

When it comes to ethical fashion, which shops most deserve your hard-earned cash? *S&D* scoured the high street to find out

My fair trade lady



Emma and People Tree: a magical partnership

Fairtrade Fortnight starts on 28 February, and some exciting fair trade collections will soon be coming to the high street. There are new eco looks in Topshop, Debenhams and Monsoon, plus a special range by actress Emma Watson for People Tree (available at selected John Lewis stores), and designer T-shirts for Sports Relief. If a garment is 'fair trade', it means the cotton or wool it contains is produced without pesticides, and farmers get a fair price for it. Proceeds from fair trade clothing are then used by local communities to support health, education and other worthwhile projects.

HOW GREEN IS OUR FASHION?

UK shoppers buy around two million tons of clothing a year, worth around \$41 billion. This results in high energy use from washing and drying, toxicity from pesticides used on cotton, plus a million tons of unwanted garments, half of which end up in landfill. Most UK clothing stores have signed up to the Ethical Trading Initiative, an alliance of companies, trade unions and voluntary organisations working to improve the lives of people in global supply chains. Although the initiative aims to bring an end to child labour and unsafe working conditions, certain companies still appear in the news with reports of sweatshop workers and young children producing their clothes.

At the other end of the scale, some firms are doing their bit to make the fashion industry less wasteful and destructive by selling fair trade and organic ranges, or setting up in-store recycling schemes.

We've trawled the high street chains to decide which stores we believe are most deserving of your conscientious custom. Here are the results. Happy shopping!

1st PRIZE

FIRST PRIZE GOES TO: Monsoon

Monsoon has been living its ethical values since 1973, and is committed to its Bohemian roots, supporting ethical design and handicrafts in its fashions. Long before fair trade became fashionable, the company worked with small-scale producers in India and set up the Monsoon Accessorize Trust in 1994, funding projects that help the lives of disadvantaged women and children around the world every year. Visit www.monsoontrust.org

EXTRA ECO POINTS FOR...

being official sponsor of the Esthetica exhibition at London Fashion Week between 18-22 February, raising the profile of eco-sustainable fashion and ethical trading standards.

RECYCLING REWARDS

With its Clothes for Life scheme, you can take an old item of

Monsoon clothing back to a Monsoon store and get £10 off any new item worth £50 or more.

THE FASHION RANGES

Spring/summer 2011 sees the launch of Monsoon's LOVE range (Living Our Values and Ethics), which combines modern design with Indian handicrafts, organic fabrics and recycled materials, such as glass and Monsoon cut-off remnants.

To celebrate working with talented craftspeople for 35 years, Monsoon is also launching the Global Craft collection of fairly traded pieces, embroidered by India's Self-Employed Women's Association.

ALSO BIG ON... reducing energy use in stores and ensuring products are delivered by sea instead of air, minimising packaging and waste by using Forest Stewardship Council-certified paper bags and biodegradable plastic where possible.



Monsoon's pretty LOVE range



3rd PRIZE

THIRD PRIZE GOES TO: Debenhams

Debenhams has lots of organic and fair trade ranges, from beauty products to different clothing brands, all of which are made in factories that must pass an Ethical Social Compliance audit.

In its jewellery, the company also uses conflict-free diamonds from suppliers who comply with United Nations resolutions.

In the Debenhams cafes, all the coffee is from 100 per cent sustainable sources, the tea is

endorsed by the Ethical Tea Partnership, and the eggs are free range. The cafes also recycle cooking oil into biodiesel, and use recycled card and paper wrappers and napkins.

EXTRA ECO POINTS FOR...

using 100 per cent recycled carrier bags since 2007 and being keen supporters of the Marine Conservation Society, which works for clean seas and beaches, sustainable fisheries and protected

2nd PRIZE

SECOND PRIZE GOES TO: Marks & Spencer

M&S launched its Plan A in January 2007, setting out 100 commitments to achieve in five years that would make it the world's most sustainable major retailer. It has now extended the plan to 180 promises to meet by 2015, which include tackling climate change and waste, sourcing sustainable materials and improving working conditions for staff and suppliers. Find out more at www.marksandspencer.com/plana

EXTRA ECO POINTS FOR...

setting a target to source all clothing and home items from sustainable or ethical sources, such as Fairtrade, by 2020.

RECYCLING REWARDS

With the M&S and Oxfam Clothes

Exchange, just take your old, unwanted M&S clothes and furnishings to an Oxfam shop, and it will exchange the items for a £5 voucher to spend in M&S on a purchase of £35 or more. Since the project started in January 2008, it's helped prevent 2,500 tons of clothes going to landfill, and raised £3million for Oxfam's work.

THE FASHION RANGES

In 2009, M&S was the largest retailer of Fairtrade certified cotton products, selling 7.9 million home items and garments. The company is aiming to convert around 10 per cent of all the cotton used by the store to Fairtrade cotton by 2012, including the cheaper ranges



Back to basics with M&S fair trade

COMPILED BY EMILY ANDERSON PHOTOS TREVOR LEIGHTON

M&S clothes - exchange and smart



such as plain T-shirts for £5, vests and shirts. Currently the range includes women's vests, tops, T-shirts, bags and trousers, some of which are also made from organic cotton.

ALSO BIG ON... holding ethical trade conferences in Vietnam, Bangladesh and other countries it sources from; building eco factories, such as the one in Sri Lanka, which combines renewable energy, waste reduction and a healthy working environment for workers, plus a holistic medical centre on site.

DID YOU KNOW?

There are 170,000 farmers growing organic cotton in 22 countries worldwide, and the market is increasing by 35 per cent each year.



Mica Paris, Lisa Snowdon and Laura Bailey show off some sexy fair trade styles. More photos by fashion snapper Trevor Leighton will be exhibited at London's RIBA and at 500 Fairtrade towns and colleges across the UK, which have been awarded their status for promoting the Fairtrade ethos. See www.fairtrade.org.uk



John Rocha organic tops from Debenhams

sea life. Buy items from Debenhams' Mantaray clothing range and proceeds go to the charity, or join employees and customers in clean-ups of UK beaches.

RECYCLING REWARDS

Recycle your old mobile phone, camera or other gadget at Debenhams and get a voucher to spend in store. Visit www.debenhamsmobilerecycling.co.uk

THE FASHION RANGES

Designers at Debenhams range Rocha. John Rocha has a large choice of organic cotton items, including a great selection of tops

(from £14) and jeans (£45). The menswear range Maine New England FiveG uses Fairtrade cotton for its many shirts, jeans, jumpers and jackets (from £20).

ALSO BIG ON...

energy efficiency and using Green Energy from Scottish Power, sourced from the Black Law wind farm near Shotts, Lanarkshire.

HONOURABLE MENTION TO: Howies

Once only available online, this super-cool sustainable fashion brand has moved on to the high street with stores selling its organic and fairly traded clothes in Cardigan and London's Carnaby Street. Visit www.howies.co.uk

