

The International Magazine for Luxury Fabrics, Yarns and Fibres

Twist

Issue 20
April 2010

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Coming home

An innovative display of Yorkshire fabric at the upmarket department store Harvey Nichols in Leeds is set to lift awareness within the region and elsewhere of the exceptional quality of the area's luxury cloth. Here, Jonathan Dyson tells the story behind the project, and on pages 32-35, we present a collaborative photoshoot involving Twist and Harvey Nichols marking the launch of the display.

Yorkshire's fabric industry - which produces the majority of England's worsted and woollen cloth - now has evidence on its own doorstep of the growing interest in the story behind luxury products. A new themed in-store display at Harvey Nichols - one of the UK's leading luxury department stores - in Leeds, West Yorkshire highlights the heritage, design, innovation and exceptional quality offered by the region's mills.

As reported in Twist January, the project has been inspired by a collaboration between Leeds Fashion Works - an initiative formed in 2009 aimed at linking textiles, retail, fashion, design, education and training opportunities in the Leeds City Region,

as well as fostering partnerships for Yorkshire textile companies across the UK and overseas - and Brian Handley, general manager at Harvey Nichols Leeds, and himself one of the numerous high-profile supporters of Leeds Fashion Works.

The display was completed at the end of March, and will run for several months. The aims of the project are to lift awareness of Yorkshire's fabric mills among consumers within the Yorkshire region; to increase awareness elsewhere, through national and international media coverage; enhance the status of Yorkshire cloth through brand association with Harvey Nichols; and create an engaging and enlightening customer experience for visitors to the Harvey Nichols Leeds store. Harvey Nichols is renowned across all its stores for its imaginative and eye-catching displays. The Leeds store attracts an average of 25,000 visitors each week.

The mills involved in the project are Alfred Brown, Arthur Harrison, Hainsworth, Bower Roebuck, Edwin Woodhouse, John Cavendish, John Foster, Joseph H Clissold, Abraham Moon, Savile Clifford and Taylor & Lodge. The Sunny Bank Mills



Meeting of minds

The story behind the Twist / Harvey Nichols photoshoot

The collaborative photoshoot involving Twist and Harvey Nichols (pages 32-35) marries the themes of quality, innovation, creativity and luxury that are common to Yorkshire's fabric mills, Harvey Nichols, and Twist, and also captures the mills' unique heritage. The shoot took place inside the mill at Bower Roebuck, near Huddersfield. Located deep in the West Yorkshire Pennines, and overlooked by craggy fells, Bower Roebuck produces luxury fabrics made by a loyal team of staff in a family atmosphere, using the latest in modern technology and production management (see pages 40-41). The shoot captures some of the key parts of the production process, from the preparation of threads prior to warping, through to the checking and mending of the fabric, and brings together classic fabrics with contemporary fashion and bright colours. The clothes are taken from Harvey Nichols Leeds' spring/summer 2010 collection.

Warp preparation interpreted in bright colours. Photograph by Sandis Kajins.

Textile Archive, as presented by Susan Gaunt, an independent textile designer, is also featured in the display. The fabric companies have joined together to create the collective brand Yorkshire Textiles in conjunction with the launch of the project.

The theme of Yorkshire fabric runs across all four floors of the Harvey Nichols store, with large bolts of cloth draping either side of the elevators that take customers up and down each floor, special fitting room curtains created using Yorkshire fabric, and many other innovative uses of Yorkshire cloth, as well as a modern and artistic take on some of the manufacturing processes that go into the making of the fabric. The display allows visitors to experience not only the exceptional appearance of Yorkshire fabric, but also its luxurious handle and finish.

Brian Handley, general manager at Harvey Nichols Leeds, explains that the display originally came about by chance: "In our top-floor restaurant, one lunchtime last year, I overheard Suzy Shepherd [one of the co-founders of Leeds Fashion Works] talking about how they wanted to promote Yorkshire's textile mills, and I told her that we could help with that, and that's really where the idea for the display started."

