



Corie Liath*, bronze vessel, limited edition of 12 sculpture and photograph by Daniel Kavanagh



Donald Buchanan, The Lake of Menteith*, panoramic photograph



Antique Scottish silver, Cairngorm brooch* from Greyfriars Antiques, Adrian Gould photography

Speaking with New London's Teresa Fritschi regarding her love of Scotland is a rich sensory experience. As owner/curator of the Edinburgh-based e-commerce initiative, thistleandbroom.com, clearly she has a great deal to speak about.

While listening, one can almost smell the peat and hints of Lavender air revealing a lush moment both past and present that we felt only her unique voice should carry. Subsequently, Teresa was approached to offer INK an essay about her inspiration, her Scotland. What follows are her words.

Scotland. Forever & everywhere. by Teresa Fritschi

When I returned to the United States from my first trip to Scotland more than three years ago, I told friends, 'mark my words, Scotland is about to become hotter than any time since (Queen) Victoria sat on the throne'. They looked at me as if I was insane but three years hence everywhere you look these days there is a reference to Scotland. From St. Andrew's Day in November through Burns Night in January and onto April for Tartan Week (based upon an Act of Congress acknowledging the vast contributions of Scots to American society) with each the frenzy of fiddles, pipes and a sea of tartan has full license to celebrate around the world. Fashion magazines abound with pictorials featuring Scottish, French and American designers – everyone, it seems, has jumped on the bandwagon. National Geographic consistently features photo journalism and editorial designed to expand the awareness of the general public of this 'small, perfectly formed country' which we still



Donald Buchanan, Carrick Castle at Loch Gail, panoramic photograph

learn so much about our forebears from with each passing year.

Inspiration and reverence

That which inspires an overwhelming sense of awe creates reverence. It is a virtue often forgotten in our busy demanding lives but remains part of our human condition. Reverence begins, according to philosopher Paul Woodruff, with a deep understanding of human limitations and grows in a capacity to be in awe of whatever we believe is outside our control. Somewhere in the world, even if it's in our own backyard, each of us holds a place special. There is no place



Animal Guardian Jars* by Charlotte Cadzow



Donald Buchanan, Glasgow's Charing Cross, panoramic photograph

on Earth which has ever consistently inspired me to stop, take a deep breath and sigh out loud in wonder - as Scotland. It is in the context of that wonder that my love affair began.

To properly frame my relationship with Scotland you must understand that I put off visiting for 17 years because at some visceral level I knew that in doing so, my life would fundamentally change forever. I had traipsed alone across Hungary, Austria, Germany and France each memorable for the experiences large and small but I held Scotland at a distance, for safety. You must also embrace the concept of serendipity, that there is no such thing as a coincidence. I have always believed in the Presbyterian concept of preordination; that our lives, and our greatest life's work, are structured by the Divine. We can attempt to deny or avoid it but inevitably whatever it is will seek us out and make it impossible for us to ignore what we are 'supposed to do'.



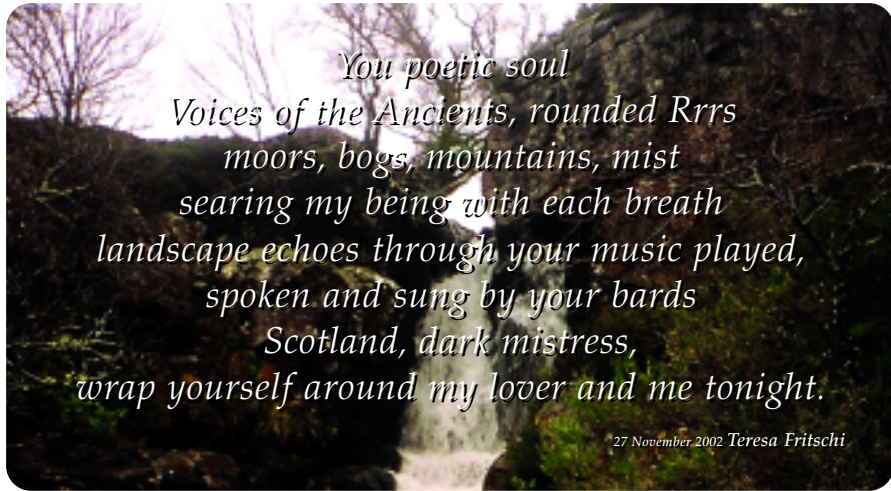
Being called 'home'

