

CLASSIC DRIVER



Shop there

22 October 2004 | Classic Driver

Asprey



In the Beatles film "Help!" in 1965, John Lennon managed to spend £8,000 in two minutes. The only place he could have achieved this decadent feat, had to have been Asprey in 167 New Bond Street.

Behind its original Victorian façade, the world-renowned architect Sir Norman Foster, and the great interior designer David Mlinaric, have managed to create a stylish and luxurious flagship store. Since 1847 the famous and wealthy have come to Bond St to purchase Asprey's finest in design and

quality.

You'll find everything to satisfy your passion for luxury goods; from jewels and silver, watches and pens, china and crystal - to leather goods and silk scarves, all carefully chosen from specialist manufacturers around the world.



Even the most extravagant wishes do not present a problem for Asprey. For example it's possible to have your family crest engraved on the "Thirst Aid Kit" - a mahogany box with two silver cups and a sterling silver hip flask, or a hand-stitched backgammon set finished in your favourite colours. No matter how complicated to make or exotic the material, Asprey is able to make a made-to-measure piece to the highest quality. And in case you prefer reading something while waiting for your exclusive diamond necklace to be wrapped, do have a look in their "Fine Books" section, there's something for every taste like the first edition of Ian Fleming's "Diamonds are forever" at £1,250!



Smythson

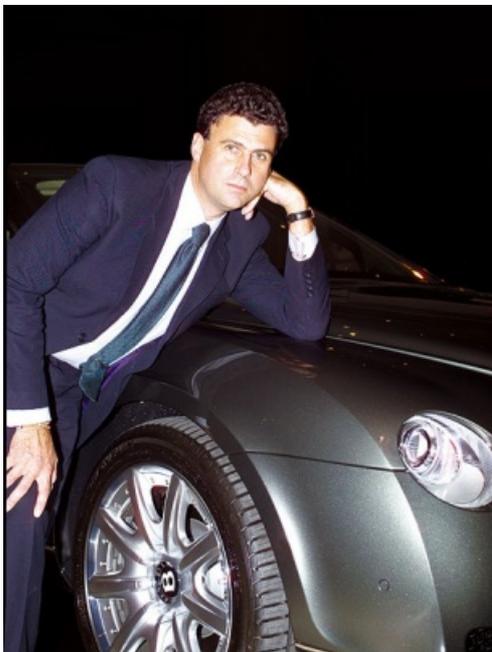
For those of you wanting to escape today's digital age of email and the internet - as if you would! - a short walk away will bring you to number 40. Welcome to Smythson of Bond St, where you will re-discover the traditional values of good writing paper, bespoke party invitations and luxury diaries and notebooks in all shapes and sizes. These are among many other items from the company, from the 'necessary' to the definitely 'fun'. As holders of the Royal Warrant, the company is used to making the more traditional items, but you might be surprised at some of the other luxury goods Smythson make. Essential for anyone are the street maps and calendars but you can also find some really nice

accessories like games sets, briefcases, leather organisers and complete writing sets. For the entertainer the company can provide bespoke invitations and placement cards, you can refer to a Smythson book on previous dinner-party menus, and consult your Smythson cellar-book on which wine to choose. A thank-you from the party guests? Smythson produce cards to suit. Ideas for Christmas include a bright green lizard-effect leather notebook (embossed with a gold-leaf 'With Envy'), typical of the humorous side of the company's up-market products.



Pickett

Near to Old Bond street, and close to Green Park and Piccadilly Circus, you will find the entrance to the Burlington Arcade, right next to the Royal Academy. Opened in 1819, it's an array of classic and modern highly-luxurious shops that's beautiful to walk through, all under one roof. Window shopping is fun, whether you are looking for a present or not. A highlight of the Arcade is Pickett. The cosy wood-panelled shop interior is packed with a variety of leather goods, accessories and small pieces of jewellery. There are the most magnificent leather cases for travelling on business and pleasure, watch travelling cases, jewellery boxes and ladies scarves and pashminas. Like any luxury manufacturer Pickett can also offer a bespoke service.



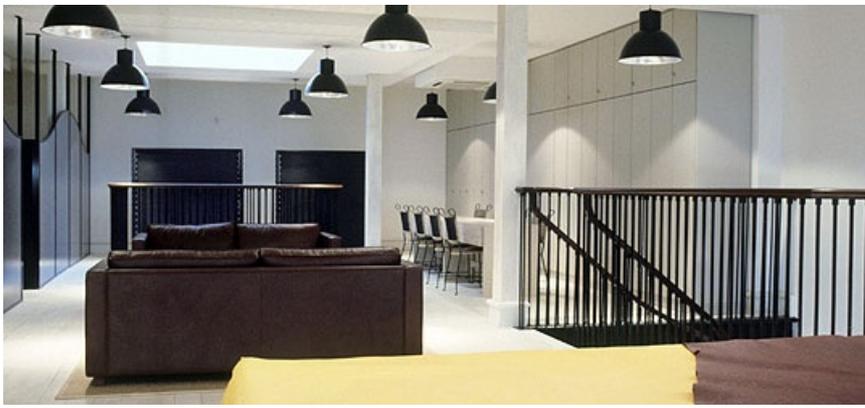


Vintage Watch Company



Across the way you will find the Vintage Watch Company, believed to have the world's largest collection of classic Rolex watches for ladies and gentlemen, currently showing more than 400 timepieces from 1915 to 1960. Due to their timeless elegance and quality, a vintage Rolex can be a real alternative to the other modern manufacturer's products that have been designed to have a 'classic' or 'retro' look. Taking a closer look at what's on display, you will be surprised how sometimes very experimental and 'futuristic' the watches can be, whether made from steel, silver and gold. For all those fans of older watches, a visit to this shop is 'a must'.

Connolly



Your new watch will tell you there's not much time left, so jump into a taxi and make your way to Belgravia. Just off Hyde Park Corner, surrounded by London Regency architecture you will find Connolly's Grosvenor Crescent Mews store (the other is in Conduit St, W1). Once a carriage and stable building for the nearby large houses, it's fitting that the company that since 1878 has been synonymous with leather for coaches and then high-class motor cars, has its latest store located there. From early days supplying Edward VII's coaches, through to specification by Bentley, Aston Martin, Rolls-Royce and Jaguar in the 1930s to recent times, the company has the most famous name in the world for automotive leather. Nowadays, in their discrete showrooms Connolly offers rare and beautiful accessories, including a leather crash helmet, goggles and gloves, as well as exclusive sets of travel cases with walnut and aluminium detailing. The style of the 1950s and '60s is perfectly maintained with a modern look by this most traditional name. There's also some very up-to-the-minute designs for the avant-garde enthusiast, take the £7,000 Brompton foldaway bike in its deluxe leather travelling case for starters, or the wonderful bespoke Christmas crackers.





Bentleys



For those with some breathing-space on their credit card, Bentleys in Walton St will offer you a choice of unusual antiques, many of them having a motoring theme. Candice Bushnell, creator of 'Sex in the City', was once asked which shop she could not live without. "Of course Bentleys in London" she replied. "In this store you will find absolutely anything from old Louis Vuitton travelling cases to picnic sets from the 1920s costing £10,000. I once said to the owner: 'Your shop is full of things that no-one needs!' he answered 'I know - and that's the point'".

So in case you don't need a propeller-fan made from a 1920s de Havilland Moth biplane, and the price doesn't matter, you are guaranteed to find it at Bentleys.

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