Harvey Nichols Leeds was keen to support the mills as much as possible through the in-store display, as Handley explains: "The quality and heritage of the mills is something that we should be aware of in the region, and be extremely proud of. It's a very important message to get across. The perception in Yorkshire today is that all textiles come from elsewhere."

'Harvey Nichols Leeds attracts an average of 25,000 visitors each week'

Handley drew great inspiration from visiting the mills involved. "I got a lot out of this personally - I gained a much greater understanding of what goes into producing the fabric," he says. "Looking round the mills, you can see why they've survived - they're very specialised, and have become the top in their industry. They are extremely passionate about what they do, and the list of brands that the mills supply is like a shopping list of brands that any store would be proud of - we stock most of these brands. The diversity of Yorkshire fabric is outstanding, ranging from fine suiting fabrics to snooker table cloths. I was also struck by the modern technology, particularly the sheer speed of the looms."

Members of the Harvey Nichols Leeds display team, led by display manager Andy Berrington, also visited the mills - and were equally inspired - and Handley says that he also plans to ensure staff in the Harvey Nichols mens tailoring and womens fashion departments visit some of the fabric



A cloud effect created by fabric swatches. Photograph by Sandis Kajins.



Surplus green wool felt for pianos from Hainsworth. The holes are created when the piano washers are punched out. Photograph by Sandis Kajins.



YORKSHIRE TEXTILES

The logo used for the Yorkshire Textiles collective brand that has been created alongside the launch of the display.

companies involved in the project. "This education leads to more understanding among the staff in store, which they can then pass on to the consumer," explains Handley. "This is particularly important with customers becoming more and more questioning about luxury products, and showing greater interest in authentic quality, provenance and craftsmanship."

Established during the Industrial Revolution, Yorkshire's weaving industry has long set the benchmark for high-quality Made in England cloth, and the region's fabric is used by many of the world's great fashion brands, high-end retailers and tailors, such as Gucci, Dolce & Gabbana, Prada, Burberry, Paul Smith, Etro, Hugo Boss, and on London's Savile Row. Key markets include Japan, Korea, Italy, the Middle East, US and UK. ●



Photography and art direction:
Elizia Volkmann
Stylists: Maria Stylianou of Harvey
Nichols Leeds, and Gemma Winter
Hair and make up: Samantha Myers
1st assistant: Julius Beltrame
2nd assistant: Trafford Parsons
Model: Yvonne Heinemann from
Bookings Models, London
Retouch artist: Simon Daniels of
Colour Curve
Clothes from Harvey Nichols Leeds
Location: Bower Roebuck, near
Huddersfield, West Yorkshire

In Bower Roebuck's warp preparation
area, the model wears an orange silk
dress by Lanvin with sophisticated
draping of cowled snood by stylist
Gemma Winter using a Bower
Roebuck design blanket, and
accessorised with classic nude
patent leather Christian Louboutin
high-heeled pumps and Lanvin gold
chain necklace, all from Harvey
Nichols Leeds.



Wearing a Diane von Furstenberg swimsuit in hot coral red and electric blue leopard print teamed with luxurious bejewelled sunglasses by Bulgari, all available at Harvey Nichols, the model drapes a royal blue Super 150's / cashmere Lapis Lazuli suiting fabric, woven by Bower Roebuck for the iconic cloth label Scabal. Shot in the warping department at Bower Roebuck.



Lanvin orange silk dress, and Lanvin gold chain necklace, both from Harvey Nichols Leeds, with a snood draped and arranged by stylist Gemma Winter made from a Bower Roebuck design blanket, showing new seasons colours for suiting cloths. The shot was taken at the Bower Roebuck mill, in front of a traditional warp creel where threads are prepared prior to warping.



In the mending room at Bower Roebuck, bales of fabric wait to be checked and mended by an expert team of ladies. The model is draped over a cart of unfinished woven fabric, wearing a House of Holland denim dress for Levi's, over an American Retro black lacy top, Wolford black and gold studded leggings, with gold Lanvin accessories and Nicole Farhi bangles, all from Harvey Nichols Leeds.