



If the glove fits

Designer, Anna Milloy reveals how she has carved a niche for herself in the craft accessories industry



What is the inspiration behind the company and its products?

Miss Foxglove designs are inspired by quintessential English style. It is vital that the goods are all hand-made and very individual.

I have a strong sense of colour and texture, and enjoy using this skill in my work.

How was your initial collection developed?

I began using sheepskin back in college at Cordwainers Technical College, London (now part of the London College of Fashion). I visited a tannery in Somerset and the staff were a great help to me. I loved the feel of using sheepskin, and experimenting with different ways of cutting and manipulating it.

My business began years later in an organic way. I supplied local boutiques and took part in selling events. It was very useful to my product development to get to know the shop owners, see the designs being used and gain feedback from regular customers.

Were there any problems when setting up the business? If so, how did you overcome them?

I aim to source my raw materials from UK manufacturers and suppliers and this can prove difficult sometimes. There are still specialised companies who supply small scale manufacturers like me, but they can be a well-kept secret.

Other than my supply chain, it is the usual

problems that affect me, trying to be good at every aspect of running a business, and finding ways to fit it all in!

How would you describe your current collection?

Luscious colour and texture is key to my autumn/winter 2011 range. Dark reds, olives and tans with accents of rich orange, purple and pink. With our desire to offer practical luxury at reasonable prices, a pair of our slippers or mittens is an everyday delight. Miss Foxglove bags, hats and slippers are products that we intend customers to keep and fall in love with.

How often will the company be launching new accessory lines?

We are always thinking about new ideas and developing products. New lines come out about twice a year. Regular customers are a good source of informal feedback, and sometimes give me the opportunity to test out new designs. New lines currently in development are our first home range and organic sheepskin baby booties.

Is the collection aimed at a particular type of retail outlet or consumer?

Miss Foxglove customers know they are individuals and enjoy showing it off. They like to express their original sense of style and colour. My customers usually have a bit of disposable income and are mature enough to have developed their personal taste; they aren't necessarily led by outside trends.



Are you exhibiting at any trade fairs over the coming months? If so, which ones and why?

I will be at the British Craft Trade Fair in Harrogate again for 2012; it specialises in high quality, design-led, handmade goods, and is a friendly and well-run show. I am considering doing Pulse and Top Drawer next year. I will also be at the London retail event, the Country Living Fair, in November.

When did you launch the website and how important is it to the business?

We've had a website for years. My husband, Andrew provides all my photographs and does our graphic design work which is very useful!

The website has always been useful as a marketing and information tool, but this season we are launching the new online e-commerce site. We expect this to be a major innovation in taking this year's business forward.

What are the long-term plans for the brand?

I want to keep the English essence of the brand, and I'd like to keep everything hand-made in the UK. I am looking into taking on additional workroom staff, and the possibility of outsourcing some products to a UK manufacturer as we continue to expand. ■

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