



The Allure of
British Luxury

2016

W A L P O L E

The Allure of British Luxury

Just what is it that makes British luxury so enticing, so covetable?

The Walpole book presents a whole new way of looking at British creativity. Here, the UK's leading fashion and luxury editors reflect on Britain's inherent design culture and celebrate its most iconic brands.

“*Britain always led the way in every field possible in the world from art to pop music. Even from the days of Henry VIII. It's a nation where people come and gloat at what we have as a valuable heritage, be it some good, some bad, but there's no place like it on earth.*”

The late Alexander McQueen CBE,
interviewed by *Dazed* magazine in 2008



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Dylan Jones studied at Chelsea School of Art and then at St. Martin's School of Art. He is the award-winning editor of *GQ* magazine, and Chairman of London Collections Men. He has won the BSME Editor of the Year Award a record nine times. A former editor at *i-D*, *The Face*, *Arena*, *The Observer* and *The Sunday Times*, he has also written several bestselling music biographies and has collaborated with David Cameron on *Cameron on Cameron: Conversations with Dylan Jones*. In June 2013 he was honoured with an OBE for services to publishing and the fashion industry. In July 2014 he was awarded Editor of the Year at the PPA Awards. He was once nearly a member of the Buzzcocks.

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Alexandra Shulman

ALEXANDRA SHULMAN

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LUCIA VAN DER POST

Lucia van der Post was born and educated in South Africa where she spent the first 20 years of her life before moving to London. She began her career as a writer in 1963 on interior design matters for the newly launched *Sunday Telegraph* newspaper. In 1968 she joined *The Sunday Times* and then in 1973 she became the editor and main feature writer on the *How To Spend It* pages of the weekend section of the *Financial Times*. She was the launch editor of its award-winning monthly colour supplement – also called *How To Spend It*. Today, she continues to write about all things bright and beautiful. Married with two grown-up children, she has an abiding love of Africa, which she visits as often as she can.

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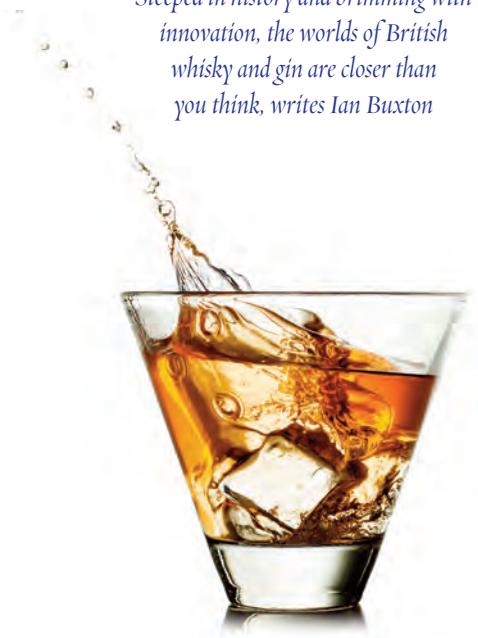


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IAN BUXTON

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Fiona Kerr

FIONA KERR

Fiona Kerr is features editor at *Condé Nast Traveller UK*, covering all that is new, cool and curious in the world of travel. Despite originally studying to be an economist, she saw the light in student journalism and plumped instead for a life of magazines rather than monetary policy. As well as *Condé Nast Traveller*, her work has appeared in *Sunday Times Travel Magazine*, *Stylist*, *Stella Magazine* and *Condé Nast Brides*. On honeymoon she trekked the Himalayas. She lives in London with her husband.



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SIMON DE BURTON

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Lucie Muir

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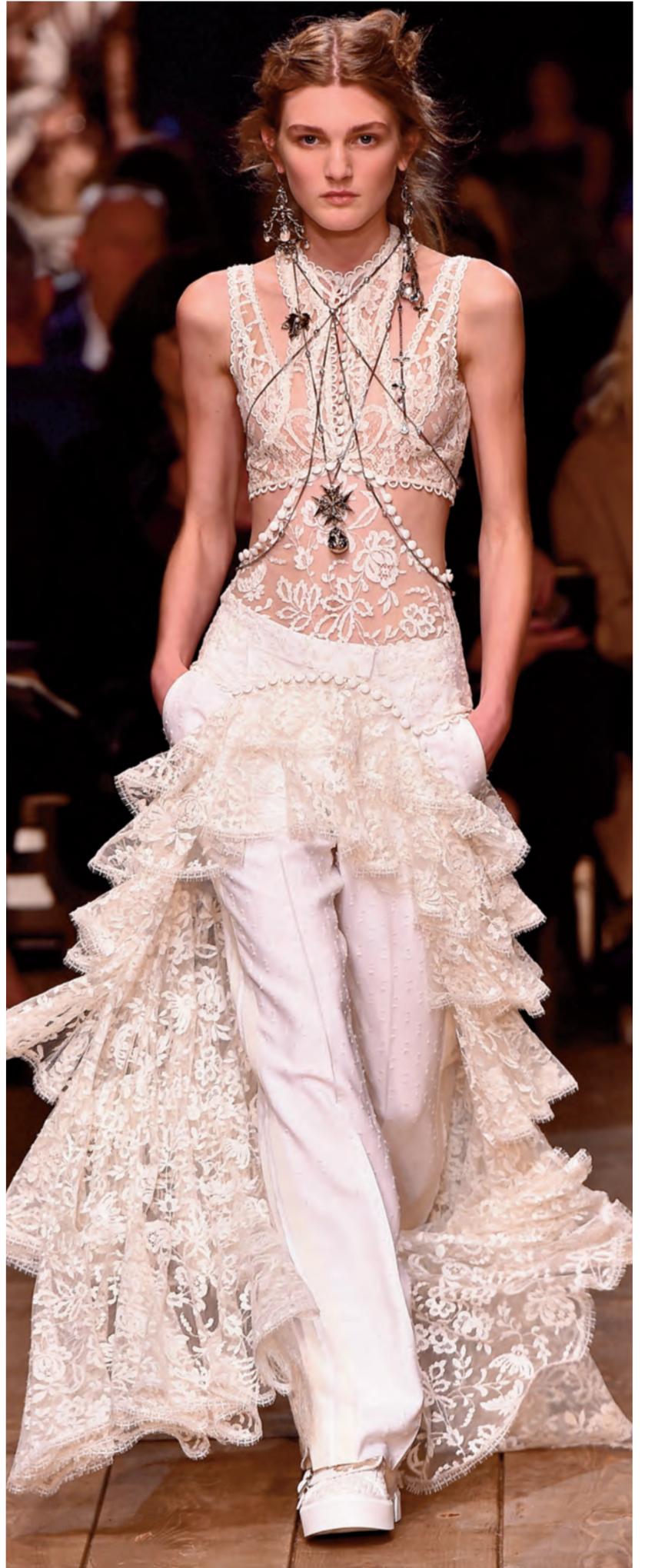
ILLUMINATING THE

