

DESIGNER REFLECTS ON NEW ERA IN COUTURE

Yvonne Gillon's newly refurbished studio may be all smoke and mirrors but there is no illusion about the quality and craftsmanship of her designs. The business, based in Hollins Lane, Marple has grown significantly and clients can now enjoy a more relaxed atmosphere in which they can see the images held in their imagination and dreams come to life in Yvonne's couture designs, whether it be for a wedding or special occasion.

The Nationwide respect which Yvonne and her team is well documented and as Yvonne explained,

"As the business has developed and grown over recent years, we have really outgrown our premises here in Hollins Lane, but it was important to me to retain our relaxed atmosphere where clients feel comfortable and pampered. I like to meet every new client and even if I am not involved in the whole design and manufacturing process, I want to ensure that they feel valued and receive the level of customer service that we are renowned for. Particularly important was the consideration of my skilled and talented staff who have been incredibly loyal and supportive. I wanted to ensure that they were provided with a better working environment but relocation would have meant that they may not have been able to join me."



Yvonne continues to campaign for a resumption of training to encourage young people into the couture business and has schemes in place to train those keen to pursue a career in the industry,

"I am very fortunate to have two young new designers working with me and we complement each other perfectly, even introducing a competitive element! However, I am still genuinely concerned that there may not be enough young blood to keep our world class bespoke tailoring industry alive and I would urge anyone interested in developing a career in couture to contact me at the studio either via email or telephone."

Although Yvonne is keen to stress that the core business will be retained, she plans to extend her bridal range and introduce an exclusive ready to wear range,

"My interest in bridalwear was reawakened when I designed Karen McDonald's wedding dress for Coronation Street and now more brides come to me because they simply cannot find what they want on the high street. I love dealing with brides and designing contemporary gowns to suit their figure and personality. I feel that it is just as important for them to be looked after and have the same special experience that we offer our other clients. We are also introducing a ready to wear bridal range by Marina K, Israel's leading fashion designer. Her gowns have the highest level of craftsmanship and are tailored in natural silk fabrics, exquisite lace and Swarovski crystal – modern but timeless, classic but unique – in fact very much following my own philosophy of design and couture. This gives us the facility to provide outfits for brides and bridesmaids in addition to the contemporary mother of the bride for which we remain famous. I am delighted that my daughter, Kate has joined me with the Evie Porter Collection of bespoke tiaras, fascinators and crystal bouquets extending the choice even more in our accessory range."

In addition the website www.yvonnegillon.co.uk has also had a makeover and includes a unique insight into Yvonne's world of couture with numerous design images to peruse.

Clients can be assured that 'simple elegance' remains Yvonne's signature with her design processes remaining unchanged. A visit to her studio is the perfect panacea to stress free shopping and the knowledge that nobody will ever walk into a room wearing the same outfit.

Cheshire designer, Yvonne Gillon features on ITV's My Northwest on Thursday 6 September at 7.30pm. The programme sees Yvonne visiting Platt Hall, an 18th century textile merchant's home and now home to Manchester's Costume Museum, to trace the relationship of couture fashion from the 1800s with her own business today.

Yvonne explained,

"Bespoke tailoring is something that I am extremely passionate about. This area was at the height of the textile industry in the 19th and 20th centuries – Cottonopolis - the workshop of the world in cotton, from the raw materials to spinning, weaving, dyeing, fabric design and manufacture and marketing."

She continued,

"The Collection at Platt Hall represents high fashion of day during the 18th century and, in fact, many of the processes are still in use today and although women no longer have 18 inch waists, my designs can give women the illusion of making them appear two sizes smaller and six inches taller."

The programme follows Yvonne to her own studio in Marple to show the modern day processes used in couture and show some of the designs available. However, Yvonne's concern regarding the lack of young professional skilled people entering the industry has prompted an appeal for anyone interested in developing a career in couture to contact her,

"Now that the vast majority of clothes are manufactured abroad, the skills to produce clothes are disappearing. As the demand for the type of service which I provide increases, I am finding that I have to limit the amount of work which I take on. This is purely because of the lack of machinists. I have schemes in place to train those keen to pursue a career in couture. There is a genuine concern that there may not be enough young blood to keep our world class bespoke tailoring industry alive. I would urge anyone interested in developing a career in couture to contact me at the studio either via email or telephone."