

London calling!

Mayfair is home to the biggest names in British game shooting, a place where best London gunmaking talent meets the finest materials and creative talent from around the British Isles. There is something for every taste (and most budgets) in the various districts nearby too, so when only the best will do when shopping in the capital, always go west.

Compiled by **Martin Puddifer**

Gunmakers Key:

- 1: Holland & Holland
- 2: James Purdey & Sons
- 3: William & Son
- 4: Anderson Wheeler
- 5: William Evans
- 6: Beretta Gallery



Gunmakers

Holland & Holland

Where: 33 Bruton Street, W1J 6HH

Founded: 1835

About: Holland & Holland's historical position as a best London gunmaker is stronger than ever thanks to a team with a wealth of gunmaking and retail experience behind it; as stockists of its own shotguns and rifles, artwork, taxidermy and clothing, each room at Bruton Street tells a story. Holland & Holland produces around 75 new guns each year at its factory near Paddington Station, two-thirds of which are bespoke. Buyers of these bespoke guns have the chance to be ensconced



in the gunmaking process, and few are the customers who don't want to meet the craftsmen building their shotgun or head out to Holland & Holland's own shooting ground at Northwood as part of the gunfitting process.

Creative director Niels Van Rooyen is responsible for bringing the firm's quintessentially English style to the shop floor. His emphasis on personal style before, during and after the shoot day and the quirky use of colour and fabrics has broken new ground across the world. Clothing does not come cheap here (all tweeds sold at Holland & Holland come from within these shores, including the signature tweed inspired by founder Harris Holland) but Van Rooyen doesn't cut corners.

While functionality trumps style when shooting attire is concerned, for Van Rooyen, regardless of the traditional or generic nature of shooting clothing, nobody should be afraid of looking smart on the peg. "You don't want to look as though you've just come out of



a box," he says. When creating a bespoke garment or full sporting wardrobe, Van Rooyen emphasises the importance of educating customers about how to bond with the landscape, while at the same time he learns about their own tastes. If you don't want to be like everybody else, head to Bruton Street.

hollandandholland.com

James Purdey & Sons

Where: Audley House, 57-58 South Audley Street, W1K 2ED

Founded: 1814

About: While every gunmaker wants to provide its customers with the best service and build guns using the finest materials, no-one can replicate 'The Purdey Way'. The process, which is followed by each Purdey craftsman, takes around two years to complete. First stop is either the West London Shooting School - Purdey has been taking its customers there since the 1930s - or the iconic Long Room at Audley House for a session with the try gun to collect stock dimensions. Customers select their stock while at Audley House and also have the chance to meet the craftsmen at the factory in Hammersmith. Once the gun is completed, around 800 man-hours later, customers join the likes of Queen Victoria, W.G. Grace and Charles



Darwin by having their gun's details entered in the Dimensions Books dating back to 1816, as well as having their gun presented to them in the Long Room. Nigel Beaumont completes the Purdey red book that accompanies each finished gun but it won't be the first time the said gentleman will have seen one of its components. How so? Part of Nigel Beaumont's job is to source only those

walnuts from Turkish wood yards that meet Purdey's strict stock specifications, all of which achieve their high gloss finished via a secret Slacum oil recipe held only by a single craftsman. While unafraid of innovation - see its Damascus shotgun from 2009 - Purdey prefers to stay true to its roots, especially on clothing. Purdey has crafted a clothing range with the same consideration as their fine guns and rifles to establish an authentic, functional range blending into nature. It works. British craftsmen make the majority of the range and new pieces follow a seasonal timetable rather than that dreaded f-word - fashion.

A former engraver for the Bank of England is one of two in-house craftsmen currently working their magic on the guns, and opportunities exist to engrave glassware and personalise leather goods to customer's specifications, echoing the bespoke nature of the brand. purdey.com

William & Son

Where: 14 Mount St, W1K 2RF
Founded: 1999
About: William Asprey and his team have certainly been busy since establishing his eponymous luxury goods store and gunmakers, and while small compared to others on our list, its size has no effect on the quality of its shotguns or its clothing. Around 1,000 hours goes into creating one of its bespoke guns, the whole process overseen by seasoned gunsmith Paul West, whose personal contact list of timeserved actioners, barrel makers and stockers is as impressive as the finished products their efforts produce. Bespoke guns will take around 12-14 months to complete with no machinery involved along the way. William & Son is proud to wear the lifestyle tag on its sleeve, its stylish, traditional-with-a-contemporary-twist garments effortlessly achieving the difficult cross-over between town and country. The creative eye of the head of buying and product development Magda Kolodziejczyk is inspired by travel and photography, and the range is being picked up by a younger generation keen to buy into traditional country style while avoiding the faux pas committed by high street copycats. There is no bespoke or made-to-measure service at William & Son, but if you want something in a tweed different from that on the peg just ask.
williamandson.com