From enfant terrible to head girl, British womenswear is now at the forefront of the international fashion scene, notes Alexandra Shulman

It is frequently claimed (though never proven) that Napoleon described the British as a nation of shopkeepers. It's more than likely that times have changed somewhat since the Napoleonic Wars but a more accurate description of contemporary Britain would be a nation of designers. The urge to create our own look, our own space, is a dominant feature of British life and is one of the great motivational forces at play in the success story that is our womenswear today.



Ralph & Russo



Alexander McQueen

FASHION LANDSCAPE



Burberry

How wonderful it is to be present at London Fashion Week, where far from being the naughty child at the back of the class, as the event was regarded 20 years ago, the occasion is widely acknowledged as the place where the most creativity will be discovered, newly paired with professionalism and growing, international businesses.

Creativity has never been in short supply when it comes to British fashion, but financial success and brand building has been more of a stumbling block. The scene has changed considerably though and now the unique



Smythson

mixture on offer combines large established labels such as Burberry and lauded high-end fashion houses like Erdem, Christopher Kane, J.W. Anderson and Mary Katrantzou. Numerous successful accessories brands such as Smythson, Mulberry, Anya Hindmarch and Jimmy Choo are now accompanied by newer names of footwear designers; Sophia Webster and Charlotte Olympia, as well as a continual supply of even more fledgling talents such as Shrimps, Molly Goddard, Marques Almeida and Phoebe English, adding up to a total that is unrivalled in its diversity and appeal.

A sense of identity is crucial to British luxury goods. Over many years, indeed centuries, this has kept some core elements shaped by our culture and geography, and moulded by the spirit of the times. Our island nation, with its utterly unpredictable and often damp weather, has been responsible for our strength in outerwear. This has allowed the Burberrys, Mulberrys, Mackintoshs and Acquascutum to grow, accompanied by our need to travel to escape ourselves (no huge continental land mass we) and therefore our strength in leather goods such as luggage that extends to terrific handbag ranges.

Our landscape, which favours sheep and moorland, has long been responsible for our success in certain fabrics such as tweeds and cashmere, tartans and pinstripes. These continue to be used by emerging designers as well as by long-term occupants of Savile Row and Burlington Arcade. And probably most of all, our embrace of the multicultural, which has (at least until recently) welcomed generations of different nationalities into the country and brought a richness of influences to our design and lifestyle that is evident in so much of our leading fashion now.

Having just finished attending another round of fashion shows in Paris, Milan, London and New York, I have been struck by the current trend for unique pieces that was visible once again on the catwalk in every city and which very much plays to British strengths. Colour and pattern, embellishment and delicate craftsmanship were the strongest themes, along with a definite nostalgia and romanticism ~ all of these are facets of design that our fashion industry is known for. And no one is embracing them more than our current generation of creatives.



Simone Rocha



Mulberry

You could look at the sweet, yet powerful designs, shown by Sarah Burton for Alexander McQueen ~ a house that has managed to become a favourite of the future queen of England while attracting record numbers of visitors to an exhibition of the original designer's undoubtedly dark and disturbing vision at the Victoria and Albert Museum in 2015. There, you found embroidered floral silks that might have found a home on one of Georgette Heyer's fictitious heroines, alongside tapestried and distressed denim.

Our landscape, which favours sheep and moorland, has long been responsible for our success in certain fabrics such as tweeds and cashmere, tartans and pinstripes

Or take the Turkish/Canadian but London-based Erdem Moralioglu, whose signature laces have allowed him to open his first exquisite shop on South Audley Street. Simone Rocha, another one of London Fashion Week's most exciting young designers, also boasts a new Mayfair store. While her latest collection showed references from Japanese kimonos to Indian paisley block prints, it was equally strong in the historical silhouettes and traditional textiles that made it seem totally at home when it was shown under the gilded ceiling of London's Lancaster House.

But there is also the legacy of our art and design colleges to factor in. They have continually encouraged experimentation and applauded the idea of not resting on commercially successful laurels. .



Mary Katrantzou

A richness of texture and elaborate print is also very evident in so much that the British designers are offering now. Take the beautiful prints Bill Gibb, Ossie Clark and Foale and Tuffin brought to the early Seventies and see how the baton has passed to contemporary designers like Christopher Kane's or Jonathan Saunders' appealing, colour-drenched textiles.

Indeed, imaginative digital manipulation has made some Mary Katrantzou's pieces worthy of being framed. Britain may suffer from grey skies and wet pavements, but when it comes to introducing brilliant ideas and illuminating the fashion landscape, no other country comes even close.

Alexandra Shulman OBE, is the editor-in-chief of the British edition of Vogue

THE MARCH

OF BRITISH MENSWEAR



Dylan Jones muses on the upward trajectory of menswear in the UK and the runaway success of London Collections Men

If anyone ever asks you just why Britain is so good at menswear, and so good at producing menswear designers, then you only need to say this: not only are the British good at tradition, we excel at rebellion too. Britain, and especially London, is awash with great sartorial heritage, both recent and historical. Not only do we have the greatest tailors in the world in Savile Row ~ we did, lest we forget, invent the double breasted suit ~ we are also responsible for every major youth cult since the end of the Second World War: everyone from Edwardians, teds, mods, hippies, skinheads, punks and New Romantics were born on the streets of London. Menswear is something we are extraordinarily good at. It is an intrinsic part of British heritage and history.

