

# Serious stuff being best dressed

Cup Week can be a marathon — socialising, fitting in some work, more socialising, working out what to wear, networking and remembering to eat. If you enter one of the best-dressed competitions, sacrifices have to be made, says **John McKenzie**, but the rewards are worth it. McKenzie should know. He won the Best Dressed competition for men at Addington Raceway last year and hosted the Fashion in the Field event at Riccarton Park. He offers aspiring best dressers the benefits of the experience he has gleaned from both roles.

Competing in the fashion events during Cup Week can resemble a military campaign for some, but just getting through the day can be like competing in an endurance sporting event.

There is the planning and the preparation, thinking about the competition — to be fair, I didn't think much about them last year, choosing to stay focused on what I was planning to wear — and then there is actually getting through the day, which can be quite long.

Your friends may be busy relaxing and socialising, but you must remain sober and on the ball, while going through the various heats that end up with being paraded in the birdcage in front of the 25,000 people on the course.

The day starts with making sure that you have all your gear and accessories. Subtle accessories are good, such as sunglasses that match your look, and matching belt and shoes.

The purchasing of a new suit is the best starting point if you are planning on entering the Best Dressed competition. If you look like a million bucks, maybe someone will mistakenly think you are worth it. Suits are like beds — spend the most you can afford and it will be worth it.

So come competition day — and

fun, or their wife or girlfriend pushed them into it. Many have entered for a variety of reasons, but it's clear early on who is taking it more seriously and has their eyes on making sure they are among the last men standing.

The guys in their casual country wear, complete with gumboots, probably realise early on they are not going to make it past the first round, but they are enthusiastic.

There is a fair amount of posing, that is for sure. If you are not a natural poser, this can be a bit of a challenge, but trying not to take it too seriously can help. The key is to relax and not think you are a model and don't overdo the posing part.

Just wander out on the catwalk — I don't know why it's called a catwalk — smile, stop for a bit, try to find a friendly face in the crowd, turn around and head back.

You have about 30 seconds to make your impression the first time out, and the judges will have their early favourites from the first heats, so make the first impression count.

The way you wear your suit is important. Have someone else check you out to make sure everything is looking OK, with the jacket buttoned, tie drawn and, hopefully, tied into a windsor knot.

Undoing the jacket at the end of the catwalk can be a nice touch, but



I know of someone who missed out on a chance of winning because he got side-tracked in the Lindauer Lawn at Addington and didn't show up on time for the final in the birdcage.

to Port Douglas is up for grabs and at Riccarton you can win a trip for two to Fiji.

There are also some great runner-up prizes, and the whole experience is actually quite good.

## MEN'S FASHION COMPETITIONS

- Columbus & Ware Cambridge Suits Best Dressed Man, Addington Raceway, Tuesday, November 14.
- Air New Zealand Fashion in the Field and Lindauer Men's Best Dressed, Riccarton Park, Saturday, November 18.

Winning advice: Best Dressed competition winner John McKenzie's tip to fashion-competition aspirants is don't overdo the posing part.

The names of the runners-up are called out first, and once your name is not called, you know you have either missed out completely or are in with a chance of winning.

Once you are named the winner, it does become quite exciting, but