# The old money aesthetic: youth fashion’s embrace of inherited wealth and its social implications



Fashion trends have long served as markers of cultural shifts, with each era reflecting distinct styles and social values. From the minimalist approach of the 1990s to the extravagant maximalism of the 2000s, fashion has continually evolved. In recent years, social media platforms, particularly TikTok, have emerged as powerful forces shaping the styles embraced by younger generations. Among these emerging trends, the "old money" aesthetic has gained significant traction among today’s teenagers, encapsulating a fascination with generational wealth and the lifestyle of the wealthy elite.

The "old money" trend, popularised across various social media channels, centres around emulating the appearance and lifestyle associated with inherited wealth. This includes a focus on luxury brands, classic fashion staples, opulent home décor, and upscale dining experiences. Its appeal lies in the portrayal of exclusivity and longstanding affluence, which resonates with many young people seeking distinct identities and aspirational images. However, the trend also raises questions about accessibility, as many elements of the aesthetic remain out of reach for a large portion of the population.

A report from The Berkeley High Jacket outlines the broader implications of this trend beyond its surface-level glamour. The publication notes that while some may view this aesthetic as merely a harmless style choice, the widespread portrayal of wealth often overlooks deeper societal issues. In particular, the old money aesthetic is criticised for idealising consumerism and perpetuating social and financial hierarchies that have historically been exclusionary.

A significant concern highlighted is the aesthetic’s tendency to glamorise wealth inherited through familial legacies, without addressing the systemic injustices often underpinning such privilege. Much of the generational wealth celebrated in this trend stems from historical inequalities, where white elites amassed fortunes backed by corporations that exploited lower-income communities. This exploitation contributed to enduring financial disparities and discrimination—issues that the trend's imagery tends to ignore or obscure.

Moreover, the old money aesthetic may reinforce toxic consumption habits by promoting an ideal that is unattainable for many, fostering a culture of exclusivity rather than inclusiveness. According to The Berkeley High Jacket, this trend solidifies a fashion culture that not only celebrates wealth but also sidelines the broader conversation about its origins and impacts.

In summary, while the resurgence of interest in exclusivity and luxury through the old money aesthetic reflects a notable shift in contemporary style, it also brings to light underlying tensions related to wealth disparity and social equity. The trend’s current focus on appearance and consumer culture signals a complex dynamic in youth fashion, where aspiration intersects with socioeconomic realities. The Berkeley High Jacket’s analysis suggests that a deeper examination and potential shifts in the trend’s narrative would be necessary for it to evolve beyond its current form.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.highsnobiety.com/p/old-money-style/> - This article supports the claim that the 'old money' aesthetic is a current fashion trend focused on 'quiet luxury,' which emphasizes timeless and elevated style rather than overt wealth. It highlights how this aesthetic can be achieved by selecting appropriate fabrics, color palettes, and styles.
2. <https://www.houseofharveyblog.com/blog/old-money-aesthetic-style-guide-2025> - This style guide explains the 'old money' aesthetic as a blend of 'quiet luxury' and classic, timeless fashion, emphasizing brands like Ralph Lauren and Hermés. It provides insights into how to emulate this style without necessarily being part of the elite.
3. <https://www.business-standard.com/lifestyle/quiet-luxury-explained-the-old-money-aesthetic-that-took-over-2023-124010300466_1.html> - This piece explains 'quiet luxury' as an aspect of the 'old money' trend, focusing on investing in high-quality, understated fashion pieces rather than overtly branded items. It highlights the 2023 resurgence of this aesthetic.
4. <https://harpersbazaar.com.au/old-money-aesthetic/> - This article discusses how the 'old money' aesthetic has evolved into a style trend rather than an aspirational lifestyle goal, emphasizing conscious shopping and timeless pieces. It also notes how this trend intersects with broader issues of exclusivity and inclusivity.
5. <https://www.tiktok.com/discover/old-money-aesthetic> - This platform showcases how the 'old money' aesthetic is popularized through social media, particularly among younger generations, reflecting their fascination with generational wealth and luxury lifestyles.
6. <https://www.noahwire.com> - This source article discusses the broader implications of the 'old money' trend, including its glamorization of wealth and potential reinforcement of social hierarchies, highlighting concerns over consumerism and exclusivity.
7. <https://news.google.com/rss/articles/CBMipAFBVV95cUxQOVpRREdsWWIyakhIcnBaZno4MHZBQ0ZERUF4a21OLWtrNHNjdnpJWmpJX1NDTGtsODBjWnZaQ2NNZzlxRFZGNk81bEFqeUxzTEZldEFiVmVEMmgtQjdhQ0tVbThLUkV0a2dNbF94QU9QRkZXVjNKbFFvaE0wSUNBZGVuNGkwQkl4dGVOVmdBX2VsRzZfTG9qbDQzaU1JV0NkLWpmZA?oc=5&hl=en-US&gl=US&ceid=US:en> - Please view link - unable to able to access data