As well as this great heritage and diversity, these days, we also have some of the world's most high-profile fashion designers in Paul Smith, Christopher Bailey and the Alexander McQueen brand. We have Alfred Dunhill, Church's, DAKS, Edward Green, Gieves & Hawkes, Hackett, Henry Poole, Richard James, Mulberry, Oliver Sweeney, Thomas Pink and more. And while some of these brands might be owned by foreign conglomerates, it is British craftsmanship that keeps them at the very forefront of the industry.

The future of menswear is exponential. There is a feeling that womenswear has almost reached a state of saturation, and that while the fashion industry continues to spread around the globe, it is in menswear where the real innovation is happening. And I have to admit to feeling the same way.

The men's market has traditionally been a lot smaller than the women's market, but as the women's business slows, so the men's business expands, getting bigger and bigger, season by season. This of course has been due to one thing and one thing only: consumer demand.

Men these days expect great clothes at every price level, be that high street, mid-market, designer, luxury or bespoke. They expect quality at any price and, so far, the market appears to be delivering it. The current generation of male consumers might be more sophisticated than previous generations and they may now shop more like women but, because of that, they no longer have any qualms about buying into the idea of 'fashion'.



E. Tautz



Henry Poole

Gieves & Hawkes

Men these days treat clothes almost as a *fait accompli*. There is no stigma attached to them, nothing secret. Just look at the success of GQ. Twenty-five years ago, we had to appeal to that select band of aspirational men who wanted to look good; not, as now, every man wants to look good.

This is one of the reasons why we partnered with the British Fashion Council to establish the BFC/GQ Menswear Fund. With the launch of London Collections Men in 2012, and the amazing design talent in London, it seemed logical to start a fund for menswear designers rather than womenswear designers. The British Fashion Council offers talented new designer businesses in the UK the strongest and most robust start-up support package in the world. However, designers starting out in London have often struggled to continue their development abroad.

The fund's aim is to recognise a designer business with outstanding design talent and a strong growth strategy, and offer them support to become British fashion brands of the future. The selection process is based on talent, the business-plan entrepreneurialism and a creation of employment opportunities.

Sponsored by the luxury telecommunications brand Vertu, each year we award £150,000 in cash and £50,000 in ancillary mentoring and logistical support. The inaugural award was given to London-based menswear designer Christopher Shannon, while 2015's award was given to Patrick Grant and his modern tailoring label, E. Tautz.

Thomas Pink



E. Tautz

As for London Collections Men ~ which is now in its eighth season ~ I think there are three reasons for its success: timing, location and enthusiasm. Firstly, and generally speaking, the British menswear designers of today are probably more commercially minded than their predecessors; and secondly, who wouldn't want to come and show their collections in London? If London really is the home of menswear, both in its traditional and modern guises, it makes sense to celebrate it here. And thirdly, if the British menswear industry hadn't have wanted a home-grown fashion week, then they wouldn't have supported one.

It is the heritage aspects of London Collections Men that have played so well with the international press and buyers, as it is not often they get the chance to visit Downing Street, St. James's Palace, Spencer House or some of the more secretive corners of Savile Row. London is a city blessed with heritage and innovation in equal measure, and you can pick pretty much any street in the West End, and know that you are only yards away from history. You could be in St. James's Palace, where you'd be in the same place where Henry VIII's

illegitimate son died. If you popped round the corner to Jermyn Street, you'd see a statue of Beau Brummell, the Regency dandy and arbiter of style who once spent a small fortune in the area.

Menswear? Why, in London it's embedded in the very fabric of the city.

Dylan Jones OBE, is the editor of the UK edition of GQ magazine and chairman of London Collections Men



The rise of the BRITISH PERFUMER

For those who truly love fine perfume, Lucia van der Post thinks a new wave of rule-breaking British perfumers is definitely worth watching

When it comes to style, the French might be famous for a certain classic elegance, the Italians for glamour and the Americans for clean, cool modernity. The Brits however, are most famous for their subversive sense of irony and their robustly independent attitude. They have an ingrained bias against doing things the conventional way, and when it comes to perfumes, they remain true to form. British perfumers put ingredients together in totally unexpected ways and rules are there to be broken. They approach the matter with wit, exuberance and a refreshing *je m'en fous* air that is beginning to make waves around the globe. And ~ like all the best contemporary 'noses' ~ they no longer see the world of scent in terms of gender.

Scents are for whoever it is who falls in love with them (as the great Roja Dove once advised me ~ "never buy anything that you merely quite like ~ you should fall head over heels with a scent before you buy it") and the adjectives 'masculine' and 'feminine' are these days strictly *de trop*.

Though in recent times it was the French and the American *eaux*, which seemed to dominate the perfumery departments of the world, it wasn't always so. In the 18th and 19th centuries, London played a central role in European perfumery with the olfactory creations of Yardley, Cussons, Pears, Floris, Atkins and particularly Grossmith being known around the sophisticated world. And though in France the early 20th century saw an unprecedented blossoming of what James Craven, perfume archivist at Les Senteurs describes as a "bursting out of chemical and perfumery genius" coming from the great houses of Coty, Patou, Poiret, the Guerlains and Ernest Daltroff at Caron, today he sees London as the epicentre of fragrance innovation.

This hasn't happened overnight. We have watched the growth of the wonderful Jo Malone, who brought the notion of new ingredients (grapefruit in a scent, anyone?), of layering, of mixing until she became a worldwide phenomenon, so sought-after that the Lauders had the good sense to buy the label. Then there's Lyn Harris with her elegant line of Miller Harris perfumes, and Linda Pilkington, the woman behind Ormonde Jayne's complex, lush creations, which has a fanbase around the world. Clive Christian, too, who bought the old Crown Perfumery Company and then created truly rich and sensuous perfumes of the sort that he himself loved and which happily turned out to be loved by a great many other people too.



