

LIBERTY
LONDON

CHRISTYS'
FINE HATS SINCE 1773



LIBERTY DEMONSTRATES ITS CONFIDENCE IN BRITISH BRANDS WITH THE ACQUISITION OF THE CHRISTYS' & CO HAT COMPANY

Liberty announces today the acquisition of Christys' Hats, a legendary British brand. This acquisition marks the beginning of Liberty's strategy of investing in and promoting niche luxury brands with a strong British heritage.

Founded in 1773, Christys' Hats is synonymous with the finest quality and craftsmanship in hat making. From British made Trilbys and Fedoras, to classic English and Scottish tweed flat caps, iconic bowlers, top hats and the finest quality Ecuadorian Panamas hand blocked and finished in the UK; this iconic British brand is one of the few companies in the world still making hats in the traditional way. The brand has been forged with a passion and commitment to quality for over 200 years, making it one of the most sought after hat brands across the globe. From the fashionable to the traditional, Christys' hats transcend all boundaries and have been coveted by wearers across more than two centuries including: Queen Elizabeth II, Queen Victoria, Sir Winston Churchill (Bowler & Homburg – both still available today), The Queen Mother, Liza Minnelli and more recently Brad Pitt, Justin Timberlake, Usher (Christys' Crown Basix), Tinie Tempah (Bowler), Paolo Nutini, Johnny Depp (Fedora), Paloma Faith, Cheryl Cole (Christys' Crown Nimbin) and Kate Moss (Wide Brim Fedora).

Christys' is also a major supplier to the corporate and public sector and has played an influential role in the development of the British police force headwear.

Liberty is delighted to announce that Christys' has launched in store with a menswear collection in an exclusive concept space. The collection spans from wide brim Fedoras to classic Trilbys, pork pie hats, bowlers and flat caps. The autumnal colour and fabric spectrum includes Balmoral tweeds, cashmere, silk, navy wool with a stripe ribbon band, maroon wool with a pleated ribbon trim and classic black, dove grey and navy trilbys. Retail prices range from £55 to £95.

Liberty will continue to work with Christys' to develop the range and is thrilled to be unveiling the launch of the first Christys' womenswear collection due early next year.



Positive results fuel investment

Liberty Ltd has experienced 12 months of steady growth following BlueGem's acquisition in June 2010 leaving the business cash generative. 2010 saw Liberty report a 35% sales uplift on the previous year with 22% from the flagship business and 72% growth from the Fabrics wholesale business with the Japanese market in particular contributing to this success. So far this year, the first half has continued this progress with the entire business reporting 16% growth on the year and the Fabrics business showing an impressive 28% sales uplift.

"These extremely positive results have given us even more confidence in the potential of Liberty as a global brand. For this reason, all of the company's profits have been and will be reinvested in the company to enable its further growth."

- Marco Capello; Managing Partner, BlueGem Capital Partners LLP

This commitment from the shareholders has funded a £4m investment plan including £1.2m on a major renovation and expansion project adding over 2,400 sq ft of retail space. The first part of the project is due to be completed mid-October 2011 and will add five beauty treatment rooms, a personal shopping department and eventually a hair salon and a rooftop bar. The second part of the project, due to be completed at the end of March 2012, involves a major expansion of the ground floor by over 600 sq ft to house a further six bag brands and eight new jewellery brands expanding Liberty's authority in both categories. An additional entrance on the corner of Kingly Street and Little Marlborough Street will be added allowing customers direct access to the new Jewellery and Accessories Room.

Voted 'Shop of the Year' by Time Out for the past two years running, an integral part of Liberty's success and unique selling point has been backing British creativity, brands and craftsmanship. Throughout its

history Liberty has sourced, supported and showcased the best of British design and a return to the grass roots ethos of the Liberty business has enabled it to continue to offer customers unique and desirable products as well as boost sales. The acquisition of Christys' demonstrates Liberty's commitment to supporting British heritage brands while presenting them in innovative ways to create new opportunities for growth.

