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Rawfish Design

John Smedley. Brook Street, London. Design: Four IV

John Smedley, the fine gauge knitwear specialist, opened its long-awaited London store on Brook Street in June.

Designed by Four IV, the store concept picks up on the Derby Dales, where John Smedley's manufacturing sites are based, with slate, moss and textured steel influencing the material palette. Direct references to equipment on the factory floor are visible in the system design and lighting schemes.

'John Smedley is known for innovation while retaining the hand-crafted finishing techniques that has established its reputation for more than two centuries,' says Dawne Stubbs, creative director at John Smedley. 'Our brief to the designers was to ensure our London store reflected the company's history and love of tradition, complemented the colour and texture of our clothes but also retained an element of surprise.'

The ground floor features a pale stone, sourced locally in Derby, and a feature wall and window display carries a bespoke tile inspired by the bobbins that

carry the fine gauge wool. 'The store had to represent a modern take on traditional,' says Chris Dewar-Dixon, co-founder of Four IV and the designer behind the project. 'The mill in the Lea Valley provided much of the inspiration. The brass stair nosings were produced in the factory, and colours and materials were picked up from this beautiful, natural location. The details of the merchandising systems were inspired by a trolley on the factory floor that is used to hold the neckpieces of the sweaters and a special plaster tile has been created, inspired by the cone of cardboard that holds the woolen thread.'

The shop front is a return to tradition in dark scratched oak and brass, and carries the new corporate colours and branding. Original stools and standard lamps have also been sourced from the factory floor.

'This has been a truly exciting project and one that is inspired in every way by the client's rich history and the beautiful rural location of its origin,' says Dewar-Dixon.