

*London's
top*

TASTEMAKERS

*From photographers and perfumers to design experts and world-renowned chefs,
London is bursting with talented contributors to the city's luxury industry.
We celebrate 20 of the most important names to know right now*



CLAIRE ADLER

For advice on fine jewellery and watches, Claire Adler is one of London's leading experts. A regular contributor to the *Financial Times*, she consults for a number of clients including De Beers, London Luxury Quarter, Montblanc and Piaget. Aside from her consultancy work, Adler pens in-depth reports and is a regular speaker at some of the city's most popular forums, including Walpole British Luxury and International Jewellery London. Underpinning all of this is Adler's love for the products she specialises in and her admiration for the industry figures she writes about. "It's inspiring to meet ambitious, creative people who believe in their art, to witness their commitment to being the best while executing their craft impeccably," explains Adler.

At the heart of this passion for luxury sits London, a city that Adler feels occupies a prestigious position in the global market. "London excels in its mix of global luxury houses and lesser-known brands," says Adler. "The city is now the third largest market for luxury goods in the world, with a luxury sector worth £32.2 billion according to Walpole." A large part of this success can be attributed to the number of exciting British brands that are flourishing in the capital. "Sixth-generation family-owned British jeweller Boodles has recently doubled the size of its Bond Street store," explains Adler. "Bremont, which manufactures its watch parts in Silverstone, Northamptonshire, is also in expansion mode, having opened a boutique in New York last year."

The success of London's luxury scene also attracts talent from overseas. "Nourbel & Le Cavalier, owned by a Swiss and Lebanese duo, has a beautiful boutique in Mayfair's Burlington Arcade, and Star Diamond, founded by partners from Belgium and Armenia, also owns a discreet appointment-only

gallery on Dover Street," continues Adler. Although the luxury sector is not without its challenges, in the form of a Chinese economic slowdown and currency fluctuations, Adler feels the market is in good shape. "The outlook is good for global luxury goods," she confirms. "According to Euromonitor International, sales are forecast to soar from \$317 billion in 2015 to \$339 billion in 2020. An appetite for sumptuous bags means the leather goods industry is the fastest growing category of luxury worldwide, and online sales are also booming, meaning high-end brands are now looking to recruit digital talent, such as Ian Rogers – a former Apple executive who is now chief digital officer at LVMH." For Adler, the lure of luxury remains eternal: "There's nothing quite like the rush that comes with seeing something gorgeous and knowing somewhere inside you that you simply have to have it," she concludes.

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CHRIS CORBIN & JEREMY KING

In an arena as competitive as London dining, where countless venues open and shut within a year, Chris Corbin and Jeremy King's hugely successful 35-year career masterminding restaurants is even more remarkable. Having first met in 1981, the pair forged their partnership with the purchase of their first acquisition Le Caprice, followed by The Ivy in 1990, transforming the run-down Theatreland favourite into one of London's most famous restaurants. After *Harden's Guide* voted The Ivy Favourite London Restaurant for nine consecutive years, the pair sensed the need for a new challenge, selling off their company Caprice Holdings and transforming a former bank into The Wolseley – which went on to achieve the highest-grossing turnover of any individual restaurant in the UK.

Several decades on, Corbin and King's ambitious portfolio continues to expand, with popular restaurants such as Viennese-style Fischer's, all-day café The Delaunay and, most recently, Alsatian-style brasserie Bellanger. The pair's recipe for success is simple but effective: "A flexible, interesting menu of well-cooked food with wide appeal, a democratic approach to pricing that creates a mix of customers and an environment that people feel recognised and

comfortable in," says King. For the restaurateurs, the capital is also the key contributor to their success: "London is a city of immigrants and this has so many positive benefits," explains King. "It opens us up to different cultures and cuisines and it means we attract chefs from all over the world who bring new ideas and different ways of working. We also have a sophisticated customer base that is used to going out and wants to try new things – meaning London has a vibrant, sustainable, enduring restaurant scene."

The city's changing landscape also informs the direction of Corbin and King's portfolio: "As the centre of London becomes more expensive for the people who live and work full time in the city, local restaurants are becoming increasingly important," explains King. "We have echoed this in our moves to Chelsea, Marylebone village and now Islington. The quality of local restaurants is improving all the time – customers want personal connections with the restaurants they frequent." Despite the fast pace of change in London's dining scene, King believes the best can endure. "Over the past 30 years, famous chefs have come and gone and restaurants have opened and closed," he explains. "What I am most interested in, and what continues to endure, is those restaurants run by the truly passionate – the people who aim to give the customer a good time and do not view them as merely a source of income."





