



## London Calling


Two British-style fashion houses have set up shop in the Chicago and North Shore area. No passport required.

By Elizabeth Smiley

AMERICANS HAVE LONG HELD an inexplicable obsession with British fashion, whether it's watching what Lady Catherine (Kate Middleton) is wearing to the latest garden party or drooling over the dapper stylings of his highness. But now the yanks have a taste of London shopping right here in our own Magnificent Mile and Westfield Old Orchard with the recent debut of L.K.Bennett and Topshop/Topman.

If you fancy "quintessentially English fashion," pop into L.K.Bennett, a British fashion house that recently chose the Windy City as a fitting location to open its flagship boutique at 900 N. Michigan Ave. on this side of the pond. Founded in London's Wimbledon Village in 1990, L.K.Bennett rapidly became renowned for signature shoe collections favored by the likes of (now) royals and commoners from Middleton to Moss. The name is derived from the founding designer, Linda K. Bennett, "Queen of the kitten heel," who decreed *ta ta* forever to sensible flats. Her love affair with shoes began as a tot when, like her daughter, she coveted mummy's shoe collection. Finding a niche between the fair on Bond and High streets, her footwear designs reflect realistic glam that's both comfortable and elegant. Capitalizing on her smashing success, Bennett launched women's ready-to-wear and accessories collections in 1998. By 2005, Bennett landed the commission to design the wedding shoes for

the Duchess of Cornwall's wedding to Prince Charles. Today, L.K.Bennett is an established leading fashion brand offering sophisticated collections of women's shoes, ready-to-wear, handbags and accessories to meet the lifestyle and requirements of every modern woman. Closer to the North Shore, L.K.Bennett designs can be found in its "shop-in-shops" located in Bloomingdale's and Nordstrom at Westfield Old Orchard. Well good. Quite. Jolly good show. Visit [www.lkbennett.com](http://www.lkbennett.com).

If the royal look is not your cup of tea, Topshop/Topman is your fashion destination. Inside, a cache of brill items caters to the not so standard plain Jane and John. In the '70s, the cheeky Sir Philip Green, the "King of High Street," christened the original stand-alone Topshop. Soon thereafter Topman - a clothing line for gents - made its debut. By 2007, British super model Kate Moss launched her premier line for Topshop, and 14 Moss collections followed. To promote the opening of the second Topshop stateside (the first is located in New York's Soho district), Miley Cyrus made a guest appearance at the ribbon-cutting last September. For 2012, look for designs from Rihanna. In addition to clothing and accessories, Topshop also carries its own signature makeup line. With Topshop/Topman, you can set the trends for 2012 and still have some quid left in your pockets. As an added bonus, Topshop/Topman provides student discounts. Aces. Visit [us.topshop.com](http://us.topshop.com) or [us.topman.com](http://us.topman.com). 

## London styleBOOK

Two If By Sea: We declared our independence from Mother England, yet we Yanks still relish British style. With L.K.Bennett and TopShop on our Shore, you can concentrate on looking absolutely fabulous!

By Elizabeth Smiley



► **The Nicole Bag in Coral:**

Bouncing with personality, the clever styling of this soft python-embossed leather bag allows it to smoothly adapt from a sophisticated day bag to a polished nighttime accessory. Its feminine, relaxed shape, with neither excessive bulk nor buckles, means it comfortably molds at your arm. It's "desk-to-dinner" arm candy complete with a sassy, swishing leather tassel. From \$645 at L.K.Bennett, 900 N. Michigan Ave., Chicago, 312/374-0958, [www.lkbennett.com](http://www.lkbennett.com).



► **Petal Pump**

Turn every step into a dance in these coral gloss patent-leather pumps. The high heel balances beautifully with the feminine shape and round toe, all wrapped up in a dishy bow. \$295 at L.K.Bennett, 900 N. Michigan Ave., Chicago, 312/374-0958, [www.lkbennett.com](http://www.lkbennett.com).



► **Don't hide this look under a card!**

Have them begg'n for mercy with this simply stunning silhouette from L.K.Bennett. The sleeveless, black silk "Jersey" dress in this ensemble is \$235. To enhance this look of understated elegance, it's paired with tan, opened-toed, lizard-embossed leather "Sail" shoes. And for a bit of flirty fun, just seize this leather "Flora" bag and be on your merry way! The bag is \$495 and the shoes are \$345. L.K.Bennett, 900 N. Michigan Ave., Chicago, 312/374-0958, [www.lkbennett.com](http://www.lkbennett.com).



► **Cloche**

This bell-shaped hat in black wool has a coy front bow that makes for a serious dose of feminine chic. \$50 at Topshop, 830 N. Michigan Ave., Chicago, 312/280-6834, [us.topshop.com](http://us.topshop.com).

► **Phantom Platform Shoes:**

"Brothel creepers" in off-white leather with contrasting black piping and double-buckle detail. These 5-inch heels (12.7 cm) will unequivocally heighten your style. \$200 at Topshop, 830 N. Michigan Ave., Chicago, 312/280-6834, [us.topshop.com](http://us.topshop.com).



► **Love Colour Block Sandals:**

Suede leather platforms in black, with stokes of magenta and jade. Pair these with a skinny denim jean for the ultimate statement in modern glam. \$130 at Topshop, 830 N. Michigan Ave., Chicago, 312/280-6834, [us.topshop.com](http://us.topshop.com).

