

# LAURA ASHLEY

## 65 Years of British Design

1925 Laura Mountney is born in Merthyr Tydfil, Wales

1943 Laura Mountney meets Bernard Ashley



1949 Laura and Bernard marry

1953 In the fall, Laura and Bernard begin printing textiles on their kitchen table in London, and create textiles inspired by the handiworks exhibition at the Victoria and Albert Museum

Headscarves were added to the line shortly thereafter, sparked by Audrey Hepburn in the movie *Roman Holiday*.

1954 Ashley Mountney Ltd is formed  
Bernard develops his first continuous printing machine aiming to sell furnishing fabrics by the yard and produces these under his own name

First tea towels are produced



1955 Old Burlington Street showroom opens with 200 accounts

The entire tea towel collection is ordered by a company in San Francisco, CA

1956 Production begins of other household items, for example oven gloves

Production increases to 100-300 yards of printed cloth per week

1957 The Ashley's move their business to Kent

Due to success of a gardening apron, an overall is produced and sells in the thousands

Export begins to Europe, the US and Australia

1958 Kent premises flooded – all equipment and goods are ruined

1961 The Ashley's move to Wales

1962 The Ashley's open their first shop in Macchynlleth, Wales where they lived above the shop

Laura's love of all things Victorian led to

the long silhouette and feminine styles, which would become the company's trademarks, and was right on trend at the end of the 1960s as fashion switched from the mini to the maxi

First fashion designer is employed and introduces a shirt dress, cotton drill skirt and a Victorian inspired nightdress

The single shop turned into two and the beginnings of a network

1967 The company moves to a purpose built site in the village of Carno, Wales

1968 The shop at 23 Pelham St., London opens, the first to sell exclusively Laura Ashley products



1969 Fulham Road shop opens – at one point selling 4,000 dresses in a week!

1970 In the 70s, licensing operations brought the opening of department store concessions in Australia, Canada and Japan, while U.K. shops continued to flourish and further shops opened in San Francisco

1971 Jane Ashley, one of the daughters, is appointed company photographer at 18 - her photography becomes synonymous with the brand image



1972 The famous bramble logo is created



First Paris shop opens

1975 The company had grown faster than any predicted, with over 40 shops and employing 1,000 worldwide



1977 The Queen's Award for Export Achievement was given to the company

1978 The 25th anniversary of the company is celebrated with a Silver Jubilee Ball

1979 Laura Ashley No. 1 and No. 2 perfume launch

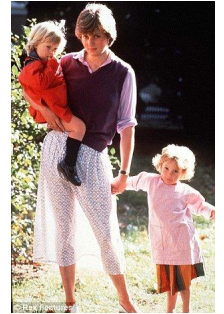
Laura expanded on the range of fabrics and the company launched its first full home furnishings collection

By the end of the 70s, Laura Ashley had expanded to over 70 shops worldwide

Laura and Bernard moved to northern France, where Laura would find new inspiration and the style took on a grander, more country house look

1980 The first Welsh shop opens in Cardiff selling only Laura Ashley products

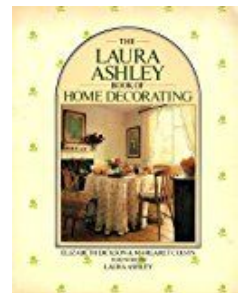
Diana Spencer, soon-to-be Princess of Wales, in a Laura Ashley skirt (photo by Charles de la Court)



1981 First full length home furnishings catalogue launches



1982 The Laura Ashley Book of Home Decoration is published by Octopus Books and the Decorator Collection of home furnishings is introduced



Laura Ashley receiving an award at Women of Achievement Awards from Countess Spencer



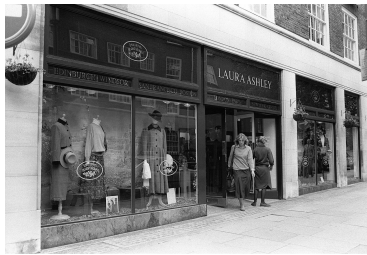
Laura Ashley is invited to decorate a bedroom in the British Embassy in Washington, D.C.

1983 The Manchester Collection launches in collaboration with Platt Hall



1984 Emma fragrance launches, named after the Ashleys' youngest child

1985 Laura passes. The business felt her loss profoundly, but her strong values and design ethos remain with the company



Laura Ashley Ltd is floated on the Stock Exchange and is oversubscribed 34 times

New flagship store in Central London opens

1987 Bernard Ashley is knighted

Texplan Manufacturing opens in Newtown, Wales

1988 Diana, Princess of Wales, visits Texplan and gets a tour from Bernard Ashley



The late 1980s saw also the launch of the "Mother and Child" and "Laura Ashley Home" collections

1991 17-year old Kate Moss is photographed in a Laura Ashley dress

1993 The 40th anniversary of the company is celebrated with a special collection and collaborative project with students from the Royal College of Art

Bernard Ashley retires and becomes honorary president until 1998

1998 MUI becomes main investor in Laura Ashley Ltd

Design Service launches dealing with the interior design of residential and commercial properties

2000 The Laura Ashley archive is established and all collections catalogued



2000 Laura Ashley E-commerce launches in America: LauraAshleyUSA.com

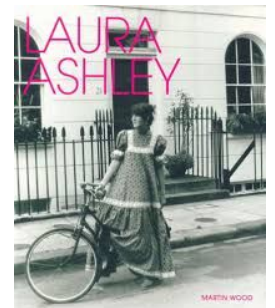
2001 Biannual home furnishings catalogues are produced for the first time

2005 Company moves from Carno to Newtown, Wales

2007 Laura Ashley Ltd wins Homes and Gardens award for Design Retailer of the Year

2008 Laura Ashley Ltd wins Homes and Gardens award for Design Retailer of the Year for the second time

2009 Laura Ashley by Martin Wood is published by Frances Lincoln Limited, with images from the company archive



Bernard Ashley passes

2011 Laura Ashley USA E-commerce relauches

2012 Work begins on The Manor in Elstree, Laura Ashley's first Boutique Hotel with 49 rooms designed using Laura Ashley Home collections



Laura Ashley wins House Beautiful's 'Best of British' Award

2013 Laura Ashley celebrates 60 years in business

Laura Ashley has over 200 stores in the UK and Ireland, and a growing franchise operation with over 250 global stores

Laura Ashley retrospective is held at the Bath Fashion Museum in England



2015 American Vogue predicts resurgence of Laura Ashley fashion, linking big-name designers' obsessions with Victorian fashion, '70s and '80s Merchant Ivory productions

Laura Ashley adds another boutique hotel, The Belsfield, on Lake Windermere in the South of the Lake District National Park



2016 Launch of wholesale wallpaper business in America

2017 Laura Ashley The Tea Room opens in U.K.



Victoria Beckham talks to British Vogue, the first under the direction of new Editor-in-Chief Edward Enninful, about her childhood home and her Laura Ashley bedroom, "When I was a child my bedroom was very pretty. I had Laura Ashley wallpaper and it was very girly."

2018 The company celebrates the 65th Anniversary