

RETAIL

Fortnum & Mason uplifts circular architecture with new design project

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Designed by French architect Arthur Mamou-Mani, "The Wavery" serves as the centerpiece of Fortnum & Mason's in-house cocktail bar. Image credit: Fortnum & Mason

By EMILY IRIS DEGN

British department store Fortnum & Mason is exploring the magic that lies at the intersection of art, dining and environmentalism.

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Teaming up with Arthur Mamou-Mani, a self-described "Eco-Parametric" French architect, the retailer now hosts an installation made of bioplastics and compostable materials. Fortnum & Mason's first public, permanent art piece, "The Wavery" serves as the centerpiece for "3'6," Fortnum & Mason's Piccadilly cocktail bar, inviting audiences in for an immersive experience.

"We have designed and 3D-printed multiple items in the bar in FabPub, our circular factory in London, and these geometrical and functional elements were created using parametric design and digital fabrication," said Mr. Mamou-Mani, in a statement.

"We believe in waves of innovation through impactful storytelling," he said. "We also love the idea of taking you on a journey to a future in which our objects are designed globally but made locally, and where we make everything from renewable and circular materials."

New wave design

As the department store's bar features a strong sense of identity throughout, Fortnum & Mason's latest addition shares the same thematic properties as the venue that houses it.

Located on the third floor of the London-based retailer's building, The Wavery brings together French and British influences, speaking to the department store's national pride and Mr. Mamou-Mani's own home country.

Taking the form of a sweeping mass of rippling wood, the overhead apparatus' very name represents a fusion of the English word "wave" and the French word "reverie," meaning "daydream."

Inspired by nature, eco-Parametric structures are on full display at Fortnum & Mason

Throughout 3'6, visions of the future are expressed through conscious materials and innovative techniques.

In addition to employing the material for "The Wavery," Mr. Mamou-Mani used Poly-lactic Acid (PLA) bioplastics, a recyclable and biodegradable alternative, to build the venue's stools and various bar items. The bioplastic is made from fermented sugar, a compostable that requires 80 percent less carbon than petroleum-based plastics to produce.



The space's stools and bar itself join the overarching art piece in their bioplastic composition. Image credit: Fortnum & Mason

The entire installation, created locally at the U.K.'s FabPub circular factory in Hackney, is viewed by the architect as a project that "addresses environmental issues through a relatable experience that speaks to our senses."

Mr. Mamou-Mani specializes in these types of cutting-edge works, born of digital design or fabrication in architecture, among other sources. His ethos has earned him numerous awards, fellowships and speaking slots around the world.

Back in 2020, *Architects Journal* named Mr. Mamou-Mani's practice as one of 100 "Disruptors" that are standing up to the status quo, making sustainability in the field possible.

Founded in 1707, one of the globe's oldest luxury vendors partnering with Mr. Mamou-Mani establishes not only a sense of environmental responsibility but signals to shoppers that Fortnum & Mason is embracing the future.

Consumers of all ages today show an especially strong appreciation for heritage and brands that communicate a definitive identity. That being said, the environmentally-friendly leanings at play are particularly appealing to Gen Z and millennial consumers who have historically expressed a demand for sustainable products, pivoting away from companies that have stayed out of green conversations.



The finished product brings together forward-facing techniques and vintage decor. Image credit: Fortnum & Mason

Fortnum & Mason has been listening to this ask for years. In 2017, for example, the brand combined conservation with art, presenting window displays that brought attention to the plight of endangered species ([see story](#)).

Now, eco-apptitude is once again being placed upon a pedestal on-site, as the highly-visible installation integrates nature and environmentalism into the elevated shopping experience.

Eating it up

Speaking to the nationalities and heritage of the parties involved in its creation, Fortnum & Mason's 3'6 serves up a curated assortment of offerings, one which complements Mr. Mamou-Mani's delivery.



British cuisine meets French tastes on the 3'6 menu. Image credit: Fortnum & Mason

Featuring dishes from France and the United Kingdom, the menu itself marries the flavors of both European cultures. Scotch eggs and Welsh rarebits sit alongside sardines prepared with pan con tomate and pesto crudits. Some menu items such as a dish comprised of Cornish smoked anchovies with a baguette formulated from regenerative agriculture-grown ingredients marry both countries' cuisines in one bite.

The eatery is only the latest showcase of this pride. Fortnum & Mason has long been proud of its culinary heritage ([see story](#)), having released a food-focused podcast in 2020 to supplement cooking product drops and campaigns ([see story](#)).

The 16-page-long cocktail menu is central to it all, as 3'6 derives its name from a bit of the surrounding shop's history.



Hungry shoppers can get a taste of countries across the U.K. in honor of the department store's locale, while classic French dishes nod to the venue's architectural roots. Image credit: Fortnum & Mason

Clients used to be able to come to the third floor in the 1930s to request an in-home cocktail party arrangement, done by Fortnum & Mason at the time. The price was three shillings and sixpence for every attendee – the factoid informed the naming of the current culinary operation, which today sits on the exact same floor as its predecessor.

Fortnum & Mason's "3'6" is open Monday through Saturday from 10:30 a.m. to 8 p.m., and on Sundays from noon until 6 p.m. Tables can be booked at <https://www.sevenrooms.com/reservations/bar3>.