



Daniel Craig: an exceptional gentleman in Scabal

PORTRAIT

DANIEL CRAIG: BOND, MADE-TO-MEASURE

His future seems more than assured – following his critical and box-office-smash first outing as 007 in *Casino Royale*, wearing Scabal fabrics, naturally, Daniel Craig has signed up for a further four James Bond films. *Bespoken* presents a portrait of this British gentleman who was born to be Bond.

SCABAL COLLECTIONS AS DIVERSE AS 'VELVETS', 'FESTIVAL', AND OF COURSE 'GOLD TREASURE', LINED WITH 22 CARAT GOLD THREAD, WERE USED FOR 'CASINO ROYALE'

With his outstanding, understated interpretation of deadly elegance, Daniel Craig ushers in a new era of Bond films reminiscent of Sean Connery at his finest. Far closer to the hard-edged menace of Ian Fleming's original novels, he would appear to have the world at his feet. The four-film deal signed with MGM is rumoured to be in the region of \$70m, which makes Craig one of Britain's highest-paid actors.

Other recent honours include a BAFTA nomination for his portrayal of Bond and a London Evening Standard award for the same – the first time that any James Bond actor has been so honoured. To boot, in 2007, Craig was invited to join the prestigious Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. A man of quiet simplicity, Craig has been consistently modest. As he told reporters: "Getting the role was kind of normal. That's the weird thing... I screen-tested, because there was a new producer on board who wanted to see if I could do it or not, and I got the job. It's kind of that simple. Nobody knows more than I do how important this is, and basically, I've taken on this responsibility".

BOND BEGINS

Daniel Wroughton Craig was born in 1968 in Chester, England, the son of a former merchant navy midshipman and an art teacher. He was brought up in nearby Frodsham, where his father ran a local pub. His acting career began early; his mother spent a lot of time at the city's famously left-wing Everyman Theatre, then in its heyday with Bernard Hill, Julie Walters, Willy Russell and Alan Bleasdale appearing regularly. The young boy would soak up the life onstage and in the Green Room, enjoying the larger-than-life camaraderie. It was this, and seeing these familiar faces on television,

that convinced Craig that he too would become an actor. He now claims this epiphany took place when he was just six. Craig moved to London when he was 16 to join the National Youth Theatre, with his stage debut as Agamemnon in *Troilus And Cressida*. He went on to train at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, graduating in 1991, and appeared in minor roles on television before landing his first major role on screen as a co-star in the acclaimed 1996 BBC serial *Our Friends in the North*.

His international film roles began in 2001, with *Lara Croft: Tomb Raider*, quickly followed by Sam Mendes' *Road to Perdition* (2002), with Tom Hanks and Paul Newman. Shortly prior to *Casino Royale*, Craig's role as a South African Jewish assassin in Steven Spielberg's *Munich* (2005) won him much critical acclaim.

BONDING WITH THE ROLE

But it is his take on the world's best-known 'secret' agent that will assuredly grant Craig cinematic immortality – and it is doubtless for this reason that the actor has 'personalised' Bond to such an extent. Ian Fleming got there first, of course – his character, a cold-blooded individual who is paid to kill people but who does this in his own inimitable style. A personal blend of tobaccos, a preference for grain-based Vodka, a Ronson lighter – because it is the only way, via such control of his environment, that he can stay ahead of his enemies. Take this scene, from both the 1953 novel and film of *Casino Royale*:

*'A dry Martini,' Bond said.
'One. In a deep champagne goblet.'
'Oui, monsieur.'
'Just a moment. Three measures of Gordon's, one of vodka, half a measure of Kina Lillet. Shake it very well until it's ice-cold, then add a large thin slice of lemon peel. Got it?'
'Certainly monsieur.'*

DRESSED TO KILL

Bond has a similar penchant for being picky about the suits he wears – in Fleming's novels, the basic outfit is a dark blue suit with a heavy white silk shirt and a thin black knitted silk tie, dark blue socks and well-polished black moccasin shoes.

In the books, Bond's clothing tended to come from specific tailors such as Turnbull & Asser - a current Scabal customer - on Jermyn Street, London but for the 21st century, Brioni provides Daniel Craig with his look.

And it doesn't take too much imagination to work out who provided the fabrics for Craig's on-screen style: Scabal collections as diverse as 'Velvets', 'Festival', and of course 'Gold Treasure', lined with 22 carat thread made from Auric Goldfinger's dream fabric, are used. In fact, Craig continues a tradition established by Pierce Brosnan of using Scabal fabrics in Bond films.

And the future? Aside from his commitments to 'Her Majesty's Secret Service', which will take the series up to Bond 25, Craig is set to portray the character of Lord Asriel in the *The Golden Compass*, the forthcoming film adaptation of Philip Pullman's novel. Eva Green, who played Vesper Lynd in *Casino Royale*, will also star in the film.

On the other hand, it may also be a case of *ad astra* – in early 2007, Craig expressed an interest in being a part of the *Star Trek* franchise, professing his love of the series to the World Entertainment News Network: "It's always been a dream of mine to have a stint in the television show or the film. It's been a secret ambition for years."

So, who can say? Perhaps, for this individualistic, stellar James Bond, the world is not enough.

J.D.