

The Tinct Helmet Bag

British leather brand launches new collection with a Chelsea pop-up

It's been a hell of a year for Rosie and Ben Broad, the brother-sister team behind **Tinct**. Their first collection of English-made leather bags launched in July 2015, was greeted with glee by the fashion world, and proved a hit with lovers of fine craftsmanship and bold-but-simple style. Now stocked at **The Conran Shop** and **Gather & See**, as well as at **tinct-uk.com**, their rainbow-toned totes, shoppers and cross-body bags have cemented their reputation as one of the most upbeat and original makers of leather goods working today.



Photography by Tom Jameison

Now, on **1–10 September**, Tinct (and friends) are upping the ante with a 10-day pop-up shop in Chelsea – their very first 'real world' product showcase. Rosie, Ben and a dog named Whisky will unveil a host of new additions to the Tinct product line-up, including document wallets, cardholders, key rings and a limited-edition motorcycle-helmet bag – all hand-crafted in Somerset from the finest-quality vegetable-tanned Italian leather.



A selection of colours available for card wallets launching at their pop up

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Why a helmet bag? "We have a few friends who ride bikes and race cars," says Rosie; 'it evolved through conversations with them. There really is nothing decent to house these beautiful helmets, which are expensive pieces of kit, especially if you're going for a custom paint job."



Sketches for the Helmet Bag that's set to launch this September

For launch, Tinct's new helmet bags will be entirely made to order, allowing customers to customise their pieces as they wish, choosing the vegetable-tanning base colour and the colour of the canvas lining, woven in Manchester, as well as specifying any personalised emboss they desire. (And, in case you've nothing to put in them, the Tinct pop-up will also stock a range of beautiful, crafted helmets from biking brand Hedon.)

Reflecting the natural heritage of vegetable-tanned leather (which uses organic materials such as tree bark to treat the hides), and the Tinct brand's own flora-themed film, the pop-up is designed to express the wonders of nature. Contributions come from London floral studio **Bold Oxlip**, whose founder Harriet Slaughter is dressing the store in luxuriant green foliage.

Rosie and Ben will be on site for all 10 days of the pop-up, offering a free personalisation service for anything bought in-store – just the thing in the run-up to Christmas...



From Left to Right: Shopper in Red, Corner Zip Wallet in Lattuga, Cross Body Bag in Aragosta, Tote in Panna

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Notes for Editors

Tinct Pop-up Shop

1 September to 10 September

Launch party

Thursday 1 September

123 Sydney Street

London

SW3 6NR

Opening hours Monday to Saturday 10 am to 6.30 pm

About Tinct

A family firm in the most literal sense, the Tinct leather brand is the brainchild of sister-and-brother team Rosie and Ben Broad. From their Chichester studio, the pair blends traditional British leathercraft and modern design sensibility to create a strikingly simple but personality-packed range of high-quality bags and accessories. Made in Somerset from fine Italian vegetable-tanned leather, sourced from farms with the highest ethical standards, Tinct's products are sold online at tinct-uk.com and Gather & See as well as from the Conran Shop.

tinct-uk.com

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Interview with Tinct founders Rosie and Ben Broad

How did Tinct get started?

Rosie: From slightly curious beginnings....

One year I was absolutely stumped on what to give a friend for her birthday. She loves cats and dressing up – so naturally I made her a leather cat mask. I loved the process of designing, and with a newfound love of working with leather I continued my craft into making ever more intricate leather cat faces.

At this stage I was working as part of the visual merchandising team at Jigsaw. One day while rummaging in the prop warehouse I uncovered some beautiful dead-stock leather. I enquired about it, and was told to fill my boots so I backed up my car and literally filled my boot.

My manager at the time saw that I was making these animal masks and asked me to design some for our Christmas window. It was a big success, with people enquiring about buying the masks and so I thought, 'Right! This is it! I quit!' Off I went to the countryside, got a puppy and began making masks.

The challenge I faced, however, was that no one actually bought them. I needed to reinvent my slightly whimsical idea into something a little more tangible. A friend suggested leather goods and it all went from there.

I started sampling in Portugal, but when that relationship broke down and I brought production to England, which is where we should have started anyway as it feels so fitting manufacturing here.

I went through the Prince's Trust Exploring Enterprise course which was enlightening in that it made me realise that I really enjoyed the business aspect of business – something I had always been incredibly daunted by. I didn't think I could be creative and business-minded at the same time.

About a year in Ben started showing an interest in Tinct and so we made it an official partnership pretty soon after. I reckon it could be one of the best decisions I've made so far!

What are your long-term aims for the brand?

Rosie & Ben: As it stands, Tinct is a British-made leather goods brand, but we hope it to be much more than that in the future. Creating high-quality, desirable products is at the heart of what we do, but our aspirations are reach far further.

