

# PETA'S PASSION

*From Florentine palazzos to French chateaux,  
Peta Smyth searches Europe for sumptuous fabrics.*

At Peta Smyth's Antique Textile shop in London, there is an attention to subtle detail that starts right at the front door. The door itself is painted a bluish-green with an overhanging terra-cotta-colored awning reminiscent of 17<sup>th</sup> century Flemish tapestries. Inside, the shop is about the size of a stall in a labyrinthine bazaar. Old velvets and brocades, needlework, palmets, silks, table covers,

bedspreads, hangings, and tapestry cushions are stacked in odd lots under and over table surfaces, draped on walls, rolled in bins.

Even Peta's office walls, covered in red burlap and littered with cutouts of needlepoint portraits conform to the period she sells, namely, the 16<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries.



Peta's love affair with antique textiles began when she was a child making dolls' clothes and decorating dollhouses, and blossomed in her 20's when her flatmate had a stall at Portobello. "At that time you could buy costumes by the bundle that were made for Shakespearean performers at Stratford," she says.

Antique Textiles  
42 Moreton Street, Pimlico, London.  
Telephone 071.630.9898

Story by Peggy Wolff  
Photography by Jonathan Green

