

ELLE DECOR

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MARY MCDONALD'S BILLION DOLLAR DECORATING THE GREAT AMERICAN DESIGN ISSUE

CHANDELIERS: FROM THE
BATHROOM TO THE BALLROOM
WOOD FLOORS AND HOW TO LOVE THEM

SHOP TALK

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TEXTILE DESIGNER
BERNIE DE LE CUONA
OPENS HER FIRST
RETAIL SHOP IN
ONE OF LONDON'S
TONIEST ENCLAVES.

BY NANCY HASS



The top floor of Bernie de Le Cuona's new store, in London's Belgravia, showcases her signature fabric collection.



ABOVE: A grid of fabric samples.

LEFT: Bernie de Le Cuona.

RIGHT: Felted wool throw, \$851.



RIGHT: A hand-embroidered cashmere pillow by de Le Cuona is displayed next to a bronze bowl by Charles Haupt.



MORE THAN 25 YEARS AGO, BERNIE de Le Cuona, fresh from studying architectural design in her native South Africa, headed to England and settled in Windsor, a town on the river Thames half an hour west of London. In order to support herself, she created her namesake fabric line, which is still based in Windsor and is now internationally known for its stonewashed linens, lush velvets, and dazzling paisleys.

De Le Cuona sells her textiles through her to-the-trade showrooms in New York and London. But recently, she took a quantum leap, opening a two-story flagship retail store in London's Belgravia neighborhood. The 2,000-square-foot shop provides an immersive environment in which to experience her vast inventory of textures, colors, and materials, as well as cushions, accessories, and a tightly edited selection of furniture. Why a full-scale retail emporium at this online moment? "In turbulent times like these, it's more important than ever to maintain personal contact with customers," she says.

The ground level of the store, which was designed by Tom Bartlett of London-based Waldo Works with surfaces of terrazzo, poured concrete, and pale amber resin, holds an array of fabrics—made for de Le Cuona in Europe only, particularly in Italian, Belgian, and French mills—hung as curtains. A "color lab" features a wall grid of large square fabric samples in every available colorway.

Downstairs, you'll find furniture by South African designers, including sculptural bronze tables by Charles Haupt and items by John Vogel, as well as Japanese-inspired linen and silk throw blankets and bespoke pillows. For de Le Cuona, the store puts her passion on display. "Working with yarns and colors that bring a room to life," she says, "is pure magic." delecuona.com ■

SCARF: STUART TYSON/STUDIO D