The comeback of Laura Ashley in the fashion sector has begun as Batsheva Hay’s eponymous Batsheva label has linked up with the UK brand in a way makes the most of its heritage and targets the upscale shopper.
The collaboration collection comes despite Laura Ashley being better known today as a furnishings label.

New York-based Hay said she’s been a fan of the romantic floral fashion for which Laura Ashley was originally known since her childhood with her first memory being of a Laura Ashley dress.

Today, that love of the label has resulted in a 15-item capsule comprising dresses and separates inspired by the Victorian era. And as well as womenswear, there’s a mini-me aspect with some replica kids’ pieces.

The collection is now online at Batsheva’s own website retailing at prices up to $313 and £229, as well as on Laura Ashley’s US site and Nordstrom, while it will soon be coming to Net-A-Porter and Matchesfashion.

Laura Ashley is now owned by US-based business Gordon Brothers that has steadily been rebuilding a brand that became a victim of the pandemic last year. It began by linking up with Britain’s Next with the latter now running its interiors-focused webstore.

But the Batsheva collab is a strong sign that the company hasn’t abandoned its fashion heritage and some of the big names carrying the collection also highlight the kind of appeal to modern luxury fashion consumers that a carefully-curated ‘New Laura Ashley’ could have.

The Telegraph quoted Gordon Brothers’ creative director of brand Ann Gordon saying: “The vision of Laura screen printing scarves at her kitchen table was the essence of the brand to me, but we wanted to make sure we brought it forward by working with someone like Batsheva. She’s this ultra-cool New York designer and doing something with the brand which totally makes sense but also might not be the typical, traditional outfit.”

Global Laura Ashley president and MD of brands, Carolyn D’Angelo, also said the firm is embarking on a “very large project to relaunch fashion”.

So what does this first collection include? As mentioned, there’s a selection of pieces with each one featuring prints from the Laura Ashley archive. But the designer has added modern twists such as a very traditionally pretty dress but with a contrasting yellow neon collar, or prairie dresses in mini lengths.

There are also pieces that vintage collectors will relate to directly such as a maxi-length smock and tiered dresses. Tapping into the homes-focused trend, the line-up also includes a printed apron and oven mitts.

The company is banking on these being able to reach new customers who are attracted by the vintage appeal of the brand as well existing consumers who’ve been buying it for years, and its modest fashion edge should also help it appeal widely.

By Sandra Halliday

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