Creating an Ormonde Jayne fragrance



Inspired by
quintessentially
British plants



Tom Daxon Perfume



Union Fine Fragrances



But now there's a new batch of British names worth watching. There's Sarah McCartney of 4160 Tuesdays with her wit, exuberance and general air of subversive irony. Her What I Did On My Holidays and Sunshine and Pancakes are wonderfully tongue-in-cheek homages to typically British summer holidays. Then there's Liz Moores, a completely untrained nose who recently launched four sublime perfumes under the name of Papillon, all of which have been hailed for their richness, inventiveness and flair. Ruth Mastenbræk took a degree in chemistry at Oxford and worked in the fragrance industry for many years before starting her own little company in 2010. All three of these women have been inspired to try and capture a sense of Britishness ~ Mastenbræk recently brought out Oxford, an olfactory ode to that beautiful city of mellow stone and ancient quads. Sarah McCartney has been inspired by quintessentially British plants such as lavender, geranium and violets, whilst Moores' best-loved perfume, Tobacco Rose, is based around that other quintessential English flower ~ the rose, that badge of our Royal House, which is incorporated into our heraldic heritage.

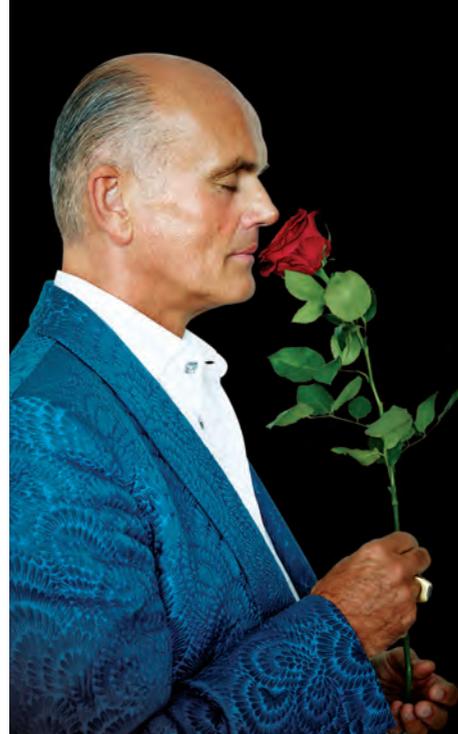
Union Fragrance turns to such neglected but essentially British plants as bog myrtle and blue ground ivy, water mint and watercress, for its fine perfume collection. Other ingredients including quince and thistles, Scottish pine, peat and birch, as well as true English bluebells are used to create this uniquely British line. Anastasia Brozler is the 'nose' and for these fragrances she scoured the moorlands of Yorkshire, the mountains of Snowdonia, the damp fens of County Derry and the windswept heathlands of Scotland to garner these plants herself.

Meanwhile, those in the know say that Laboratory Perfumes, the brainchild of Christopher Perry, is another new arrival to watch. Instead of evoking the Britain of country cottage and babbling brook, Perry is inspired by vast heaths and expansive coastlines, which is reflected in his minimalist packaging.

And let us not forget Tom Daxon, whose mother was the long-time creative director at Molton Brown and whose exceptionally modern, elegant scents are made in a small independent perfumery in Grasse.

We also have the great Roja Dove, who after years of being an *éminence grise* at the house of Guerlain, started producing perfumes of his own. Hugely successful, his 45 perfumes are mostly rich and complex, quite often heady, with exotic ingredients, but when he was asked to create a fragrance to celebrate Prime Minister David Cameron's Great Britain Campaign in 2012, he turned to quintessential British themes for inspiration. "I loved the idea," he says, "of making a scent that was at once opulent but also tailored, understated, and disciplined. The British have a feeling of restraint that is present everywhere: we are good at what we create but we never overdo it. That is why this scent had to be a chypre. We are proud, self-assured, but understated ~ like a chypre." And he called it ~ of course ~ Great Britain.

But, happily for Britain, there are many other great *parfumeurs*, each trying to follow a path all of their own. Take Matthew Zhuk who has been described as a "master of oud and dark woody scent". He has created the sublime Ex Idolo perfumes Thirty Three and Ryder. While Michael Boadi, whose Boadicea the Victorious (no need to elaborate the inspiration there) was one of the West Western brands to use oud, has just launched Bohdidharma, a range of eight fragrances all based round the very British notion of tea.



Roja Dove

London is the epicentre of innovation

These, though, are just some of the best-known of the new wave of British 'noses', all busy exploring a new and contemporary way of making fine perfume. It is hard to imagine that any will make it into the big-time league in the way that say, Chanel No. 5 or Youth Dew have. What they are much more likely to do is to give intense pleasure to a smaller group of sophisticated and knowledgeable connoisseurs who appreciate the true art of perfumery and who have the courage and personal sense of style to seek out the more adventurous and skilful of these indie experts. British perfumers, as the aforementioned James Craven puts it so succinctly, have "a delight in exploration and novelty combined with a deep sense of paying homage to ancient craft, art and skill." They are worth saluting.

Lucia van der Post is associate editor of *How to Spend It* magazine and an acclaimed luxury writer



BRITISH LUXURY: TO HAVE AND BEHOLD

British designers lead the way when it comes to creating highly coveted heirloom pieces. Michelle Ogundehin sheds light on Britain's best maverick makers to invest in now



Cole & Son's Whimsical Punchinello



Paul Smith for The Rug Company



From the Fornasetti wallpaper range by Cole & Son

In a recent article for *ELLE Decoration*, author and design critic Stephen Bayley opined that there was no such thing as 'British Design' since the concept of 'Britain' is mere political construct rather than national identity. However, he continued, there was such a thing as English design. I tend to agree with him, albeit adding that the Welsh, Scottish and Irish each have a unique creative signature to distinguish themselves too. But here I shall attempt to define the conundrum of 'English' creativity.

Certainly that which we consider to be 'English' is different from the appreciation of the sensual so commonly attributed to the Italians, or the rigour associated with the Germans, not to forget the intellectual veneer often ascribed to many French works. Further afield too, the Japanese are lauded for their technological prowess, the Chinese for their productivity, the Americans perhaps for their irreverence? But what core theme distinguishes the English?

England has always been a melting pot of influences responding to ideas and inspiration from all over the globe. Marry this to the oft-mentioned English designers' innate sense of rebellion and inclination for 'thinking outside the box' (the mad inventor scenario) and you have the makings of a potent creative cocktail: kicking against the establishment and rejecting the mainstream on the one hand, while spurning precedent on the other. Nevertheless, the inherent history of fine workmanship, meticulous hand-crafting and tailoring exhibited in England and the pride with which these skills are maintained and upheld, are cemented in the very DNA of the English design process. With their attendant attention to detail and an emphasis on quality materials, these are traditions that a designer born, bred or taught here will inevitably, overtly or subconsciously, find underpinning everything they do.