BEN EVANS

As director of the London Design Festival (LDF) and executive director of September's inaugural London Design Biennale, Ben Evans is one of the most powerful voices on London's design scene. Having studied history of design at the Royal College of Art, Evans took a detour into political speech writing, helping pen the UK's first design policy, before teaming up with Sir John Sorrell to create the LDF. What started as a few unofficial events across the city has developed, 13 years later, into one of the world's most influential design festivals. "London is a leader in this field," explains Evans. "Since we started, more than 100 cities have created their own design-related events, but we and Milan are still by far the biggest and best design events in the world."

For Evans, London's rich history makes it the perfect host: "Ever since The Great Exhibition of 1851, we've had a presence in design," he says. "However, in the past couple of generations, the creative industries have become an important part of the London economy and design has been at the centre of that." Evans has also noticed that the public has become more design-literate. "When we started the festival, we assumed our core audience would be design professionals, but I quickly realised that the

biggest audience by far was the design-interested public. We have seen a sea change in the confidence and understanding of the design consumer." He continues: "The micro-businesses at the festival tell us that the people commissioning them to produce works or take on projects are enlightened members of the public – not just companies."

With increased interest from the public, some interesting developments have emerged on the design scene: "I think a broader interest in materials is remaining very popular in design," he says. "Another trend is the integration of new technologies. Material companies are changing how technology is available to us." Several London-based designers are spearheading this innovation: "Barber & Osgerby is one of the most important design companies in the UK because it has an increasing influence on our daily lives," explains Evans. "Max Lamb is also producing some great work – he's very interested in nature and materials and he created a circle of chairs that was the best thing in Milan last year."

For Evans, this strong wave of design innovation links closely to the luxury market. "Luxury for me is a refined view – a mixture of craftsmanship and quality materials," he says. "My personal preference is for a much simpler aesthetic, which is quite hard to do. If you can get that right, with the highest level of craftsmanship and materials, then that is the height of luxury. I don't think something can be luxurious if design isn't integrated within it."

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LIVIA FIRTH

For the fashion industry, the tragic Rana Plaza factory collapse in Bangladesh in 2013 represented a turning point in the spending habits of consumers. Following the shocking disaster, customers started to ask questions about where products are made and their ethical and sustainable credentials. Leading this new wave of conscious consumerism is Livia Firth – wife of actor Colin, Oxfam Global Ambassador and founder of Eco-Age, a brand consultancy helping luxury labels add value to their products by becoming more sustainably minded. So far Eco-Age has worked on a number of prestigious projects with well-known brands such as Chopard, collaborating to create the Palme Verte collection – Chopard's first diffusion line made with 18-carat Fairmined gold bought from artisanal and small-scale miners certified under the Fairmined standard.

In September 2015, Eco-Age also collaborated with fashion house Erdem to create a Green Carpet Collection made from reused, surplus or sustainably certified materials, while Livia and her husband continue to promote sustainable fashion by sporting it themselves at red-carpet events, as well as encouraging celebrity friends to do the same. For Firth, those in the luxury sector play a key role in the growth of sustainable fashion. "The luxury market can lead the way, showing examples of how to work at supply-chain level," she explains. "What the Kering group has achieved is particularly impressive – my hat goes off to CEO Mr François-Henri Pinault. The fact that Kering recently published its environmental profit-and-loss report is groundbreaking."

On top of the environmental and ethical benefits, Firth believes that buying sustainably fits well with the luxury ethos, which promotes buying well-made, high-quality items in a considered way. "The problem is that today we buy at an ever faster pace because fashion is so cheap," says Firth. "We don't think twice about buying something which we then discard quickly. Sustainable fashion is about buying things we care about, instead of on impulse." Eco-Age's 30 Wears campaign reflects this philosophy, encouraging fashion lovers to only purchase pieces they will want to wear at least 30 times. "There is a beautiful concept that Amanda Harlech (muse to Karl Lagerfeld) uses called 'fashion memory,'" explains Firth. "It means that everything we have in our wardrobes should have a memory of when we bought it and why, of when we wore it for the first time – was it that first kiss? Or when I danced all night at that beautiful party?" Firth believes that with a wardrobe full of treasured purchases, we can begin to value the hard work and resources that are required to create the luxury fashion we love.

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MARK HENDERSON



Chairman of Gieves & Hawkes and instrumental in the founding of Savile Row Bespoke – an organisation that promotes and protects the handcrafting skills of the tailors of Savile Row – Mark Henderson is a proud proponent of handcrafted luxury. “London has been one of the world’s great luxury markets for a long time,” he explains. “Bond Street, Savile Row and the reputation of Mayfair and St. James’s go right back to the 18th century. For me, Mayfair is the epicentre – there’s nowhere else that offers the same excitement, beauty and choice in a sophisticated urban environment.”

Alongside its heritage, Henderson considers the talent of London’s highly-skilled craftspeople to be one of the city’s greatest strengths. “London boasts some exceptional craftsmanship, witnessed by the City Livery Companies that are rooted in craft,” he says. “The Goldsmiths, The Merchant Tailors, The Cordwainers, all retain links that go back in some cases for a thousand years.”

