

8 DRAKE'S

15 Garrett Street, EC1

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Founded: 1981

No, Drake's isn't to be found along the Row: the UK's largest maker of handmade ties has its premises a little east of Mayfair in the uber-trendy heart of Clerkenwell. But should you buy a tie in Savile Row, the chances are, irrespective of its label, it was made by Drake's in a time-honoured tradition no less august than bespoke tailoring. Drake's make 250,000 ties a year, to unique designs that are printed in Macclesfield and woven in Sudbury. High-count silks are largely UK-sourced and sewn together by hand with a single slip stitch that goes from one end of the tie to the other.

Founder Michael Drake is proud still to be working with some of the clients of his very first collection (Angès B and Old England in Paris, for example, Davide Cenci in Rome, Beams and United Arrows in Tokyo, Pauw in Holland) and to number among his regular clients Bardelli and Biffi in Milan, Barneys and Bergdorf Goodman in New York and, here in London, Anderson & Sheppard, Huntsman, Harvey Nichols, Harrods and Selfridges, Emma Willis and Dougie Hayward. I asked chief designer, Michael Hill, whether there were any hot trends in neck attire: "At the very top end I think there is a return to traditional prints, away from the high contrast colourful woven ties we have seen in the last few years, and a more modern slightly narrower shape." Handmade ties are luscious in the hand and have a 3-D quality missing from cheap equivalents. And all this attention to detail and craft comes at the very reasonable price of £65 - £90.