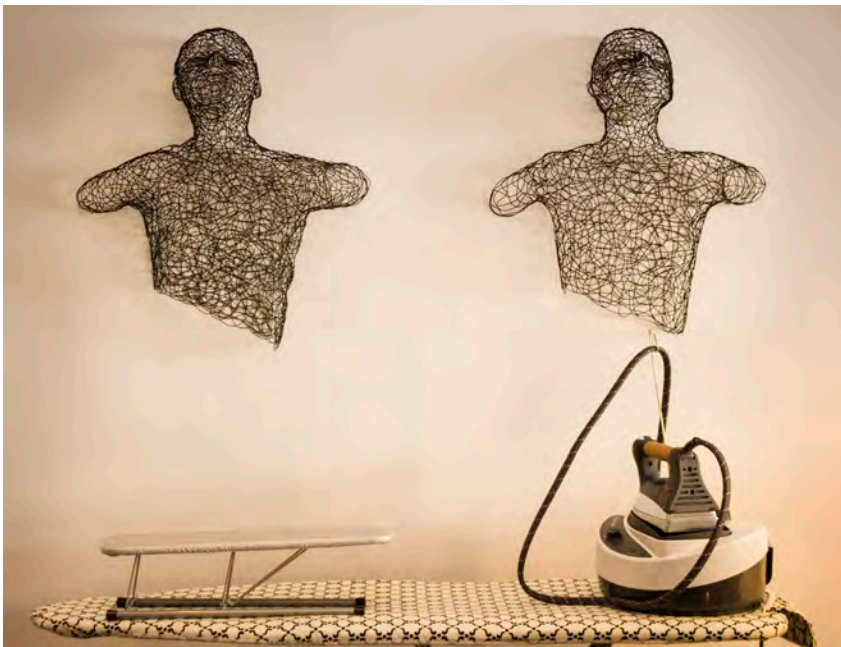
**Alex Harden:** Our core business is clothing alterations; pant hems to wedding gowns and everything in between. As a result, we work with seamstress from a variety of backgrounds including, customers, tailors, fashion designers and dressmakers.

In terms of recruitment, STITCH has a presence on all of the recruiting websites but this only accounts for a third of the applications we receive. Since opening, word has got to the industry and we have a number of enquires both through our website as well as directly. Additionally, we have built good relationships with the trade schools, in particular, FIDM (Fashion Institute of Design and Merchandising) whose alumni are some of the most talented professionals in the industry.

**SW: Is tailoring, a lost art?**

**AH:** Firstly, I think the appreciation for tailoring has declined but is back in favor. Over the last decade, with the surge of online retail and dramatic fall in clothing prices due to cheaper manufacturing overseas, clothing became disposable. As a result, people were less inclined to spend money altering a garment they would eventually throw out.

However, in recent times, with pressure to improve manufacturing quality and to bring work back into the United States, people are



# STITCH Tailor-Made

By Sherrie Wilkolaski



## About STITCH

Founded in Los Angeles, STITCH is a progressive alteration and tailoring company, providing high-quality alterations and design services to a broad customer base. The flagship shop is located in Los Angeles, and STITCH aims to become the first American alterations chain with plans to expand across the nation. Most alteration shops in the country lack the size, resources and expertise to offer a quick turnaround and a standard of work that is superior and guaranteed. STITCH has reinvented the tailoring experience, combining a luxurious atmosphere, top talent, and technologically advanced communications to better service the individual client, as well as corporate retailers and fashion/entertainment industry professionals. Unlike any other business in the industry, STITCH is altering people's perceptions on what to expect from a tailor. This is the brand fit to set the standard in fast, reliable and quality alteration and design services.

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beginning to invest in pieces for the long-- run. So while the art of tailoring may have been lost, I think people are starting to realize its importance and the added benefits that a good tailor can bring to a look.

In addition to this, historically, many established tailors were self-taught and often started sewing as a hobby. With the growing presence and influence of technical trade schools, which utilize modern technique, machinery and technology, are produce expertly trained professionals.

**SW: What type of sewing and/ or tailoring technology does STITCH utilize, or is everything done by hand?**

**AH:** Everything is done by hand. There are a number of companies, usually made-to-measure suit

companies that are based online, and do not have a brick and mortar store. Most these companies use 'technology' to try and find the perfect fit. This is usually computed with the use of an algorithm and 10,000 or so data points that produce an analysis of your body. While technology can get close, it is nowhere near as accurate as having a trained and experience seamstress or tailor measure and make the needed alterations.

**SW: What type of training do your STITCHERS go through?**

**AH:** All of our lead seamstress have a combination of technical knowledge (i.e. they went to some sort of trade school) and 10+ years of experience in the industry. Right now, being one location, all work is overseen by our master seamstress. With an eye for expansion, we are

developing a training program for new recruits that will standardize our methods.

**SW: Who is the STITCH client?**

**AH:** STITCH serves a broad customer base. Our everyday walk-in clients

are locals in the surrounding area who alter their day--to--day clothing; jeans, skirts, suits and occasional evening wear. Additionally, we work a lot with brides--to--be and their wedding party. STITCH Bridal offers in--home





'fit-parties' where we travel to a location of the bride's choice and fit her dress and often, the bridesmaids at the same time.

STITCH is also tied into the fashion and entertainment industry, providing tailors to work on-set and for large events. We work with a number of fashion stylists, production companies and celebrity clients.

**SW: What is luxurious about STITCH?**

**AH:** Think dark hardwood floors, white marble and plush furnishings. We designed the store and the experience to make the customer feel comfortable and actually enjoy the process, rather than it be chore on their Sunday to-do list. We offer our clients water, juice and champagne and also ensure when they have their clothes altered it is private and they have the adequate one-on-one time with our tailor to really discuss the alterations that are being made.



**SW: How did the concept behind STITCH develop?**

**AH:** Like a lot of business it started with frustration and the thought that there had to be something better. I wore suits every day and

found the experience of getting a new suit altered to be less than satisfactory; unreliable and poor customer service, the inability to communicate and an environment

that was not comfortable.

After investigation, I also saw an inefficient industry, on that had remained 'mom pop' with no real brand in the industry. STITCH will be that brand across the US.

**SW: Will STITCH be using mobile technology to connect with customers?**

**AH:** Firstly, our technology in-store allows us to track customer loyalty as well as customer data so we can start to understand preferences etc.

Additionally, we provide electronic messages, via text and email to alert customers of any changes and/or when their pieces are ready to be picked up. As we grow we will develop an App that allows customers to build a profile as well as book in-home appointments and

select options such as pickup and delivery services.

**SW: What is the plan for expansion in the coming year? In five years?**

**AH:** Over the next year we will focus on streamlining our in-store process as well as developing additional relationship with the fashion and entertainment industry. Following that, STITCH is poised to grow aggressively over the next 5 plus years. We are looking at store two already, and we would like to have between 25 to 50 stores, on the west coast alone. Ideally, we would be in the top 50 markets within the US.

We see a niche and want to exploit that by creating a trustworthy, reliable and high-quality alterations and tailoring business that is available to a wide range of customers across the U.S.