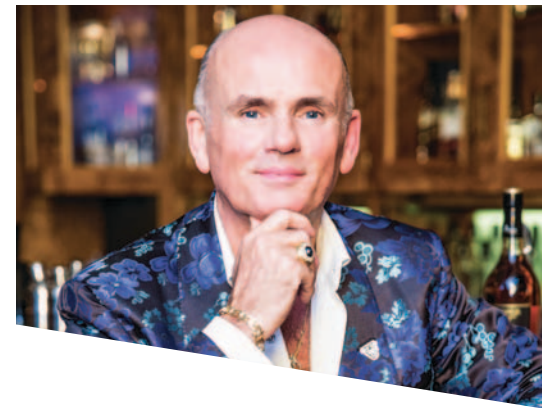
Most recently, Henderson cemented his commitment to supporting British craftspeople with the launch of The New Craftsmen in 2012 – a Mayfair shop selling furniture, ceramics, home accessories and lighting created by Britain’s most talented artisans. “I think craftsmanship is one of the most attractive aspects of the luxury market,” Henderson explains. “And by craftsmanship, I mean mastery of material. It offers two things – enormous satisfaction for the customer

and, to me crucially, satisfaction for the maker. London remains one of the world’s great craft hubs and London Craft Week in May is a great opportunity to celebrate these talents.”

Naturally, Henderson is an authority on London’s best luxury makers: “I love Michael Ruh’s hand-blown glassware, Sebastian Cox and Gareth Neal’s furniture and Ruth Tomlinson’s beautiful jewellery,” says Henderson. “In terms of brands, I also think what Jason Basmajian has done for Gieves & Hawkes has been world class, and I love that Bremont makes timepieces in England.” He continues: “For menswear, James Brown is doing a great job at Hostem, Trunk in Marylebone is fun and I’ve got great admiration for Nick Ashley and Private White V.C. Patrick Grant is also doing a great job with E. Tautz.”

Despite these successes, Henderson still believes that there is room for progress. “I would like to see a real embracing of ethics in luxury. Underlining what we do in the luxury industry should be the concept of beautifully made, carefully designed and ethically sourced products – something of lasting value. I feel the British understand and like that sort of value – and that’s why we are very well placed to build on it.”

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JASON ATHERTON

One of the hottest names on London’s luxury dining scene, Atherton was the first British chef to complete a stage at Spain’s prestigious elBulli restaurant. From there he honed his skills under Gordon Ramsay, before opening Pollen Street Social in 2011. Within six months the restaurant had scooped a Michelin star, and a family of celebrated venues followed, including Little Social, Berners Tavern and Typing Room. Atherton’s latest project, Sosharu – launching this March – promises casual yet refined Japanese cuisine that incorporates seasonal British ingredients.

WILLIAM BANKS-BLANEY

Crowned “The Vintage King” by *Vogue*, Banks-Blaney is the expert behind WilliamVintage – a world-leading destination for high-end vintage fashion. Banks-Blaney’s boutique boasts a diverse stock of vintage gems, featuring everything from a 1970s YSL feather-collared cape to a 1950s Dior cocktail dress. Counting Rihanna and Victoria Beckham among his clientele, Banks-Blaney has recently launched a capsule collection in collaboration with Liberty and plans to move WilliamVintage to a bigger location this year, with plenty of room for more couture gems.

TOBY BATEMAN

Recently appointed managing director of Mr. Porter, Toby Bateman is a crucial tastemaker in the world of men’s fashion. Having worked for the online retail platform since 2010, Bateman has been responsible for the addition of more than 270 brands to the portal’s roster. Earlier this year, Bateman oversaw a popular collaboration with Japanese lifestyle store BEAMS,

featuring six exclusive collections. On top of this, Bateman is heading up plans for a capsule collection to celebrate Mr. Porter’s fifth birthday.

ED BURSTELL

Starting his career as a perfume spritzer at Macy’s in New York, Ed Burstell worked at almost every layer of the retail industry before rising to the role of managing director of Liberty. Burstell joined the company in 2008 as buying director and breathed new life into the department store by introducing young British designers such as Peter Pilotto and Mary Katrantzou, as well as spearheading a number of collaborations with brands such as Levi’s, Barbour and Nike. Having celebrated its 140th anniversary in 2015, Liberty continues to champion dynamic contemporary designers and set a benchmark for retail in the city.

ROJA DOVE

Having clocked up 35 years in the industry, Roja Dove is one of London’s leading fragrance specialists. Dove began his career with a 20-year stint at Guerlain, before opening his own Haute Parfumerie in Harrods. Before long, customers were requesting bespoke perfumes from Dove himself, which soon evolved into Dove’s own fragrance range, Roja Parfums. Dove recently achieved a brand milestone, opening his first standalone boutique in Mayfair’s Burlington Arcade, featuring two floors of fragrances and a private consultation space.

