

EAU DE CHOO

Jimmy Choo – the fashion label synonymous with celebrity style – has launched its first captivating fragrance through House of Fraser.

The eau de parfum is a modern, fruity Cypre – the French term for Cyprus – with a citrus top note and a floral heart. The signature scent is inspired by the modern woman and boasts notes of exotic tiger orchid, sweet toffee and heady Indonesian patchouli.

Reflecting the brand's taste for contrasting antique and modern objects, the faceted bottle is reminiscent of the landmark crystal-encrusted shoes made famous by the label and an eye-catching pink snakeskin box encapsulates its essence.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT www.houseoffraser.co.uk

CHARITABLE MOVE

Sorting the wheat from the chaff when moving house may be a mammoth task, but Eco Movers is now making it that much easier through its new initiative with Cancer Research UK.

All you need to do is fill up the special branded cartons with any household items you no longer need while packing up your belongings. The Eco Movers then simply drop off the special containers so that unwanted items can be sold on in Cancer Research charity shops.

after they have completed your removal job. Offering electric vehicle technology and low-emission vehicle scheduling as well as an effortless way to support a very worthy cause, this simple scheme can make homeowners feel even better about taking their next step on the property ladder.

FOR MORE DETAILS ON THE SCHEME, VISIT www.ecomovers.co.uk

AESTHETIC ARTWORK

Located just across from Hampton Court Palace, the Fountain Gallery is the perfect place to pick up some original artworks to spruce up your new home in time for Easter.

This month, three fabulous artists are showcasing their pieces, starting with Colin Turner and his observational landscapes in oil and mixed media. His impressionist stylings have bursts of luscious colour and heavy brush strokes, creating a magnificent sense of the outdoors.

Also showcasing his ability to capture a scene, Jim Woodman takes the exhibition space midmonth. His unique technique relies on a raw aesthetic that fuses oil and watercolour to produce a rough yet eye-catching view of everyday life.

Finally, Suzy Abrahams will be on show for the rest of the month, with powerful and vibrant abstracts that explore the limitless possibility of shape and form, ideal for giving contemporary décor an additional edge.

FOUNTAIN GALLERY, 26 BRIDGE ROAD, HAMPTON COURT, EAST MOLESEY, SURREY, KT8 9HA. FOR MORE INFORMATION, CALL 020 8941 5865 OR VISIT www.fountaingallery.co.uk

Artwork by Suzy Abrahams at the Fountain Gallery



ROCK AND A HARD PLACE

The Bank of England's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) meeting in March attracted a media circus. Despite the increasing pressure on the MPC members to raise rates in order to curb inflation, the committee decided to maintain

the bank base rate at 0.5%. This record low has remained unchanged for 24 consecutive months.

Industry experts are still split on when rates will rise, however the majority view is that the MPC will increase the bank base rate twice this year. The first rise is expected in May, with forecasters predicting the rate at the end of the 2011 to be in the 1-1.5% range.

Inflation is the reason that a rise in the bank base rate is under serious consideration. The Consumer Price Index (CPI) – the main measure of inflation – rose from 3.7% last December to 4% in January. The two main factors fuelling the increase are the rising price of crude oil and the recent rise of VAT to 20%.

While the minutes from the February MPC meeting show the majority of the committee believe that inflation will come down of its own accord, there is also the danger that inflation could stay high for longer and threaten the return to economic growth. Sustained inflation would create pressure on UK manufacturing at a time when manufacturing output is growing at its fastest annual pace in over 16 years – up 6.8% in January according to the Office for National Statistics.

So why are the MPC waiting? The unexpected news about the Gross Domestic Product's downward turn in the last quarter of 2010 was troubling and the MPC will probably want to see a return to growth before increasing rates. The unsettled situation in the Middle East and North Africa is also a factor in current global economic stability.

The pending interest rate decision is resulting in fixed rate mortgages becoming more expensive. This is because mortgage lenders have to fund tranches of money and the cost of borrowing has risen because of an expectation of a rate rise soon. Nonetheless, there has been some good news over the past month with the launch of a few more exclusive loan-to-value (LTV) products, which will help first time buyers or movers with limited equity in their search for a suitable property.

FOR STRAIGHT TALKING MORTGAGE ADVICE, CONTACT ALEXANDER HALL ON 08000 38 37 36 OR EMAIL info@alexanderhall.co.uk

alexander hall

LONDON'S MORTGAGE BROKER

Alexander Hall Associates is authorised and regulated by the Financial Services Authority for pure protection, residential mortgage and general insurance business. Registered in England and Wales, registered office: Building One, Clowick Park, 560 Clowick High Road, London HA1 3BT. No. 2702096