

# Social shopping

## FRENCH FASHION AND LIFESTYLE BRAND CAPTAIN TORTUE IS CELEBRATING ITS 10TH ANNIVERSARY IN THE UK

**B**ased in Horsham, West Sussex, Captain Tortue's UK and Ireland division is run from The Mill House, Mill Bay Lane - a charming setting just a stone's throw from the centre of town. It's in such a quiet location, you'd be forgiven for not knowing it existed.

The company sells women's and children's clothing exclusively through its independent consultants, who sell directly to customers at home or via informal events.

### CHIC

With its French headquarters in Aix en Provence, the brand epitomises the ethos of French chic. Founded in 1993 by Lilian and Philippe Jacqueline, Captain Tortue is still family run. Little Captain for children is the heritage brand and was the only collection for the first 10 years.

Managing director Mimi Bogelund has seen significant growth in the business since she launched the UK division in 2005 from her home in Storrington. A few years later, Ireland was added to the mix. 10 years on and the UK and Ireland division employs seven staff, retains 350 consultants and has a turnover approaching £4 million. Sales are up 40 per cent on last year.

Mimi explains: "Captain Tortue offers a unique way for women to do something they love doing, while being flexible enough to fit in with their daily lives and commitments. Our consultants are passionate about the brand and customers love the easy, friendly, sociable way of shopping. It works equally well in an urban or rural environment because the clothes are unique, affordable and can't be bought on the high street or online."

The UK office covers everything except

warehousing and distribution, which is handled in France. The team looks after sales and marketing, finance, training, administration and customer services. Horsham was chosen as Captain Tortue's UK base because of the proximity to Gatwick Airport and London and the excellent transport links the area has. In addition, Horsham is a buzzy, vibrant environment, making it a great place to work, for entertaining visitors and inspiring creativity.

### AMBASSADOR

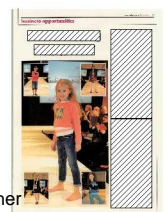
Captain Tortue's 10th anniversary lunch and autumn/winter fashion show took place at The Montcalm Hotel in London on July 1. The show was presented by Lilian Jacqueline, who also formally announced the appointment of author, TV presenter and businesswoman Saira Khan as the company's brand ambassador.

Saira was runner-up in the first UK series of The Apprentice in 2005 and has since become a regular presence on British TV. She has recently been signed by ITV to present a new daytime game show that airs this month and joined ITV's Loose Women as a guest panellist on June 15. **MM**

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

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