LORD BRUCE DUNDAS

An expert in luxury brands, Dundas has 35 years' experience in the industry, working in roles such as managing director of Harry Winston and Asprey, as well as co-founding jewellery brand Theo Fennell. Currently, Dundas serves as managing director of Buccellati as well as chairman of the Bond Street Association – a crucial voice on London's luxury scene, founded to represent the interests of high-end retailers and businesses in Bond Street. Lately, Dundas has been working with the association to bring important improvements to the street, as well as overseeing sponsorship of Brown's London Art Weekend.

MARC HARE

Born and bred in London, Marc Hare enjoyed a successful career in marketing for brands such as Nike, Adidas and Levi's before the idea for his own shoe brand struck him in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada mountains. Just one year later, Mr. Hare shoes debuted on the shopfloor of Dover Street Market, and the brand has since become a benchmark for quality footwear with character. Hare now plans further growth for the brand, with the opening of a West London HQ and design studio for private appointments.

NICK KNIGHT OBE

Photographer Nick Knight has been at the cutting edge of the fashion industry for three decades, producing award-winning editorials for magazines including

Vogue, *Dazed* and *i-D*, as well as iconic images for brands such as Christian Dior, Saint Laurent and Tom Ford. In 2000, Knight launched fashion website SHOWstudio with the aim of "showing the entire creative process from conception to completion". In October last year, Knight announced that 2016 would mark the launch of the inaugural SHOWstudio Fashion Film Awards, open to filmmakers across the globe. Most recently, Knight received the Isabella Blow Award for Fashion Creator at the British Fashion Awards.

NATALIE MASSENET MBE

Founder of fashion giant Net-A-Porter and chairman of the British Fashion Council, Natalie Massenet is a hugely influential voice in retail. Starting out working as a journalist at *Tatler*, Massenet hit upon the idea of a magazine-style website offering designer fashion and founded her now famous e-tailer in 2000. Having recently set up Imaginary Ventures Ltd following Net-A-Porter's merger with YOOX Group, Massenet continues her work with the British Fashion Council, bringing homegrown fashion talent to the global stage.

MUNIRA MIRZA

Prior to her appointment as London's deputy mayor for education and culture, Mirza worked for a range of cultural and charitable organisations including the Royal Society of Arts, independent think-tank Policy Exchange and Tate. Since then she has played a crucial role in shaping the city's cultural landscape, writing extensively about cultural and social policy in the UK. Mirza also sits on the board of the Institute of Contemporary Art and led the Cultural Olympiad as part of the London 2012 Summer Olympic Games.



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SAM PRATT AND VALERIO CAPO

Established in 2008 by Pratt and Capo, Gallery FUMI is an appointment-only design emporium selling high-end contemporary pieces with unique flair. Limited-edition and one-off pieces make up much of the stock, snapped up by interior designers and members of the public alike. This year promises to be a busy one for Gallery FUMI, with a trip to PAD Paris at the start of the year followed by Design Miami and Basel in June as well as the London Design Festival in September, with plenty more in between.

MARTIN ROTH

Martin Roth has worked as director of the Victoria and Albert Museum since 2011 and is closely involved in spearheading solutions to make the V&A's world-class reserve collections as accessible as possible. In addition to this, Roth is also heading up several groundbreaking new projects including the creation of a V&A museum in Scotland, and another in the capital's Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park.

CAROLINE RUSH CBE

Following a successful career in marketing and PR, and five years managing her own business, Caroline Rush was appointed chief executive of the British Fashion Council (BFC) in 2009. Under her guidance, the BFC has undertaken a number of groundbreaking projects, including the launch of London Collections Men – Britain's only biannual menswear showcase – as well

as various initiatives to support outstanding talent in the fields of millinery, jewellery and fashion design.

SIR JOHN SORRELL

From humble beginnings as the son of a London milkman, Sir John Sorrell has built an impressive career in design, working as chair of the Design Council as well as founding the London Design Festival and The Sorrell Foundation – which inspires creativity in young people through classes in everything from architecture to glassblowing and photography. Sorrell has recently been appointed president of the inaugural London Design Biennale, launching at Somerset House this September. The theme Utopia by Design will offer the chance to view installations and exhibitions from 40 different nations.

GILES TAYLOR

As one of the world's most famous motoring brands, Rolls-Royce sets a precedent for motoring innovation in the luxury market. Design director Giles Taylor clocked up 20 years' design experience in the automotive field before taking up the mantle at Rolls-Royce, and today he spearheads the brand's artistic development. So far he has been responsible for the launch of Wraith, featuring the brand's most powerful engine, as well as Dawn – an open-top model with an interior handcrafted from wood and leather.