

EXQUISITE CRAFTSMANSHIP

MADE BY HAND

TRADITIONAL TECHNIQUES are used to cut leather at Gladstone in London, which celebrates Britain's design heritage.

CRAFTSMANSHIP

Around the Globe

LONDON, TOKYO AND DETROIT COULDN'T BE MORE DIFFERENT, BUT THESE THREE CITIES HAVE ONE THING IN COMMON: THEY ARE HOME TO ARTISANS WHO ARE EMBRACING EXQUISITE CRAFTSMANSHIP AND RETHINKING THE PRODUCTS YOU USE EVERY DAY TO THE FOOD YOU EAT TO THE SPACES AROUND YOU.

by Shane Mitchell

Craftsmanship, like creativity itself, expresses itself through the imagination and hands of skilled artisans, who may dedicate years perfecting a single technique, playful flourish or use of materials that could transform a craft dating back centuries. Or one that barely existed yesterday. Here, we spin the globe and explore three cities that encourage and inspire their own mothers (and

fathers) of invention, manifesting artistry in the worlds of fashion, functional objects, architecture and food. There's London, the British capital that's home to generations of bespoke tailors, furniture makers and milliners; Tokyo, the Asian metropolis where futuristic designers of everything from jewelry to food are reinterpreting traditional Japanese culture; and Detroit, a city built on manufacturing that is witnessing a resurgence in the creation of everyday works of art.

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CULINARY CREATIVITY

Working magic at Aulis, a small but powerful food innovation lab at London's Claridge's Hotel.

LONDON

WHERE BESPOKE DESIGN IS PUTTING A PERSONAL FLOURISH ON EVERYTHING AROUND YOU

London is synonymous with craftsmanship by prestigious houses with royal warrants that have been fashioning wares for centuries of aristocratic patrons, as well as brash leaders of the Cool Britannia movement. Bespoke can be applied to humble household goods and grand flights of fashionable fancy.

Sometimes, even royalty gets in on the act. David Armstrong-Jones, a.k.a. Viscount Linley (davidlinley.com), is both a member of Britain's royal family and a talented creator of interior décor and objet d'art. In 1985, Linley opened a workshop above a fish-and-chip restaurant. From this modest beginning, his studio has grown to produce bespoke carpets and home accessories. Walk into his flagship store on Piccadilly Road, and you will be tempted by sleek skateboards laser-etched with images of London's skyline and furniture with intricate marquetry and secret drawers. "We apply exactly the same principles of tailoring and engineering in interior design as we do to creating individual items of furniture," says Linley.

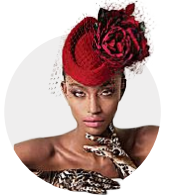
Entering the studio of hat designer Philip Treacy (philiptreacy.co.uk) is like opening a door to Wonderland, filled with feathers and wooden forms hand-carved by one of the remaining masters of millinery. Each commission begins with a private fitting, then Treacy sets to work crafting a singular piece of art to wear atop your head. He has created women's hats resembling swarms of butterflies and dashing trilbys for gentlemen. The final

hat—ensconced in a hot pink box emblazoned with his unicorn crest—is delivered to your palace. Or palace hotel.

While London's East End is not a neighborhood usually associated with custom haberdashery, it has been home to Drake's (drakes.com) since 1977, when it began producing sumptuous scarves and shawls for high-end tailoring houses and boutiques. At the small factory shop on aptly named Haberdasher Street, the knowledgeable staff will help you select fabrics for elegant made-to-order ties. Or you can visit the Clifford Street branch to be measured for their equally stylish range of bespoke shirts.

At Gladstone (gladstonelondon.com), founder John O'Sullivan embraces contemporary aesthetics while honoring the craftsmanship of the golden era of leather artisans. "I felt both the narrative and skills of older craftsmen, who were being retired, needed to be preserved," says O'Sullivan, who finds inspiration for his designs by scouring antique markets and vintage bookstalls. His G14 bike bag is based on a WWII officer's map bag. The G23 "Angelitos" backpack pays homage to old military kits.

In London, bespoke craftsmanship even extends to its food. At Fera (feratclaridges.co.uk), an art-deco dining room at Claridge's Hotel, chef Simon Rogan revives little-known British ingredients. Fera means wild in Latin; the menus are inspired by ingredients sourced at Rogan's own farm in the Lake District. He recently added Aulis, a six-seat research lab that serves guests a tasting menu based on whatever whimsy is invented in the chef's study directly upstairs. A waiter will deliver a perfectly plated dish of raw scallop, perhaps followed by stout ice cream. You not only go away sated but also informed about the culinary history of the British Isles.



HATS AS HIGH ART IN LONDON

Haute-couture milliner Philip Treacy creates fascinators that have been worn by everyone from European aristocracy to Hollywood starlets.



HANDSOME AND HANDCRAFTED

At Linley, the bespoke furniture is made following the same principles as clothes tailoring.