We've discussed introducing charitable aspects to the business when it's more established, opening a workshop and creating an apprenticeship scheme. We want to support young people and sustainable means of production. It's all a little down the line for the time being, but it's exciting thinking about what it could become in the future.

In the shorter term, we've been having a few interesting conversations regarding cool upcoming collaborations, quite design-focused rather than fashion-centric, which is so exciting.

Ben, what does your professional backgrounds bring to Tinct?

Ben: I spent a number of years working in a London advertising agency in various roles from production to account management. The advertising industry provides a fantastic springboard for people looking to start something of their own (in whatever field), as it arms one with the broad understanding of what it takes to build a brand and make a business work.

Rosie, how did you develop your knowledge of British leather craft?

Rosie: Research and the desire for knowledge! I won't ever pretend I'm the most clued up being when it comes to leather craft but I don't think you ever know how much you absorb until someone starts asking you about it. I didn't study design or leather craft so it's been an organic progression for me. Talking to people, visiting places, touching stuff and having a go.

How would you describe your design approach?

Rosie: Ongoing. I'm constantly designing and re-designing everything. I think I have redesigned my dream house in my head about three times, as well as developed our barns, built a glass lodge, and then turned it all into a hotel. Next is a campervan...

There's not a period when I sit down and say 'OK, today until Friday I have to design and, that's it'. It would just become a formidable task; sometimes things just come to you at the most random times, and if you can get it down then you can go back to it and develop the idea.

How do you decide which designs to take forward into production?

Rosie & Ben: It's predominantly timings-based. We have designs backlogged because it's not the right time. It's also a cash-flow thing. We simply can't afford to put everything through, so we have to look at items with a critical eye and ask ourselves various questions. We also speak to people. People are the biggest asset in deciding what to design next.

What other brands do you admire?

Rosie & Ben: Loewe for the puzzle bag. Phoebe English for the attention to construction. Issey Miyake because I love the pleats! Marni for the colour. Also: Bill Amberg because he just seems to know everything there is to know about leather, and Private White VC whose clothing is all made, and predominantly woven, in Manchester.

The brand's video is very distinctive – who/where did the creative inspiration come from?

Ben: An old friend of mine, Jack Driscoll, directed and produced the film, and it was ultimately Jack's incredible creative vision that led us to where we got to. We all had ideas in mind as to what we wanted the film to be, but we shared the notion of wanting to draw on the playful, honest, and handmade values of the brand and to showcase the collection in an interesting way. Combining this with our use of vegetable-tanned leather and interesting colour combinations gave us an interesting start point, and the idea evolved from there.

Your factory is in Somerset – how did you choose it and why?

Rosie & Ben: We knew we wanted to manufacture in the UK, so it was a case of finding someone who would take a risk on a tiny brand. We found a factory, whose heritage was actually in leather tanning, who were expanding their manufacturing arm and it went from there. There have been peaks and troughs but there are always going to be when you're manufacturing! We never, never underestimate how hard it must be running an operation like that.

Sabine says you're moving the business to East London – what are the benefits of doing that?

Rosie & Ben: Geography certainly plays a role! It should also streamline the whole operation, and it also just feels more 'us'. We have recently taken on a small space in London and spend half our time working from there so it will be far easier to work alongside our factory. We also really like the people we are working with there. They understand the feel of the brand, and are enthusiastic about us, which is an absolute bonus.

I understand you're making a motorbike-helmet bag – what has inspired that?

Rosie: People! We have a few friends who ride bikes and race cars and just through conversations with them it evolved. A bit of market research and drawing and – ta-da! – it was there and, actually, there really is nothing decent to house these beautiful helmets, which are expensive pieces of kit, especially if you're going for a custom paint job.

Are you planning on introducing any other new products?

Rosie & Ben: We are, and you can come and see them in our pop-up shop!

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The pop-up is in Chelsea – how come?

Rosie & Ben: We had visited a couple of spaces prior to deciding on Chelsea, and there were multiple reasons why we decided to go with it. We stepped into the shop and really felt like we could create an exciting space to invite people into our world. It's as much about creating an inviting and engaging space as it is properly showcasing our products for the first time.

Will you be doing anything special for the event?

We'll be having a little party on our opening night (Thursday 1 September) at which we'll have the Prosecco Van [from Ben's other business, Bubble Bros] parked up outside. We'll be offering 10% off any sales that night, as well as having a prize draw. Throughout the pop-up we will also be offering free while-you-wait personalisation on any purchase.

What's the best thing about working with your sibling?

Rosie: He's my bro! There isn't anyone I trust or respect more than Ben, and when it boils down to it he is one of my best friends too, so we can have a fun time as well as work hard.

Ben: We have an inherent trust and respect for each other, and despite being the older brother I'm endlessly impressed with my little sister. We also enjoy a lot of the same things, don't take life too seriously, and share a stupid sense of humour, which means plenty of laughter.

... and what's the worst?

Rosie & Ben: It's all good. So far.