Anderson Wheeler

Where: 13 Shepherd Market, W1J 7PQ
Founded: 2003
About: Anderson Wheeler's reputation for luxury rifles and shotguns was established long before James Bond used the .500 Nitro Express to such devastating effect during the explosive finale to *Skyfall*. While there are over-unders and side-by-sides within its range, Anderson Wheeler's mainstay is double rifles for dangerous game in Africa. The firm produces around 40 custom guns each year between their field and best grade guns; the field grade typically take one year



to produce, using continental barrelled actions which are then stocked, engraved and finished in London, whilst the best grade are entirely handcrafted in the UK. Product development is led by Stuart Anderson Wheeler himself, often in Africa, crucial when creating something of the best quality which can still withstand the rigors of shooting in that continent. The shop in Shepherd's Market, home to a small range of accessories including knives exclusive to the firm, is filled with the curiosities that have influenced the brand, adding to the whole buying experience.
andersonwheeler.co.uk

Also in town

William Evans

Where: 67a St. James's Street, SW1A 1PH
Founded: 1883
About: One of England's oldest and last remaining independent gunmakers, William Evans is home to some of the most popular Anglo-Italian and Anglo-Spanish shotgun collaborations on the current market. The Pall Mall side-by-side (manufactured in consultation with Grulla Armas), the St. James over-under (Caesar Guerini) and Connaught (Grulla Armas) all offer a competitively priced juxtaposition of English design and Continental European craftsmanship; demand for the made-to-measure guns

- and its best London guns - has been driven by shooting instructors at Bisley, where William Evans has a satellite operation. A best London gun, comparable to those made by its London neighbours, takes around two years to complete (the aforementioned Continental ranges have a four- to six-month wait), each of its components superior to those of the off-the-shelf guns. The William Evans team pride themselves on their approachability and close relationships with their customers - theirs is the kind of gunshop where £1,000 will keep you in kit for many seasons to come.
williamevans.com

J. Rigby & Co.

Where: 13-19 Pensbury Place, SW8 4TP
Founded: 1775
About: Synonymous with big game hunting and fine and collectable firearms, Rigbys was so pleased to be returning to London after a 15-year absence it commissioned three rifles to commemorate the occasion. The brand will now be producing three different rifles, the Big Game, the London Best and the Rising Bite at its new factory in Vauxhall. While the queue for hunting

rifles is around 200 strong each year, customers seeking any one of its guns will arguably be as excited as the team making it when the two sides come together. Engraving talent from across Europe gives the new era at Rigby a truly international flavour, and that is without its renewed relationship with Mauser on new Rigby hunting rifles. The companies once developed one of the most successful magazine rifle designs in history, the Magnum Mauser action, so there are interesting times ahead.
johnrigbyandco.com

Boss & Co.

Four questions, four answers from Boss & Co. gunroom manager Roy Lyu.

What is the process of ordering a best gun from Boss & Co.? We manufacture fewer than 20 guns each year and like to work with our clients to create them truly bespoke guns and encourage a visit to our factory premises to get a feel for what we do. Most clients are well-versed with our guns and know what they want. With new clients we like to ascertain what our gun will be used for and will advise on barrel length, chokes, engraving, choice of wood, stock configurations



and finishes, so we can offer a bespoke gun suited to their sport.

How long might it take for a gun to be delivered? Side-by-sides take approximately two years while over-unders take around two-and-a-half. Some guns may take longer depending on the intricacy of the engraving required.

How do you balance traditional working methods with the demands of the modern customer? In this age of CNC, which cuts down build time, our craftsmen still use traditional methods, working with their hands and using the same machinery we have used for the last



50 years. Our clients appreciate our working methods and see this when they see the gunsmiths in action at their benches.

What is it about Boss & Co. best guns that set them aside from other best London gunmakers? Boss is known as the pioneer of the Boss patent single trigger over-under shotgun - the most sought-after and desired gun. Also, the company has only been English family-owned since it was founded. When you buy a Boss gun, you are getting 200 years of English gunmaking knowledge behind it and know that the dedication spent creating and quality of finish will be 'Best London' only.
bossguns.co.uk



Ray Ward Gunsmiths

Where: 12a Cadogan Place, SW1X 9PU
Founded: 1961 (as Continental Sports)
About: Ray Ward has come a long way since its humble beginnings in Redhill, Surrey, now selling an array of the finest British and international names from its impressive shop in Belgravia. The firm entered a new phase in 2011 when it debuted its own best and bespoke shotgun range.
rayward.co.uk