It is also what makes English design so covetable and lends it such longevity. Consider Cole & Son, the wallpaper manufacturers founded in 1875 by John Perry, son of a Cambridgeshire merchant. Renowned from the start for high-quality block printing and exquisite designs, it furnished many a stately home, palace, castle and theatre throughout Britain and overseas. And today, alongside the prints in its fabulous archive, sit contemporary collections, some which reflect this distinguished heritage, others which abound with newness. Personally, I was thrilled when they launched the Fornasetti collection; a series of papers in collaboration with the Italian house famed for its illustrative prowess, and one that absolutely encompasses a mix of the historic with the eccentric, the playful with the architectural. Entirely logical then, that it took an English company to reproduce the designs as wallpaper. And these papers are, as a result, as collectable as the original Italian ceramics.

Being open to varied influences, both geographically and professionally, is another key factor that distinguishes the English. Certainly a desire for creative collaboration propelled The Rug Company to global acclaim. It is a brand that describes itself as "the collaborative effort of 1,662 people," and goes on to say, "from the spinners to the weavers, to the people who deliver and lay the finished rug, the result of all these diverse and individual contributions is a hand-knotted rug that will last for generations." These household heirlooms also benefit from being designed by a roster of talent that reads like a who's who of the creative English elite, from fashion to photography, think Alexander McQueen, Tom Dixon and Paul Smith to Sue Timney, Sam Taylor-Wood and Neisha Crosland.



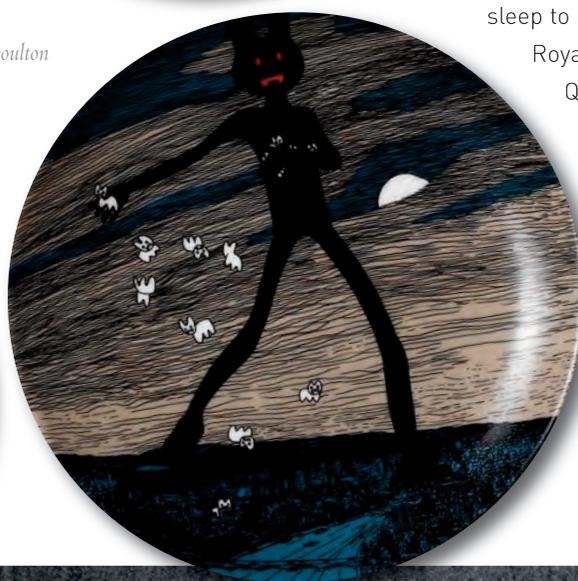
Alexander McQueen for The Rug Company



Pure Evil for Royal Doulton

And again, although the thinking behind the brand is modern and forward-thinking, as The Rug Company founders Chris and Suzanne Sharp put it: "We know that during the four months it takes to make each of our rugs, we use the same undiluted craft that was used 100 years ago." After all, true English design is never conceived to be throwaway or transient. The shoulders on which it sits, whether acknowledged or not, give it deep roots.

Thus, if pushed to come up with a single pithy descriptor for English design, it would have to be something like, 'crafted individualism'. What you find here can't be found anywhere else in the world: from Savoir beds that have afforded a decent night's sleep to many a star at The Savoy since 1905, to Royal Doulton, founded in 1815, adored by Queen Victoria and today selling super contemporary pieces by graffiti artist Pure Evil and Olympic torch designers Barber Osgerby alongside the heritage pots. As they put it, their mission is to "add enjoyment to everyday life ~ a clean look with that something extra to really stand out from the crowd."



Barber Osgerby for Royal Doulton



And that's the point, although the components used by any English company or designer might well be the same as those used the world over, or even come from far afield, it is the way those pieces are put together, the little flourishes and the unexpected details that mark them out as special. English design has a way of taking the ordinary and elevating it

to extraordinary in such a way as to make you not only desire it, but want to keep it forever. In short, from suits to silverware via carpets and clothing, English means brilliance meets bravado with an extra helping of, well, let's just call it genius.

Michelle Ogundehin is editor-in-chief of *Elle Decoration UK*

BRITISH LUXURY: A Worthy Investment?

Walpole CEO Michelle Emmerson charts the novel customer experiences and captivating brand stories which make British design so desirable

British luxury brands have a knack of creating designs that make you not only desire them but also want to treasure them forever. Enduring values such as craftsmanship and quality carry a timeless appeal and are engrained into each Savile Row suit, bespoke scent or cult sports car. Whether designed to retain its value or purely an investment in pleasure, it's easy to see why British brands are so coveted.

As always, British luxury begins with a good story. Everybody loves owning something such as a piece of fine jewellery or a beautiful watch, passed down through the generations and carrying a compelling tale. It will always have a very special meaning to its custodian, especially when stories tell of provenance and how the product was made. I always think about highly skilled makers such as Roger Smith producing just 10 watches a year from his Isle of Man studio. Then there is Method Studio in Scotland. In creating one-of-a-kind wooden furniture and objects, its founders, the husband-and-wife duo Callum Robinson and Marisa Giannasi, will take great lengths to source unique woods and seek permission to use them in the design process.

Elsewhere, the revival enjoyed by car makers such as Rolls-Royce and Aston Martin is partly due to raising brand profiles and encouraging enthusiasts to embrace the histories and stories of such celebrated makers. Meanwhile, our thirst to know more about the master blenders behind exclusive single-malt whiskies by the likes of Scottish producers Glenmorangie and The Macallan shows no signs of abating.

This homespun genius is part of a wider movement, which is bringing increased production back to the UK. By building its luxury yachts here for example, Hampshire-based Redman Whiteley Dixon is contributing to the development of core British craft skills such as marquetry and leather stitching. Ultimately, this ensures that there is a strong supply chain in place for its end product. Elsewhere, English watchmaker Bremont is spurring on the British horology industry by producing its latest timepieces from a workshop on the banks of the Thames. Across the country, apprenticeships and design college programmes are drawing young people into all areas of the watch, jewellery, cabinet-making and footwear industries.



