

# *collect*

N°22 DORCHESTER COLLECTION





## Society Room / *Paris*

Inspired by the early 20th century literary salons, where like-minded aesthetes assembled to share ideas, Society Room gathers creative people in a lively place dedicated to the arts, centred on the civilised ritual of made-to-measure tailoring.



A visit to the private quarters of Society Room, located in a discreet townhouse just steps from Place de la Madeleine, is destined to lead to a host of discoveries and encounters. At heart, it is a tailor's den, where both ladies and gentlemen can get fitted for bespoke wares in fine Italian fabrics—yet they are also invited to enjoy a glass of wine, stay for lunch, try on the jewellery and other accessories, or glance at the art that hangs on its walls. Almost everything happens to be for sale but this is not simply a boutique. It is, moreover, a Parisian place of aesthetic exchange. Conversation, collaboration and personal encounters are the priority here.

"I started the project by thinking about who my customers are," explains founder Yvan Benbanaste. Hailing from the textile centre of France, Lyon, he subsequently garnered extensive experience in fashion design working with Italian houses, manufacturers and weavers. His customers? His friends. "With the number of people I know in Paris and the number of friends I have, I thought that I would have to do a project dedicated to them—to my friends, friends of my friends and to Parisians. We wanted to do something quite classic and with taste."

He describes his business plan as something rather more like a piece of theatre—and, indeed, the project is one that is character-driven and ever changing (objects and exhibitions change roughly every six months). The decorator of the space is, principally, an opera and theatre set designer, handmade Japanese ceramics are dotted throughout the shop as well as other objects made by artisans that cannot be found elsewhere in Paris. A mix between a gallery and a cabinet of curiosities, Benbanaste explains the concept: "It is centred around a certain *art de vivre*. I show what I love in an agreeable environment. I am a sort of orchestra conductor, reuniting different people with different skills in this place. But, at base, my specialty is really fashion, tailoring and material."

Whilst well-made suits with sleek cuts and crisp customised shirts usually belong to the domain of menswear, Society Room offers this style also to women—très Parisien. Made-to-measure suits, jackets, tuxedos and shirts for men and women



start at a price of € 800. Furthermore, in addition to the made-to-measure services, a ready-to-wear collection includes iconic pieces, such as the tuxedo and blazer, as well as lighter looks that feature tunics, t-shirts, tank tops and short jumpsuits; the collection is presented alongside a selection of vintage pieces to capture the truly eclectic but elegant vibe. Society Room muses are the likes of Jane Birkin, in the era when she would steal Serge Gainsbourg's clothes to play with a feminine, sensual appeal using a masculine wardrobe. Oversized yet gathered at the waist, the Society Room silhouette is the perfect illustration of Parisian allure. A stop by this haven for the art of living well—and being well dressed for it—is sure to attract beauty lovers, whether local or Francophile at heart.

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