



an original
Penguin[®]
BY
Munsingwear

OUR STORY

If a 100-year-old underwear factory in Minnesota seems an unconventional starting point for a fashion icon that has represented Americana since 1955 and is still worn all over the world today, blame Pete the Penguin. And perhaps a Whiskey or two.

Abbot Pederson was an ambitious salesman who worked for the Munsingwear undergarment factory in Minneapolis. On a sales trip to NYC in 1955, finding himself with some time to kill before a flight home, he decided to wait out his time in a local bar. Stumbling out to find a taxi stand, he took a wrong turn down a Manhattan street and found himself in front of a display of stuffed penguins in a taxidermist's window. Before he knew it, he had bought one of the penguins, named him Pete, and was soon enjoying cocktails with him on the flight back to Minneapolis.

At some point during the flight, Pederson's enthusiasm got the better of him -- and Pete the Penguin's head was knocked off. A seductive stewardess whose attention Pederson had been enjoying throughout the flight gently helped him remove his tie, then wrapped it around the penguin's neck. As she did so, she joked that such a lucky, dapper bird surely deserved to be immortalized -- maybe even embroidered on a shirt similar to the one Pederson was wearing. Little did she know...

On his return to Minneapolis, Pederson, a keen golfer, wasted no time tallying his interests. And so the Munsingwear golf shirt was born. Even in 1955 it was ahead of its time. Casual, comfortable, equally at home on the 18th hole or... the 19th hole. From the moment it hit the shelves it was a must-have, popular with suburbanites and sports legends alike. Known today as "the 55", it represented not only a relaxed and sophisticated lifestyle but was to become the cornerstone of an entire fashion movement.

From this point on, the penguin's flight was onward and upward. (And you thought penguins didn't fly...!) Pete's profile became instantly synonymous with the era's most iconic -- and talked about -- celebrities: Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin, Arnold Palmer, Clint Eastwood, and Richard Nixon, to name a few. Original Penguin had become a true American classic.

As a testament to the timeless appeal of Original Penguin's classic designs, the shirts catapulted back into fashion starting in 2000, when young trendsetters started scouring yard sales and demanding their favorite vintage stores to restock the cult classics.

In 2003, this overwhelming new audience led to the rebirth of an Original Penguin by Munsingwear, and an alliance with an international fashion house. Penguin's archive of mid-century classics was reworked to reflect today's lifestyle without compromising the heritage or craftsmanship that had made Penguin's name.

Today, with Original Penguin stores dotting the globe and sold at exclusive luxury retailers, Pete is back -- bigger and better than ever, presiding over a full lifestyle brand that now includes suits, watches, bags, belts, hats, shoes, and women's and kids' collections.