



## Laura Ashley

*Martin Wood*

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## **Laura Ashley** Martin Wood

Welsh designer Laura Mountney was born in 1925 and married Bernard Ashley in 1949. She started her fashion empire humbly — on her kitchen table in Pimlico — where she designed and produced distinctive scarves using her husband's silk screen. Her taste for and imaginative use of rustic, romantic fabrics with flowery patterns became a hit in British department stores in the early 1950s. Popularized by Audrey Hepburn in the 1953 film *Roman Holiday*, head scarves were just one component of a business that would soon touch every area of couture and home decor, from dresses and blouses to household textiles and furnishings. Examining Ashley's art against the background of her life, and showcasing little-seen images of her creations, Martin Wood tells the story of the brand one woman created and built into a worldwide phenomenon that continues to resonate today in the phrase "Laura Ashley style."

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