

# Linen store

## COMPANIES THAT IMPRESS



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*Linen is a mature fabric, its long history of use by ancient societies is coupled with aesthetic qualities that take time to fully appreciate. Comparisons may be odious but it is true to say linen cannot create the ostentatious impact of fabrics such as silk. Thankfully it doesn't have to, it has its own associations; humility, integrity, timelessness and a beauty that increases with age and familiarity. We have selected a handful of companies that know this fibre well ...*

**The art of living** Yumiko Sekine's first foray into the commercial world was importing used books into Japan. Travelling throughout the USA and Europe she searched for illustrated recipe books and sewing manuals. Her taste for Western graphic design – rooted in her study of European Art History – flowered into a creative enterprise producing home wares and stationery. The basis for the collections was simple, Yumiko's own taste, she explains, “I could find many things but linen was a problem. There was beautiful linen in Europe but prices were too high.” Even if they had been affordable there was another problem, “the designs were too elegant! I couldn't sell them for everyday use.” Undeterred Yumiko sourced raw materials and designed the products herself. In Lithuania she found a factory that could produce her products in small batches. That was eight years ago and Yumiko now has over 400 products but her ethos hasn't altered “They are super simple, not necessarily eye-catching but inspired by real needs. They fit into someone's home quietly and can stay for a long time.” [www.fog-notebooks.com](http://www.fog-notebooks.com)

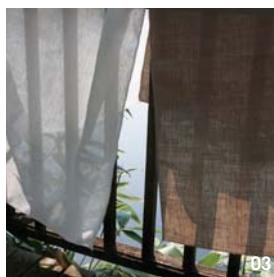
**The art of looking** Knowledge is power but it is pleasure too. Cote Bastide with its deceptively basic aesthetic draws to itself those who understand the subtle distinctions between good, better and best. Essentially, Cote Bastide offers a lifestyle – one of simplicity, deceleration and appreciation. We are encouraged to observe previously unseen intricacies and to comprehend that the creation of a stack of plain nut-brown linen pillows required the skills of an experienced craftsperson. The company ethos dismisses “urgent” day-to-day tasks and by providing simple, and undeniably beautiful products aims to trigger the wonder we experienced as children. In this world the chore of changing the bathroom towels becomes the pleasure of setting out the fine linens. One is reminded to pause, take a deep breath - they have a complementary range of fragrances - exhale and realize the beauty that surrounds us. [www.cotebastide.com](http://www.cotebastide.com)

**The art of making** Linnet - a finch with a particular fondness for flax seeds but also a company with a deep love of linen. Co-founders Satoshi and Mayumi Maeda blend their respective expertise in architecture and art and design but also rely on a shared gift for spotting objects and materials that possess a shy kind of loveliness. Based in Kyoto they offer products from much further afield; Portuguese and French lace sit along side stitched flax ribbons in shades of mint, mulberry and sage. Readymade products, sewing tools and yardage as well as paper patterns she has designed, catering for both consumers and those wishing to pursue their own crafts. Passion, practicality and very pretty products. [www.lin-net.com](http://www.lin-net.com)

**The art of sharing** The Linen Shop has metres and metres, or yards and yards (they work in both measures) of fabrics all “with many-a-use” as they put it. But this is no bulk buy, economy driven enterprise; the vast majority of these fine fabrics are designed by Fran White on a hand-loom, then woven in Ireland, Scotland or Belgium. A few other linens are carefully selected to complement Fran's designs. The shop's tranquil surroundings in the English landscape have inspired many of Fran's fabric designs and colours. Searching for linen the shade of a river-washed pebble or a cloud on a fine June day? Look no further... [www.thelinenshop.biz](http://www.thelinenshop.biz)



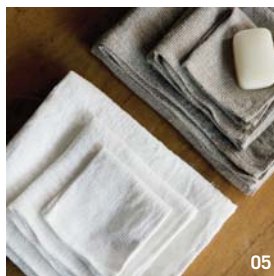
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