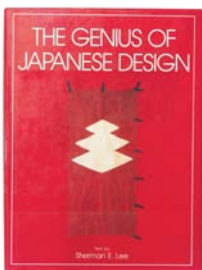


## SELF PORTRAIT



I carry around an American book called **THE GENIUS OF JAPANESE DESIGN** by Sherman E Lee, which I always refer to. I am inspired by its extraordinary Japanese textiles, which feature shapes that have come down through the ages – neither flowery nor geometric, neither modern nor traditional.

I collect **DRINKING GLASSES**, including hand-blown Czech ones and vintage designs by Lalique ('Langeais Burgundy Glass', below). I don't believe in keeping them in the cupboard, so they all get used, though I would be mortified if I broke the valuable pieces.



*My husband and I love **ROLLERBLADING**. We have done group skates in London, Paris and Brussels, where they close down the streets and you can zip through them. Sometimes, at home in Windsor, we'll rollerblade to dinner, then back again afterwards.*



I never tire of admiring **THE LADY OF SHALOTT** by John William Waterhouse at Tate Britain. I love the nature, the tragedy and the beautiful texture he gives to the fabric. The lady herself has a shade of coppery red hair that has made its way into my collections.

I recently visited the **MICHELANGELO** exhibition at The Metropolitan Museum in New York. I loved his red chalk drawings (*Studies for the Libyan Sibyl*, below) and was struck by how one man could be a painter, sculptor, architect and engineer.



The wild **UNTAMED BUSH**, magnificent sunrises and sunsets, and the textures and tones of the dry earth are early memories for me. People always say that our fabrics are odd colours, which don't go down the usual Pantone route. That's because they come directly from the great natural beauty of South Africa, where I was born.



# Bernie de Le Cuona

THE FOUNDER OF DE LE CUONA  
PAINTS A PICTURE OF HER  
LIFE, WORK AND INSPIRATIONS

This year, it has been exciting to open the new **DE LE CUONA SHOWROOM** on Pimlico Road, SW1, which marks 25 years of the company. I worked with Tom Bartlett of Waldo Works and it's the first time I've been able to build a space for the company from the ground up.



*When I first came across **WEAVING IN INDIA**, I saw craftsmen softening their silks by beating them with wooden mallets. I now use many new and old techniques to achieve the effects I want – I like to wash cloth in a machine with golf balls to produce a soft surface without damaging the finish.*

My favourite holiday destination is an island off Mozambique in the Quirimbas Archipelago called **AZURA QUILALEA**. I loved the remoteness, the untouched beauty and the colours under water. Walking off the beach and diving the reef, with all its colours and strange fish and life and shapes, was like being transported to another world ☐

