

NUOVO



THE MERCHANTS OF VENICE

Heretics, Artisans,
and the Palazzo
Venetian Hotel

—
A STELLAR
COLLECTION
Celestial Luxury
Watches for Men

THE RISE OF ROSE

How Pink Wine
Became Serious
Business

Christina
Ricci

A Fine Craft Concept

Empreintes emporium in Paris.

Following nearly a decade of popular enthusiasm for artisan-made objects and the authenticity they embody, shops around the world have begun to specialize in the handmade. Eschewing the exclusive, museum-like air of new “galleries” of craft, however, Paris’s first fine crafts concept shop welcomed visitors starting last September into an athenaeum of craft washed with light pouring through windows and oversized glass doors.

At Empreintes, spread over four floors and 600 square metres near the Marché des Enfants Rouges in the Haut Marais, visitors can find more than 1,000 unique or limited-edition contemporary objects at any given time: tableware, jewellery, furniture, lighting, cabinets of curiosity, and artworks. “There are so many ways to make daily life more delightful and energetic, to make it a pleasure for the senses, by putting the emphasis back on texture and touch,” says Aude Tahon, a textile designer who is president of the country’s crafts federation, Ateliers d’Art de France, which represents more than 6,000 makers and workshops around the country and of which Empreintes is, itself, a finely crafted initiative.

Craft involves manual and creative genius, intimacy with one’s materials, and mastery of complex fabrication techniques. Its products bear the signature of their creator and the workshop where they were produced. Ateliers d’Art de France mounts seasonal exhibitions

at the shop that make no effort to draw a distinction between craft and art. The approach is aided by sophisticatedly simple interiors by Elizabeth Leriche that echo the sustainable *savoir faire* of the merchandise, so that the feeling inside is warm and organic. Featuring plywood display cases, trestle tables, and matte-finish concrete or wood-plank flooring, it’s the urbane loft you wish you owned... on the Côte d’Azur.

In democratic fashion, products are rotated seasonally to give every member equal exposure. Guests could discover bowls made of turned wood by Elisabeth Molimard, an angular desk in walnut and black bull leather by Pigment, mobiles in candy hues by Christel Sadde, and Reticello blown-glass goblets by Laurence Brabant and Alain Villechange. There are hand-bound books, diaphanous fabric ornaments, and Denis Castaing’s colourful carafe series, which riffs on the combination of a cylinder with a funnel-like spout attached at a different angle on each.

The variety, in fact, can make shopping at Empreintes feel like a treasure hunt. And for anyone needing actual food while digesting the shop’s contents, a first-floor café serves organic and gluten-free dishes. Empreintes by Season overlooks the tableware display and, *bien sûr*, serves its creations with mugs, teapots, and dishware all made by hand in a French workshop. **Shonquis Moreno**

Photos: Empreintes, the first French concept boutique dedicated to fine crafts, is located in the Haut Marais neighbourhood of Paris.

