

A Family Affair

Photographers dish out a new canvas of art.

by CHARLOTTE METCALF



An inconspicuous terrace house on a quiet West London street may seem an unlikely setting for Powderhound, a mountain-themed homeware collection beloved by skiers the world over. But for those who know professional photographer Tim Hall, and his artist and fine art photographer wife Natasha Durlacher, it's rather par for the course. And absolutely consistent for a brand that was born at a kitchen table amidst the bustle of family life with two daughters and a pair of King Charles Cavalier Spaniels.

Having spent their lifetimes visiting and photographing The Alps, the couple – who have skied together since they were kids – were keen to share their passion with a wider audience. Initially launched as a collection of bespoke tableware decorated with Natasha's images – charming bone-china breakfast sets with nostalgic *joie de vivre* designs of colorful figures that were hand-colored and enhanced – Powderhound has since grown into a fully-fledged homeware brand, offering everything from mugs and tea towels to water bottles, T-shirts, hoodies, and a handful of ski accessories.

Today, the brand is sold in 20 stores – from Aspen and Sun Valley to Gstaad and St. Moritz – with prices starting at \$28 for

an egg cup. Says the manager of Gorsuch, “Since the very beginning the Powderhound collection has been a success, and appreciated by our customers – men, women, young and old. Porcelain mugs are not easy to bring home safely in one’s luggage, but where there is a love and a will there’s a way.”

Though the couple are committed to maintaining the brand’s signature purity and simple look, Natasha annually updates the designs to keep their devotees – including celebrities the couple are too discreet to name – inspired. “Alphabet mugs are particularly popular, as are small canvases made to order with people’s names created from skiing figures,” Natasha says, adding that bespoke chinaware is also available on request.

Still produced in the small creative hub of a basement, piled high with boxes ready to ship, stacks of artwork, and rolls of fabric printed with jewel-bright skiing figures, Powderhound shows no sign of slowing down. In addition to the homeware, and the couple’s classic landscape photography, which adorns many hotel and chalet walls, Natasha has recently created a collection of brightly colored, Pop Art-inspired photographs of ski scenes.

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“I recently rediscovered my mother’s stash of photograph albums going back to the time of her grandparents,” says Natasha. “And, in them, wonderful photographs of my grandfather and great uncle skiing as children in St. Moritz in the 20s and 30s. We’re going to build a vintage collection, some of which I’ll color and tint by hand.”

So, what next for this family affair?

“We’d like to become the go-to shop for fun, joyful art and accessories celebrating snow and mountain life,” says Tim. Considering Natasha’s charming, distinctive designs of happy life in the mountains have struck such a strong chord with snow-lovers, the two may go global sooner than they think.

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