



ECO TEXTILES

Material world

Stunning textiles and homewares also come with a story of environmental responsibility for Andrea Bradley's Décor & Tissu business.

Words Nikki Birrell. Photography Andrew Coffey

Reflecting on her extensive collection of interior design magazines, collected since teen years, Andrea Bradley had a seminal moment. These vast piles were an obvious clue as to what might yield a new, fulfilling career.

In 2015 the decision was made – Bradley left her corporate job in HR to follow the path she'd always had such a passion for. "Over the next couple of years, I completed an interior design qualification and during 18 months in France developed a business plan," she says. What that all amounted to today is Décor & Tissu – a showroom and online store of beautiful textiles, wallpapers, select homewares and interior design services.

Bradley's decision to branch out from more than just interior design was partly a savvy business decision to ensure she didn't have all her eggs in one basket, but also because prior to her new career she'd had particular tastes, and knew there would be others like her hankering after certain aesthetics that couldn't be accessed outside of wholesale. "It was important for me to provide direct access to that market," she says.

What followed was the task of carefully selecting who she wanted to represent, of which there were a couple of criteria, aside from the obvious aesthetic pull.

"The designers I select all have interesting stories and backgrounds. And often there's a personal connection there too," says Bradley, referring to the fact more than one of her suppliers have also experienced a major career change. "For example,

Nicola Cliffe, of fabric company Madder Cutch & Co, was a chemistry teacher with a lifelong interest in art," she explains. "Her desire to change what she saw as the careless use of synthetic dyes was the catalyst for her completing an MA in sustainable textile design and starting her business."

Which leads to another theme Bradley's suppliers have in common. All of the textiles she represents have a positive environmental aspect to them. "They are either hand-blocked or hand-screened using natural plant dyes, or they are digitally printed, which eliminates the need for synthetic dyes." Plus, she says, "All the fabric houses for whom I am the sole distributor, make the fabric to order, which eliminates wastage."

While this sounds fantastic, what is also very obvious, on perusing the Décor & Tissu website or stepping into the physical space, is that it looks amazing too. She says the most exciting part of her business is seeing people's reaction when they come in to the Mt Eden showroom, with its brands ranging from very classic British, through to fun and contemporary.

"I've set it up with vignettes, including a sitting room scenario with beautiful wallpaper behind the sofa," she says. "And I've had so much positive feedback from people, who say they've not seen anything similar elsewhere. It's very reaffirming to me that not everyone is after a mass-produced look and shows how simple changes can produce something that is beautiful and unique." And without the planet paying the price.