Redman Whiteley Dixon

Everybody loves owning a one-of-a-kind luxury object



Method Studios



Roger Smith



Aston Martin

Fera at Claridge's



In the area of bespoke, demand for additional personal touches is at an all-time high

The Corinthia



Stories are essential, of course, but for many British fashion designers, along with leading food and drink producers, creating a unique and memorable 'experience' that runs alongside each purchase is key. This is most evident in the area of bespoke, where demand for additional, personal touches, it seems, is at an all-time high. However, this is the first time we are seeing a convergence between personalisation and bespoke. Real purists would say there is a very clear delineation between the two but there is evidence that those lines are blurring.

For instance, Burberry had everyone talking with its 'My Burberry' perfume campaign, which encouraged customers to put their initials on the bottle and then Instagram or Tweet it to their friends. Burberry's latest twist on personalisation is the scarf bar, where you go into any of its stores, choose your beautiful cashmere scarf, pick your initials and have them embroidered right before your eyes.

Then there is the luxury candle maker Rachel Vosper. At her Belgravia store, customers can bring a beautiful bowl or object that they might even have inherited and work directly with her to create a bespoke fragrance that can then be contained within it. That way, they get the candle-making experience alongside something that is uniquely tailored to them.



Rachel Vosper



Ralph & Russo

Masterminding that extra personal experience successfully on the shop floor and creating an engaging, as opposed to intimidating, retail environment requires a certain level of skill. An example of this is British couture house Ralph & Russo. Its Mayfair atelier excels at making customers feel completely at home. One of the highlights here is a complete hair and make-up service, which makes you feel a million dollars and readies you before you try on the stunning couture dresses.

Tailor-made experiences are not restricted to luxurious boutiques, of course. They can also be enjoyed across the UK's vibrant hospitality sector in our world-class restaurants, bars and hotels. The latter are becoming far more than just places to rest your head or meet associates for the latest thing in cocktails.

Instead, they are connecting guests to their destination in increasingly novel ways, such as opening private members' clubs and acting as showcases for local artists ~ even staging theatre performances in guest suites, hotel lobbies and stairwells.

Finally, as long as the association with fashion and trends remains in place, the younger audience will always covet aspirational items. We have skilled craftsmanship and a brand's strong narrative to thank for that. Watches and jewellery have traditionally been heirloom pieces but I still think owning a Mulberry handbag is every millennial girl's dream. When it comes to exclusivity, originality and above all beauty, is British luxury a worthy investment? Absolutely.

Michelle Emmerson is CEO of Walpole



BEYOND the BEDROOM



As Britain's top hotels bring more and more cultural happenings within their own walls, Fiona Kerr asks, is this the true meaning of intelligent luxury?

I'm standing in the corner of a bottle-strewn bedroom at The Hoxton in London's Holborn, while a man in a fluffy white bathrobe screams blue murder. I'm handed a glass of champagne, while others make themselves comfortable on the bed before helping our temperamental host learn his lines for the production he's apparently about to perform. This play-within-a-play is all part of an elaborate 'backstage tour', where the line between audience and actor blurs in a clever showbusiness satire that romps along hotel corridors and scurries up and down back-of-house stairwells.

It used to be that the closest you'd get to theatre in a hotel was booking tickets at the concierge desk. Today, though, hotels are no longer content to be places to eat, drink, sleep on repeat.

Instead they want to connect guests to their destination in increasingly innovative ways, becoming incubators for local talent and the next big trends ~ immersive theatre being just one of them.

"People are valuing experience over seeing hotels as a commodity and want somewhere where they can connect with the city rather than being cocooned away from it in a stuffy lobby," says Sharan Pasricha, founder of Ennismore Capital, which is behind The Hoxton brand and the new owner of the Gleneagles Hotel.

With travellers increasingly looking to discover their destination like a local, so savvy hotels are distilling and curating the city into experiences that go much deeper than a checklist of famous sights.



The London experience at Corinthia

The obsession with all things local originally came into focus in hotel restaurants and bars, with everything from craft British spirits like Sipsmith gin in cocktails and London-roasted Alchemy coffee beans at The Dorchester's Parcafé, to the Ham Yard Hotel's rooftop vegetable garden. But now the trend is being translated way beyond the menu to draw on the vibrant British art scene.

The Corinthia London's Artist in Residence programme, which nurtures young British creatives within the hotel, is now in its fifth year. Past incarnations have seen Noémie Goudal create huge photographic installations of 'unknown views' ~ a forest seen from the spa's swimming pool or a snow-covered jetty through a bedroom window; theatre company Look Left Look Right turn the hotel into a stage with a one-on-one immersive play; and filmmakers Zawe Ashton and David Petch produce shorts around the theme of sleep. And at the beginning of this year, composer Emily Hall staged her new opera *Found and Lost*.

During a month-long writing stay, Hall lived and breathed her set. "Myself and the poet Matthew Welton set ourselves the challenge of taking all the lyrics for the libretto from literature found in the hotel," she says.

"So we rummaged through menus, housekeeping instructions and maintenance lists ~ anything we could get our hands on that sparked lyrics, song and drama. For the music, we recorded singers in spaces unique to the hotel and made recordings of the sounds coming from the massive dishwasher in the kitchens and a scream recorded underwater in the swimming pool of the spa."



The Corinthia

It's not just one-off cultural events either; hotels are getting serious about their permanent art too. At 45 Park Lane, there are original works by home-grown contemporary artists such as Christian Furr and Sir Peter Blake in the bedrooms, and 16 of Damien Hirst's *Diamond Dust Psalms* series in the restaurant. This alongside a unique programme of artist-led exhibition tours, painting lessons and studio visits. Of course, the synergy between artist and hotel is not entirely new: Monet was the first artist in residence at The Savoy hotel back in 1901, a programme that continues today, although the focus now is less on international clout but local resonance.

It's a trend that's rippling outside of the capital too. Each summer, Robin Hutson's litter of Pig hotels, as well as his smarter Lime Wood, host mini music festivals Smoked and Uncut, drawing headliners such as Manchester band I am Kloot. While in Glasgow, CitizenM partners with the city's famous art school, showing a curated selection of digital artworks by graduates of the Master of Fine Art programme.

