



STYLISH SETTING
From left: Fish Spice Jewels by L'Objet; Ma Russie Gemstones Sapphire presentation plate by Fradkof; Golden Forest teapot by Dibbern

TUESDAYS' CHILD

Hotelier Grace Leo turns her discerning eye to her new online luxury boutique, A Touch of Grace.
By Rachel Read

When it comes to creative concepts, Grace Leo is never short of inspiration. The daughter of Hong Kong hoteliers and the pioneering founder of Grace Leo Consultancy, she has developed and transformed luxury hotels around the world with her innate sense of style. Now, she's turning her design flair to a new luxury online store, A Touch of Grace.

Building on the appreciation for beauty, sophistication and skilled craftsmanship that made hotel projects including Le Guanahani in St Barths and The Lancaster in Paris such a success, Leo's idea was to bring a touch of European lifestyle into the home of the everyday consumer—with all products hand-selected by Leo herself.



What gave you the idea for A Touch of Grace and the distinctive "Curated Ensembles" that its items are grouped into?

I spent a lot of time sourcing the design elements and products featured in my hotels, and guests would often ask, "Where did you get that from?" What encouraged me to develop A Touch of Grace was the idea of creating a place where people could easily and conveniently access all my design concepts and finds.

Why did you choose to focus on European products?

When you first live in Europe and are surrounded by the many luxuries it has to offer, you want all of that opulence right at your fingertips—they become a part of you. By shopping with A Touch of Grace, consumers from all over China now have access to the same artisan luxury products that I have enjoyed over the years, but

without having to leave their homes. A Touch of Grace also benefits from my many years of design experience; you get the kind of personalised, first-class advice that many retail stores can't provide.

What sets A Touch of Grace apart from other retailers?

I think of our brand as not just a vehicle for luxury products, but also a go-to resource for European savoir faire and the art of living. Our website is different because our mission is to inform and educate as much as it is to promote. To me, an educated consumer is our best customer. Only when armed with the facts, like a product's authentic European provenance, are consumers certain that our brand mirrors their values or fulfils their aspirations.

How do you select and source the items?

The products I have chosen reflect the tastes and standards

that I have adhered to as a professional designer for the last 25 years. This means they must all be made only in Europe, be representative of the highest degree of craftsmanship and quality, and come from world-renowned European luxury goods companies I have consistently worked with.

How have tastes evolved in Asia? Do you think appetite has increased for European products?

Consumers in Asia are becoming more sophisticated, cosmopolitan and in-the-know all the time. Their knowledge of every class of luxury product and experience is increasing experientially as they travel and learn. As their knowledge increases, their appetite for owning a select number of excellent products is on the rise—I am sure they buy more selectively rather than quantitatively.

How does designing for hotel interiors differ from choosing items for one's own home?

As a hotel developer who has worked on many different properties all over the world, I always plan out a project by first creating a concept and a storyboard that sets the stage for whatever I want it to look like. I'm not bound by any style or other people's design influences; instead, I seek inspiration from the architectural epoch of a building, the local culture, or the history, area or city where my project is located.

Decorating a home is an entirely different matter. Rather than setting the stage based upon the mindset and traditions of a culture or a country, you must design a home as a reflection of your own mind and soul. Make it a mirror of your own personal aspirations and you can't go wrong. ❶