

WHAT WOMEN WANT

It's a year since south west London business emma & louise was launched, so the founder takes us through what has been a memorable 12 months

Words YASMINA BONA



Pottery West was launched by a husband and wife team

My company emma & louise came about through meeting talented British craftswomen living in my area. I decided there and then to take the plunge and feature their creations on my online marketplace. All my makers and designers are female – empowering women is an issue close to my heart – and all their creations are made in the UK.

I spent last year building my business by focusing on my social media presence and bringing on new makers and designers. I threw myself into the intricacies of Instagram and the depths of SEO in order to promote emma & louise. I gradually built a loyal customer base and I am happy to say that I recently reached 1,000



followers on Instagram. I also spent a lot of time recruiting brand new craftswomen to emma & louise, expanding into homeware and fashion

accessories. I am proud to say that there are now almost 40 makers and designers featured on my website and over 250 beautiful objects to choose from.

Being the sole founder of my business, there are lonely times and moments of

doubt. I sometimes wished I had a sounding board, a partner, to bounce ideas off.

Everything from the marketing strategy to the day-to-day operational side of things, I manage on my own. It can be disheartening at times, especially when results are not immediately seen or felt. It is a big world out there and there certainly isn't a lack of competition. The key is finding a point of difference and staying true to one's philosophy. As such, the DNA of my brand is to support women and promote 'British made'.

I have been lucky to have influencers in home design endorse me and promote emma & louise;

people such as Cate St Hill, Jane Day and Abi Dare. I also had a product feature recently in the Evening Standard Magazine, which lead to stock levels of the featured serving board going out of stock very quickly! Reaching out

to talented craftswomen and bringing them on board is always thrilling and rewarding too.

I have lots of ideas for emma & louise. Firstly,

I hope to reach out to a wider customer base through events and pop-ups. For example, I am organizing a One-of-a-Kind summer fair on 9 June in the Fresh Ground Café in Battersea. It will feature fashion (such as children's brand LilyLoop, fashion accessories and homeware for one day only... exciting raffle prizes to be won too). Secondly, I am thinking of expanding the product offering to beauty brands and niche food brands. Watch this space! **!**

emmaandlouise.com

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5 TO WATCH...

Yasmina Bona's top designer picks

Pottery West

Husband and wife team, Catherine and Matt, have launched a sublime ceramic range in their Devon studio. Matt is the lead thrower whilst Catherine specializes in creating beautiful glazes. The resulting range has a certain earthiness and simplicity to it, which renders their tableware timeless. A pure delight!

The Bird Box



Sophie decided to make her own candles when she realized that commercial candles gave her headaches. She perfected her knowledge in essential oils in order to launch her line of 100% natural, pure soy-wax-based candles. Her packaging is truly exquisite and her candle fragrances are relaxing or uplifting, depending on what you are in the mood for.



Emma Aitchison

Emma is a true crusader for the environment and uses recycled gold and silver to craft her jewellery, reducing waste in the process. Her inspiration is drawn from natural phenomenon such as lava and mountain formations. Her gold or silver magma hoop earrings are absolutely stunning.

Camilla Thomas

Inspired by her home on the Isle of Anglesea, Camilla set out to make gorgeous throws in colours and patterns reminiscent of the sea. Camilla's throws are made out of merino lambswool in warming blue and grey tones. They are a must-have in any home, draped over a sofa or spread over a bed.



Hopeful

Two friends, Dominique and Trudi, have combined their love of fashion with their industry experience and creative minds to launch their first line of handbags. Their denim and leather totes are fun, practical and stylish. Perfect to take on holiday or accompany you for your daily shopping.