The ultimate hotel art experience, however, takes us back to the most basic of its elements: the bedroom. For London's Beaumont Hotel, the British sculptor Antony Gormley created an inhabitable artwork: a giant cuboid man-shaped *Room* crouching against the outside of the façade.

"I never envisaged the scale of his ambition," says Jeremy King, who opened the hotel with business partner Chris Corbin. He initially asked Gormley to create a work, as the City of Westminster requires that new buildings contain public art. "It was important that it wasn't gratuitous but in the end nothing could be more intrinsic to the hotel."

Inside, the metal-clad exterior is lined in dark fumed wood; the only furniture a white linen-covered bed. When you lie on it and the electric shutter whirrs shut over the sole window, very low-level lights hidden in the juts and joins allow Gormley, as he says, "to sculpt darkness".

Whether you can stay awake long enough for your eyes to adjust to the gloom or drift off in this silent cocoon is another question ~ because, just sometimes, you don't even have to stay awake to appreciate the art in today's hotels.

Fiona Kerr is features editor at Condé Nast Traveller UK



It's not just one-off cultural events either ~ hotels are getting serious about their permanent art too



AGGAINST THE GRAIN

Steeped in history and brimming with innovation, the worlds of British whisky and gin are closer than you think, writes Ian Buxton



Gin vs. whisky: it's a stand-off. On the face of things these two spirits could hardly be more different ~ one redolent of the cocktail scene, the other naturally at home in a Highland lodge by a roaring fire. But look deeper. Discerning drinkers have moved well beyond such hoary clichés, discovering deep similarities in both that make them equally the spirit of the times.

Both drinks have long and engaging back stories; both have the provenance and heritage so critical to today's consumer, and both, in their finest limited releases, are made with the attention to detail and handcrafted skill that delight and engage top bartenders, cocktail mixologists and their refined clientele.

Great Scotch whiskies such as Chivas Regal, Royal Salute and Johnnie Walker continue to set the standard for the whisky blender's art. Glenfiddich, and later Glenmorangie and The Macallan, built the single malt category virtually single-handed. Meanwhile, under the guidance of the revered malt master David Stewart, The Balvenie is exploring subtle new expressions that demonstrate its versatility and range of flavour.

Whilst these great single malts are revealing hitherto unexpected depths, through the skilful use of carefully selected casks, this little-known style of grain whisky has exploded onto the scene.



Promoted by, and in partnership with, footballer-cum-style icon David Beckham, Haig Club has introduced a new generation of consumers ~ consumers who knew they didn't like whisky ~ to a softer, sweeter-tasting variant designed to star in a range of exclusive cocktails. Grain whisky, which is made in Scotland to the demanding standards of all Scotch, has previously been used as the base of the blended brands that make up the majority of sales. However, Haig Club has brought it to a global stage and into unexpected prominence.

Meanwhile, distillers have been exploring the possibilities of limited editions that meet the refined demands of the super-premium consumer. These truly handcrafted casks are selected one by one for their individual qualities; the blending is bespoke and the presentation aims to match the superb quality of the liquid.

Take Johnnie Walker for instance. Long the global bestselling blended Scotch, it is best known for its ubiquitous Red and Black Label variants. But the line stretches far beyond this, with Blue Label, the King George V Edition, the annual Private Collection, Odyssey and the ultimate Diamond Jubilee bottling. Just 60 bottles of this exceptional whisky were ever created and from the profits, £1 million was donated to the Queen Elizabeth Scholarship Trust, which funds the world-class training of craftsmen and women in traditional skills.

The blending team at Johnnie Walker is led by Dr Jim Beveridge; modest of demeanour yet renowned for his discriminating and subtle 'nose' and legendary ability to select casks from the company's vast stocks, which form the basis for distinctive blends of unrivalled quality. And yet he does, of course, have rivals producing their own superlative limited editions.

One of the foremost is the Chivas Regal and Royal Salute master blender Colin Scott. Like Beveridge, an industry veteran of many years standing, Scott brings an understanding and sensitivity to his task that defies analysis. Here, art, science, skill and intuition come together to create timeless whiskies such as the Royal Salute Tribute to Honour, the pinnacle of the Royal Salute range. These classic creations meet the needs of a contemporary market.



So much for great whiskies. Where lies gin for today's luxury consumer? Until recently it's hard to deny that gin was fading in popularity and appeal. But it has been re-invented and today is as vibrant and fashionable as ever. That renewed appeal can mostly be attributed to two brands: Bombay Sapphire and Hendricks, which have introduced new consumers to new styles of gin ~ light, crisp and floral. A generation of small craft distillers have rapidly followed their lead and today a popular bar may have 100 or more small-batch gins gracing its shelves.



Hendricks comes from the same family distillers that produce Glenfiddich and The Balvenie so starts with impressive credentials. This is vital: being a white spirit it may appear simpler to make than whisky. But while whisky looks to the cask to contribute colour and much of its individual flavour, the gin distiller must get everything right in the still. It is a demanding discipline, all the more so when a product such as Hendricks relies on hard-to-handle ingredients such as cucumber and rose petals to deliver its distinctive taste.



The good news for gin aficionados continues. Forced to raise their game, traditional styles such as Tanqueray have been looking back through history to recreate lost varieties in exclusive limited editions. Expressions such as Tanqueray Old Tom (from an 1835 recipe); Malacca (a sweet and spicy 1839 style, developed following demand from discerning mixologists) and the citrus-led Rangpur have been greeted with excitement.

The latest is Tanqueray Bloomsbury, honouring the gin's London heritage with a hit of juniper flavour that will appeal to gin traditionalists. These exclusive bottlings provide a fresh look at provenance that satisfies the old school while reaching out to the trendy hipster.

So no stand-off then: simply the recognition that class and quality are enduring values that have timeless appeal. We can all drink to that.

Ian Buxton is an internationally renowned drinks writer, commentator and whisky specialist



TOP SPIN

Simon de Burton finds luxurious British automobiles, jets and superyachts being assembled with the same care and devotion with which they will undoubtedly be treated by their owners for decades to come



The pristine interior of the Bentley 5

When it comes to making things that take us from A to B in luxury, Britain is on a roll. From legendary marques such as Aston Martin, Bentley and Rolls-Royce, to less familiar names such as Zenos, Radical and Ariel, our home-grown prestige cars are currently drawing orders from all corners of the globe in a way that has never been seen before.



