

A CRAFTY BUSINESS

The Battersea entrepreneur bringing talented designers and makers together

Words EMILY MILLER

Battersea resident Yasmina Bona is striving to bring one-of-a-kind objects made in the British Isles, crafted by women and for women, into our homes. Hers is a new kind of online marketplace bringing a community of talented London artisans together, where you can source finds to dress your home that are anything but ordinary. The collection currently includes contemporary, colourful and tactile homeware and stationery made in Bermondsey by Georgia Bosson, feature tabletop wooden amplifiers by Camilla Lee, and ceramic vessels and vases by designer Timea Sido, a graduate of Central Saint Martins. We caught up with Bona to find out more...

What inspired you to launch Emma & Louise? I have always dreamt of starting my own business, combining my experience in marketing with a love of homeware. The first spark came from listening to women around me. Many had left a corporate job behind to take on more inspiring challenges, embarking on motherhood before choosing a more fulfilling professional path. Gifted women are going against the current by



Georgia Bosson's designs are a favourite; inset, Judit Ezerzomi's ceramic kitchenware



Yasmina Bona



Accessories such as Candice Lau's bags are featured





Clockwise from left: work by
Lale Guralp,
Alice Robson,
Camilla Lee
and Rachel Cox



opting for creative careers. It became evident to me that I was surrounded by talent, which I felt inspired to champion and to share with a wider audience.

What has been most satisfying about setting up your own company? I definitely enjoy the entrepreneurial journey, from doing market research and developing the idea, to implementing the strategy. My ambition is to find the most talented designers and makers and to promote them. It's a big leap into the unknown, and one that encourages me to think creatively each day. It's important to go out there, meet people, exchange ideas and take criticism on board with humility. I'm the sole founder, but my husband and close friends play a crucial role by lending an attentive ear and applying their critical reasoning!

What do you enjoy most about living in Battersea? My husband and I ended up in Battersea almost by chance. We initially fell in love with a house and, after that sale fell through, we decided we loved the area so much that we stayed. We ended up buying a different house and have lived here for over ten years. Battersea has the perfect combination of green spaces, interesting high streets, good dining options and a 'village' feel. My favourite spots are Queenswood in Battersea Village, Lagu (a gorgeous little Japanese restaurant) and the Sendero Coffeeshop (my local), both on Lavender Hill. I've always loved the vibe of a cosy coffee shop. The community feel, large shared tables and intimate nooks with comfy sofas inspire me and get my creative juices flowing. It is also where I choose to convene with many of my makers and designers over a good flat white.

What have been the highlights of your journey so far? One of the best things about it is the opportunity to meet amazing women who take a leap of faith each day to make beautiful objects. All of the designers and craftswomen I work with are hard-working, inspiring and unique. The creative process can be quite a lonely one, so through my website, I hope to bring together a close-knit community of craftswomen. Browsing the site, you'll find the story behind each creation, making for a more personal and meaningful purchase, which will enable them to continue to pursue their passions.

What are the latest trends for the home? I would definitely say that less is more. We have seen the Scandi trend, the Hygge trend, and the Marie Kondo decluttering trend take centre stage. All of these are movements to get rid of the superfluous, and to help you to focus on what is important in life.

What are your favourite products, and which are the most popular? I love everything featured on my website. I'm in a privileged position, because I curate each and every one of them! I will say that I have a weak spot for Georgia Bosson's napkins, Alice Robson's pod necklace, Leila Swift's bangles, Rachel Cox's ceramic tableware, Nicola Cliffe's cushions and Lucy McGrath's journals.

Why do you choose to work with handmade products made by women only? I feel it is important to recognise female industry and creativity. We women need all the positive enforcement and support we can get!

See more at emmaandlouise.com

SUMMER HOME TIPS

- 1. ADD A TOUCH OF COLOUR AGAINST A MUTED PALETTE:** yellows, oranges and pinks are bright and cheerful colours this season.
- 2. DECLUTTER!** A side table with one large picture book speaks volumes more than a stack of mismatched ones.
- 3. BRING PERSONALITY TO YOUR WALLS** by hanging meaningful and personal prints or pictures: stay conservative with matching black or white frames or push the boat out with asymmetric frames.