Beretta Gallery

Where: 36 St. James's Street, SW1A 1JD
Founded: 1526
About: It would be a crime not to have the oldest gunmaker in the world on our list. The quality of the range at the Beretta Gallery, London's largest gunroom, attracts admirers from across the country (it's across from The Ritz) and the quality of craftsmanship on its premium guns - the engraving from Brescia in particular - is the standard barer for many in the gun

trade around the world. The competitive cost of Beretta guns means it is one of the most accessible brands on the market and visitors to St. James's Street might find themselves rubbing shoulders with one of the Beretta family watching customers appreciating the whole Beretta range under one roof. The versatile clothing range is equally impressive, and despite its stylish Italian character one doesn't have to be of fashion model dimensions to pull it off in one of its key pieces.
london.berettagallery.com

Food and drink

Allens of Mayfair

Where: 117 Mount St, W1K 3LA
Founded: 1830
About: London's oldest butcher counts Marco Pierre White and Michel Roux Jr as admirers and

The Ivy and Scotts as customers - especially for game, which comes to Mount Street from shoots across the country. If you want grouse on the Glorious Twelfth this is the butcher to try first, not least because it's held a long standing relationship

with country estates ever since landed Londoners arrived on Mount Street looking to sell their bag. Venison, mallard, pheasant, partridge, woodpigeon and woodcock are also available during the season.
allensofmayfair.co.uk

Also in town

Paxton & Whitfield

Where: 93 Jermyn Street, SW1Y 6JE
Founded: 1797
About: With its instantly recognisable black and gold frontage, Paxton & Whitfield is the go-to cheesemonger on our list. Two-thirds of its 150-strong artisan cheeses come from the British Isles, many finding their way to the Royal palaces. Paxton & Whitfield works directly with the artisans to maintain its high standards and bring on new talent, this investment helping to enhance this country's reputation for cheesemaking. Hampers are a large part of their service and customers of a shooting bent looking to make up their own can also tap in to an exclusive range of chutneys, real ales, biscuits and meats. A number of Paxton & Whitfield cheeses are available for export, some through a partnership with the Parisian fromagerie Androuet.
Top tips: Of buying cheeses for shoot days, branch manager Hero Hirsh says: "Buy your cheese as close to the day as you can. Cheese changes, so what tastes good today might not be as good in two weeks' time. Avoid buying a wide selection in small quantities; it doesn't look generous even though it's fun to buy. Keep it simple; have up to three cheeses available, and if you're serving sloe gin team it with a mellow Cornish blue rather than a salty Stilton that won't make the most of the sloe gin's sweetness."
paxtonandwhitfield.co.uk

Rules

Where: 35 Maiden Lane, Covent Garden, WC2E 7LB
Founded: 1798
About: Rules restaurant has a history few can surpass, thanks in part to famous diners including Chaplin and Olivier. Rules loves its game and its Pennine estate has long hosted staff looking to improve their meat husbandry skills and knowledge.
rules.co.uk

Berry Bros. & Rudd

Where: 3 St. James Street, SW1A 1EG
Founded: 1698
About: This family-run wine merchants has come a long way since it began life as a grocers under the stewardship of the Widow Bourne. While you won't find a vintage which stretches back to the 1600s, a suitable tonic for your hipflask or shoot dinner will be simple thanks to any one of the eight Masters of Wine at Berry Bros. & Rudd, more than any other wine merchant. Cellars that once housed the exiled Napoleon III and wine bound for the Titanic are now home to thousands of wine varieties from around the world - including rare and vintage bottles.



Wine for September: Berry Bros. & Rudd Master of Wine Demetri Walters recommends a Burgundy, the 2010 Beaune 1er Cru, Les Cents Vignes, Domaine des Croix, for those serving roast partridge. (£29.95 per single bottle).
bbr.com

Harwood Arms

Where: Walham Grove, Fulham, SW6 1QP
Founded: 2008 (in current form)
About: Mike Robinson's establishment is the only pub in London to have a Michelin star. The creative menu, which has game at its heart during the season, offers a slice of rural life for Londoners old and new.
harwoodarms.com



Clothing and accessories around town

Cordings of Piccadilly

Where: 19 Piccadilly, W1J 0LA
Founded: 1839
About: Co-owned by Sir Eric Clapton and patronised by Graham Coxon and the Duke of Wellington over the years, Cordings is one of London's most recognisable one-stop off-the-peg shops for fieldsports enthusiasts. The home of the iconic Covert Coat, the shop is a by-word for tradition without fustiness that is equally at home in town as it is in country. Cordings has its own house tweed, and every essential from the breeks, socks and cords to ties, shirts and sports jackets in a rainbow of colours can be found across its shelves.
cordings.co.uk