Luxury interior of the Bulldog by Ruskin Design

But it's not just cars that are attracting attention. The fortunes of Britain's motorcycle industry are also undergoing a dramatic revival, with firms like Triumph, Norton, Hesketh and, again, Ariel, making the most of a growing trend among the well-heeled to embrace a suitably high-end biking lifestyle.

Our superyacht makers and designers, meanwhile ~ including Devon's Princess Yachts, Cornwall's Pendennis Shipyard and Hampshire based Sunseeker and Redman Whiteley Dixon ~ are all enjoying international recognition from buyers around the world.

We are even making headway in the world of aircraft, both through private jet charter experts such as Victor Jets ~ which offers an almost unrivalled service in terms of cost, versatility and choice ~ and through niche manufacturers of personal planes including Cambridge-based e-Go which recently launched a £60,000 single seater aircraft with a range of 330 miles and a 90-knot cruising speed.

Another British aviation firm is currently putting the finishing touches to its fabulously retro, radial-engine autogyro aircraft. And just so there's no mistaking where it's made, it will be called the Bulldog Autogyro from www.bulldogautogyros.com.

"Anyone who is looking for a run-of-the-mill, daily car to buy as a disposable object would be wasting their time if they came looking for one in Britain," says Robert Coucher, the founder and international editor of highly respected classic and high-performance car magazine *Octane*.



The classically styled Bulldog autogyro

"But this is probably the first place anyone thinks of when they go in search of a car that's hand-built, offers an exceptional level of luxury or performance and which is made to last ~ and that's because we have become renowned as a centre of automotive craftsmanship, be that for the hand-stitched interiors of a bespoke Rolls-Royce, the traditional build of a Morgan or the high-tech design of a Jaguar or Aston Martin.

"The simple fact is, buyers from around the world regard British-built automobiles as being rich in heritage, exclusive, special and statement-making ~ and also likely to hold their value in a way that the cars from many other countries simply don't."

Indeed, the revival enjoyed by names such as Aston Martin, Rolls-Royce, Morgan and Caterham which has taken place over the past 10 years, has had a knock-on effect in the pre-owned market by raising profiles and encouraging enthusiasts to embrace the histories of such makers.

The result is that the values of classic Aston Martins, for example, have soared in recent years, so lending weight to the marque's investment value. Especially sought-after models such as the DB5 of the 1960s (famous as James Bond's car of choice) regularly achieve in excess of £400,000 at auction while, at one of its annual Aston-only auctions, Bonhams sold the unique 1960 DB4GT 'Jet' Coupe for a staggering £3.2 million.

Aston Martin's headquarters in Warwickshire, England



The cutting-edge single seat e-Go aircraft



Mëtisse MK 5 Caf  Racer

The British motorcycle revival, meanwhile, is being led by the Triumph marque which is set for additional success with the launch of its new, five-family Bonneville model. It brings one of motorcycling's most famous names into the 21st century with an all-new, water-cooled engine and a vast range of accessories and customising parts designed to capitalise on the ongoing trend for truly individual-looking machines.

And for riders who demand something really different, there are numerous niche makers based in Britain currently delivering motorcycles all around the world. Among these is Norton, which has been revived by entrepreneur Stuart Garner who builds his £15,000 Commando models in the grounds of Donington Hall in Derbyshire.

Then there is Hesketh, which was brought back to life in 2010 by British engineer and entrepreneur Paul Sleeman and whose factory in Redhill, Surrey, builds the limited edition 24 models costing £35,000 apiece. Meanwhile, the aforementioned Ariel recently launched its £20,000, Honda-powered Ace model that is capable of more than 160 mph.

Equally exclusive is the new Mëtisse MK 5, a motorcycle designed and built in-house in rural Oxfordshire by a man called Gerry Lisi, who acquired the celebrated Mëtisse name more

than a decade ago. The MK 5 is powered by a bespoke, 1,000 cc engine designed in conjunction with former Formula One engineer Tim Baker and is available in normal guise or caf  racer and street scrambler variants.

"I realised from the outset that, for Mëtisse to survive, we were going to have to design and build our own engine," explains Lisi.

"It has taken nearly 10 years to do it because, if someone is going to pay an entry price of £30,000 for a motorcycle, it needs to be right ~ and to get it right means careful design and considerable investment. We believe we're there now, and the aim is to produce 30 or 40 MK 5 bikes a year for high-end buyers."

Lisi goes on to say, "I have had enquiries from around the world from enthusiasts who love the idea of

anything which is truly made in Britain. Although our motorcycle industry did enter the doldrums somewhat during the 1970s and 1980s, it has never lost the reputation for excellence and imaginative design that was built up during the previous half-century or so. People remember that, and if they see a high quality, British-built motorcycle, they seem to want to own it."

Simon de Burton is a contributing editor on *How To Spend It* magazine and a seasoned freelance writer and author

When it comes to making luxury objects ~ Britain is on a roll



W A L P O L E

A unique alliance of Britain's luxury brands.

The world's love affair with Britain's luxury brands shows no signs of abating, and Walpole's 170 members – including Alexander McQueen, Boodles, Charlotte Olympia, Dunhill, Ettinger, Garrard, Jo Malone London, Mulberry, Selfridges and Rolls-Royce – have never been more valued or desired.

Walpole promotes, protects and develops the unique qualities of UK luxury: the long tradition, rich heritage, superior craftsmanship, innovation, design, style, and impeccable service at the heart of the industry, which is a leading creator of jobs and currently worth over £32 billion to the UK economy.

Dedicated to nurturing the next generation of Britain's luxury brands, Walpole also runs the annual mentoring programmes Brands of Tomorrow, Crafted and the Programme in Luxury Management at London Business School. These initiatives connect Britain's most talented up-and-coming entrepreneurs, craftsmen and leaders with a network of senior mentors from Walpole's established membership.

For more information on becoming a member of Walpole, to become a corporate partner, discuss sponsorship opportunities, or to apply for our Crafted or Brands of Tomorrow programmes, please email yearbook@walpolebritishluxury.co.uk

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