

# Quintessentially British



ASPINAL OF LONDON FLAGSHIP STORE,  
BROOK STREET, LONDON, UK



HONOURING TRADITION, UNDERSTATED ELEGANCE, QUALITY AND SERVICE WHILE CELEBRATING BRIT MODERN CHIC AND “COOL”, ASPINAL OF LONDON IS A QUINTESSENTIALLY BRITISH BRAND WHICH, IN ITS VERY IDENTITY, EASILY EMBRACES SEEMING CONTRADICTIONS. HERE, RLI SITS DOWN WITH COMPANY CHAIRMAN AND FOUNDER IAIN BURTON TO DISCUSS THE BRAND’S IDENTITY AND THE FUTURE.

Originally founded in 2001 with the idea of reviving the vanishing English leather industry by making small leather goods for the world’s major museums and galleries, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, The National Gallery in London and The Louvre in Paris, Aspinal of London’s success and dedication to British craftsmanship, timeless design and quality are true values of a heritage brand.

The brand’s success grew exponentially from this small leather goods offering, soon diversifying into travel accessories before launching accessories collections for both men

and women, first purely as an online business, and only after eight years did it launch its first retail store in Selfridges London.

Since then Aspinal has expanded rapidly over the past decade and now has 10 standalone stores in London plus concessions in both Selfridges and Harrods. A new Northern flagship in Leeds has opened in the new Victoria Arcade and a Scottish flagship on Edinburgh’s George St will soon be opening.

“I am proud to say that we have developed our retail strategy rapidly in a comparatively very short space of time and we are looking forward to opening our new 4,000sq ft flagship London

store on Regent St, St James in the Summer of 2017," says Aspinal of London's Chairman and Founder Iain Burton. "We have been working on this exciting and beautiful new store with Crown Estates to create a real flagship that will be a credit to the new St James area and ourselves, and we believe it will be the game changing presence that we have been looking for."

Aspinal of London's handcrafted leather goods encompass distinctly British qualities while the brand prides itself on the creation of affordable luxury, accessible for men and women who are seeking investment pieces that last a lifetime. Each piece is created by an experienced design team led by Creative Director, Mariya Dykalo, in Aspinal's West Sussex headquarters.

A proudly British luxury brand, Aspinal of London creates desirable contemporary classics for women and men. "The polished and practical accessories collections include women's and men's bags, luggage, leather accessories and stationary. Aspinal is the go-to gift destination for personalised quality gifts, exquisitely presented that last a lifetime," says Burton.

Aspinal has created a number of highly successful collaborations which include Elizabeth Hurley, New York socialite and style icon Olivia Palermo and recently the stunning Dockery Collection with Michelle Dockery of Downton Abbey fame. The Dockery Collection is a range of timeless designs based on a much-loved vintage bag owned by Michelle's grandmother, and Aspinal has produced two lines - a classic frame bag, the Dockery, and its sister, The Dockery Snap Bag. Aspinal sees Michelle as a modern icon of classic British style, making her the ideal partner and ambassador for the quintessentially British brand.

"We feel that with Michelle we have found our brand soul mate, and you can see this in the beautiful range of lady-like bags," explains Burton.

The brand continues to go from strength to strength. From crocodile-effect executive leather briefcases, to Italian calf leather reporter bags, and lady-like cross-body saddle bags, the brand continues to successfully build upon its style family variations and extensive colourways. Aspinal is still a niche brand that stands out from other mass market offerings - allowing it to remain close to the artisans that work for it and also to its customers. The unique monogramming service of many of the products - from journals to passport covers, watch boxes and handbag straps - allows for initials to be printed onto the leather, further reinforcing the relationship between consumer and product, making it a long-lasting connection with the brand.

This focus on the experience of the customer and that all-important relationship ensures that quality does not come with an out-of-reach price tag. Aspinal has built a deserving reputation as the number one brand in the UK for quality versus price. The aim was never to create an "elitist" brand but rather to focus on making beautiful pieces that stand the test of time. That speaks volumes about the brand's values, as does the fact that Aspinal is driven by elegance and style rather than fashion.

The brand's appeal is so wide that the same bag is worn by mother and daughter alike. Men and women, young and the more mature, the fashionable, the elegant and the timeless - they are all Aspinal customers.

"Aspinal of London's aim is to open stores in cities across the world, environments that reflect the warmth of the brand relationships and where the customer can buy something for everyone from a credit card holder - to a beautiful bag or leather crafted monopoly board - luxury products with a fair and reasonable price tag," explains Burton.

"That's part of what makes Aspinal unique. As is the fact that Aspinal of London makes sure all products are made with adherence to the international standards of ethical business because it believes that real luxury shouldn't cost the earth," Burton concludes.