Orvis

Where: 11b Regent St, SW1Y 4LR
Founded: 1856
About: One for the American gun in London who pines for a slice of home or the Brit who loves to add a little New England influence to their sporting wardrobe. Orvis's new

3,200 square foot store is good news for people who like to buy in bulk but want assurance their clothing will stand up to whatever nature can throw at it on either side of the Atlantic. While unabashedly American, many an Orvis garment takes its cue from the Old World, and it would be easy to imagine a sportsman from Yorkshire

or Maine wearing identical threads in their respective countrysides. Dogs are welcome in store.
orvis.co.uk



Pickett

Where: 32-33 Burlington Arcade, W1J 0PZ & 149 Sloane Street, SW1X 9BZ
Founded: 1988
About: Luxury leather goods retailer Trevor Pickett developed an appreciation of British-made things behind the counter of his parents' specialist bicycle shop in Essex. Through Pickett Bespoke, a complement to his company's extensive handmade range, this "quintessential English eccentric" is able to explore each stage of the design

process thoroughly, entwining colour and texture - most of his leathers are dyed to his personal specification - to the customer's expectations. While flasks and cup sets are a huge hit with shooting customers, anyone wanting to treat themselves should think about a bespoke cartridge bag or gunslip to go with it. Why? As someone who is equally at home in the beating line as the West End, you wouldn't bet against Trevor Pickett doing extra homework on your piece.
pickett.co.uk

The secret is out...

Ever wondered where you can get hold of a sports jacket for the après-shoot pint that you could wear from the age of 21 to 81 and still look sharper than Don Draper on a skiing vacation in Vermont? Enter Bladen, a stylish brand that has prided itself on the quality of its exclusive Supersax tweeds since 1917 and which now wants to get better acquainted with game shooters (William Evans is a stockist). Inspired by Savile Row tailoring, many of the garments within the Bladen range take up to six weeks to create. There is something for guns of either sex, including breeks, caps, country ties and the action backed Suffolk jacket. A semi-bespoke service is available at many Bladen stockists, including Benson & Clegg in the nearby Piccadilly Arcade.
bladentailoring.co.uk



Oliver Brown

Where: 75 Lower Sloane Street, SW1W 8DA

Founded: 1984

About: The next time you're talking bespoke shooting suits and someone mentions they "know a little place in Chelsea" your first thought should be

Oliver Brown. The sourcing of cloth from some of the oldest mills in Scotland and northern England (all garments are made in England) will tick a box with many, but there's also the added bonus of its entire shooting range being available off-the-peg, made-to-order and fully bespoke care of in-house tailor Juan Carlos.

oliverbrown.org.uk

OLIVER BROWN
CHELSEA ENGLAND

Made in the West

London-sold but Walsall-made, this 80-year-old luxury leather goods maker first caught our eye when it collaborated with tattoo artist Saira Hunjan to create handmade hipflasks featuring pheasants and foxes. Many an essential for a long shooting trip is available from Ettinger, from leather and canvas weekend bags and travel wallets to the "where did you get that from" hipflask. You will find Ettinger in Harvey Nichols and Fortnum & Mason, and via appointment for bespoke products at its showroom in Putney Bridge.

ettinger.co.uk



ESTD 1934

ETTINGER

LONDON

Some sartorial advice from Savile Row

Savile Row new boys Cad & The Dandy create many wonderful things for the discerning country gentleman. Their small stand stood out a mile at the recent CLA Game Fair, and such is our appreciation for anything involving British craftspeople we couldn't help but take a brief (which turned into a long) look around. We got talking shooting threads with founder James Sleater, a man whose suit collection would make Beau Brummell blush, and he explained the various dos and donts when buying bespoke shooting shirts.

"The most important element for a shirt for shooting is that it needs high armholes, i.e. small ones. If a shirt has big armholes it means movement is restricted and will make the shirt ride up. A longer shirt will help reduce riding up and stop the unsightly shirt-out-of-the-trousers look. The fit on sleeves is also key: if they are too short movement will again be restricted. Always choose a brushed cotton over standard cotton, too."

cadandthedandy.co.uk

CAD & THE DANDY
TAILORS AND SHIRTMAKERS

Stationers

The Wren Press

Where: 1 Curzon St, W1J 5HD

Founded: 1985

About: The Wren Press, proud holder of two Royal Warrants, is a destination for customers who recognise the value of sending and receiving quality stationery. Whether for sending an invitation, thank you card or correspondence via letter headed paper, The Wren Press uses the finest engraving, lithography and thermography techniques to create its bespoke pieces. Customers who prefer to design their stationery themselves are free to do so, this service complementing The Wren Press's bespoke and ready-to-order ranges, all of which are made at their London factory.

wrenpress.com