Backing British design, creativity & innovation

In 2008 Liberty Retail's MD, Ed Burstell introduced the Open Call. This concept allowed burgeoning designers to bring their wares into Liberty on a bi-annual basis and show them to the buying team. Any items deemed suitable for the store are purchased and Burstell and the Liberty team offer the new designers support on all sides of their business from manufacturing to press and marketing. The Open Call became the subject of and the inspiration behind the recent BBC2 docu-drama 'Britain's Next Big Thing' which shadowed aspiring designers hoping to have their products sold in Liberty. Success stories from the Open Call include: Professor Richard Weston, whose completely unique prints are created by scanning minerals and crystals which are then printed on to Italian silk scarves and sit in the top five selling brands in the Scarf Room; Tom Hopkins-Gibson, whose ceramic moulds are created from driftwood sourced on his local beach in Strathclyde and then fashioned into beautiful ornamental bowls in soft pastel shades; Hand illustrated bone china tea sets from Mellor Ware and Silken Favours, whose scarves use arresting hand drawn illustrations of animals that have become instant bestsellers as soon as they hit the shop floor. The products sourced from the three Open Calls so far have generated approximately half a million pounds worth of business for the Liberty flagship store and have given exposure to over 40 emerging British designers spanning fashion, accessories, home wares and jewellery.

Liberty is also a supporter of the British fashion industry with Ed Burstell sitting on the British Fashion Council Advisory Panel. It has continued to showcase a good mix of home-grown talent on the women's and men's fashion floors including Jonathan Saunders, Richard Nicoll, Peter Pilotto, Lou Dalton, Hermione de Paula and Christopher Kane. Liberty has also worked with a number of London Fashion Week designers to create exclusive scarves in their signature prints which have become an integral part of the lucrative Liberty scarf business. In addition, Liberty fabrics themselves have proved a wealth of inspiration for emerging designers such as Peter Pilotto, J.W.Anderson and Michael van der Ham. Liberty has supported these designers and many others by offering them access to its vast print archive, working with them to create unique colourways and bespoke fabrics.

The latest venture in celebrating not only British design but the people and places that make the UK a hub of creative talent is Liberty's National Treasure collection which launches on the 20th October 2011. Liberty challenged the UK's most beloved icons, eccentrics and hallowed institutions to create the products they've always wanted. The result is a range of products every bit as original and inspiring as the people who designed them. From the delightfully offbeat, to the remarkably innovative, to the breathtakingly beautiful, the National Treasures collection includes one of a kind and limited edition pieces created by: Tracey Emin, Stella McCartney, Grayson Perry, Helena Bonham-Carter, Vivienne Westwood, Paul Smith, Claridge's, The Old Vic, Soho House, Lulu Kennedy, Celia Birtwell, the British Fashion Council, Nigel Slater, Jo Wood, Rick Stein, Deborah Meaden, Rankin, Jon Snow, Vinnie Jones and Tom Dixon. All proceeds from the National Treasures collection will be donated to the 'Treasures' nominated charity of choice.

For further information and imagery please contact:

Kate Brindley; Head of Press, Liberty Ltd
Email: kbrindley@liberty.co.uk Direct line: 0207 573 9431

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Cheryl Cole (Glamour May 2011)



Johnny Depp



Sienna Miller (Elle)



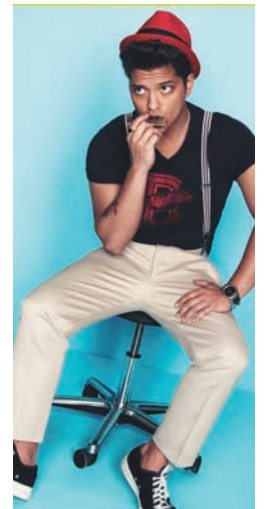
Lindsay Lohan



Kate Moss (Wire image)



Keira Knightley



Bruno Mars (GQ)



Sir Winston Churchill (Christys' archive)



Usher (Postimage.org)



Justin Timberlake (Terry Richardson)



The Queen Mother 1963 (Christys' archive)

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