

THE LITTLE BLACK BOOK OF London fabric shops

WITH A GROWING NUMBER OF EMPORIUMS, THE CAPITAL'S FINEST CLOTH SHOPS ALLOW YOU TO EXPLORE AND BE CARRIED AWAY BY PATTERNS, TEXTURES AND COLOURS, WRITES **ARABELLA YOUENS**



TICKING ALL THE BOXES
Main image: This living room is decked out in Designer's Guild's verdant Karakusa print in Emerald from the new Ikebana collection Opposite, clockwise from top: Blue Ikat by Susie Atkinson; Phoebe voile by Penny Morrison; new shades added to Rose Uniacke's fabric range; a Mayfair boutique hotel bedroom designed by Juliette Byrne; Bernie De Le Cuona's latest fabric collection; Thick Stripe in Charcoal and Red by Susie Atkinson



The fabric-buying experience in the capital is book-ended by the two great destinations: Pimlico Road and the Design Centre, Chelsea Harbour – and there's plenty to explore in between. As the result of recent investment by Grosvenor Estates, the former has become a leading destination of high-end interior design and antique showrooms. Meanwhile, the latter is the largest of its kind in Europe. The choices are as enormous as they are daunting, which is where the expert eyes of interior designers are so often required to help curate ideas.

PRINTS, STRIPES AND WEAVES

Robert Kime (190-192 Ebury Street, SW1) remains one of the most respected names in decorating and antique dealing. The Pimlico Road shop of the late decorator to King Charles is the best place to view his trove of fabric designs which are favourites with interior designers. Lucy Cunningham recently mixed and matched a number of his stripes for a project across a sofa, armchair and ottoman with great success. "They blend and work so well together," she says. Meanwhile, Henriette von Stockhausen, creative director of VSP Interiors, believes it's almost impossible to go wrong with any of his small-scale designs: in her words, "They're brilliant". robertkime.com

Howe (36 Bourne Street, SW1) is also a firm favourite among decorators, thanks to its nostalgic collection of prints and dependable collection of tickings. howelondon.com

Nearby is Lulu Lytle's **Soane** (50-52 Pimlico Road) where the fabrics are all inspired by the motifs and colours found in Eastern Mediterranean and North African fabrics. Elephantine, a scaled chevron repeat, and the Scrolling Fern print are two designs recommended by Kate Guinness. soane.co.uk

For a more off-beat interior look, the Anglo-Swedish designer **Beata Heuman** (188 Hammersmith Road, W6) continues to expand her own lively range of prints, checks and vertical patterns; she's just added Nettle to her eclectic range. beataheuman.com

CONTEMPORARY AND TRANSITIONAL

Designer's Guild (267-277 Kings Road, SW3) is a London decorating legend. In business for over 50 years, it specialises in the design and wholesale of fabrics and wallcoverings under the helm of the vibrant Tricia Guild. This year's spring/summer collection is called Ikebana, which means flower arrangement in Japanese. "I love the symbolism behind it – heaven, earth and humanity," explains Guild. designersguild.com

Nicola Harding, who's soon to launch her own range of fabrics woven in the UK with linen and cotton, cites **Vanderhurd** (17 Portobello Road, W11) as one of her most regular haunts. "Christine's tailored designs and geometric prints have a feminine twist, and she has an exquisite flair for colour," she explains. "Various prints are overworked with stitching for a particularly special