My first trip is memorable for a thousand reasons but most critically for what happened as I sat on The Flying Scotsman (named after the Scottish Olympian Eric Liddell) bound for Edinburgh from London. With bucolic landscapes slipping passed the window in the late November drizzle, I took pictures of Norman towns, verdant fields and sheep - lots of them. There was a palpable

moment when my palms began to perspire, my heart raced, my throat caught, my eyes filled up with tears, and I thought that I was having a heart attack. I wondered, (reasonably so) under the circumstances, if I had put off coming to Scotland because I was destined to die there! There was no physical explanation as the tea was my own decaf. A short time later a lovely septuagenarian man approached and enquired if I am "luvin' Scotlan' verre much ahze we' bin 'arye bout three minoots lass", my sincere apologies to every Scotsman or woman reading this passage. It started like this, physically knowing before my brain could comprehend. Everything about Scotland is like this; places familiar without basis. As it turns out I had every reason to intuit keeping Scotland at a distance. I have recently discovered that for years Harvard, Duke and University College London have been conducting research over Scotland's 'draw'. It's something I don't fully understand, but it somehow binds a race memory component to the

facing page: Slate backed, c. 1880 Montrose Agate and silver brooch* from Greyfriars Antiques, photograph by Hamish Hill
below: Antique Sweetheart cushion* from Greyfriars Antiques, photograph by Hamish Hill
right: Thistle & Broom's exclusive St. Magnus Bracelet* by Hamilton & Inches, photograph by T. Fritsch





*You poetic soul
Voices of the Ancients, rounded Rrrs
moors, bogs, mountains, mist
searing my being with each breath
landscape echoes through your music played,
spoken and sung by your bards
Scotland, dark mistress,
wrap yourself around my lover and me tonight.*

*27 November 2002 Teresa Fritschi

unique geological formation (high iron content) and subsequent strong magnetic energy of the country especially in the Western Highlands. Some 40 million people on a global basis proudly proclaim their Scottish heritage. With ancient Celts having wandered as far as Persia and northern Africa its likely that an even higher percentage of the worlds’ population has Scots blood.

The dichotomy of Scotland

What I feel for Scotland is the sense of hopelessness one ‘enjoys’ in loving fiercely. Each day Scotland courses through my veins demanding my capitulation and utter surrender, she is unrelenting in driving me ever deeper into an inescapable and unrequited love that few will ever understand. Is it madness to love a place rather than a person to such an extent? To the uninitiated how can you explain the scent of Highland winds caressing broom and pine, lifting the scent of seaweed from upon the shore, of crystalline waters cas-



cading in frothy white and peat coloured ribbons over rock, moss and heather and heath? Air so pure you can taste it? Drive through a stand of Caledonian Pine in



Orkney Chairs® by Scapa Crafts Jackie Miller

Wester-Ross with her ancient forested mountains looming against a sky filled with snowflakes as angels feathers fall or along hairpin roads on the Isle of Harris with lichen covered granite boulders only to surmount a rise in the road to face the pure white sand beach and azure waters of Luskentyre. Scotland is a land of contrasts and infinite beauty.

Of course, Scotland is much more than simply physically awe-inspiring. Her ancient standing stones and civilizations blend seamlessly and dynamically with contemporary society. History oozes up from beneath your feet regardless of where you walk from Shetland to Iona, Harris to the Borders and all points in between. Over 100,000 of Scotland’s 4.5 million people are registered artists and



Donald Buchanan’s Five Sisters of Kintail® panoramic photograph

when taken in combination with her many festivals and extraordinary cuisine (don’t scoff, this isn’t English food - one of the Top 50 Restaurants in the world is on the remote and beautiful Isle of Skye. Oyster connoisseurs the world over are well familiar with Loch Fyne); the Scotland you long to find will make herself known to you. Edinburgh now eclipses Paris, Berlin and London with her museums entirely worthy of their newly claimed destination status. Scotland’s many ruined (and perfectly intact) castles, 6,000 lochs, her Munro’s (any mountain over 3000 feet) and traditional fashions, as noted above, continue to inspire the latest ‘trends’ in couture. I am not a golfer, but I do enjoy fine single malt whisky. I don’t hunt, but I love the romance of standing in a foot and a half of water as salmon escape fly lure flicked by better casting wrists than my own.

Connecticut to the Highlands

How does a small town girl from Western New York, who has lived in Old Greenwich, near the Litchfield hills, and now in New London become committed body and soul to Scotland? It has as much to do with my inability to find a brooch of Scottish gold as a combination of circumstances that still astounds even my best friends. What spurred me onto to embrace my life’s work was, in a single word, inequity.

Following my first trip in November of 2002 I became obsessed with all encompassing research about Scotland. The average tourists stay in Scotland? - three days. In a decade 35,000 textile jobs were lost to consolidation and Far East competition, think of the ripple effect against a population of 4.5 million people. Income disparities between the central belt cities of Glasgow and Edinburgh and the Highlands and Islands; the fact that the British Government pegs poverty at £19,000 per annum (family of four) whereas Scottish Executive and the Scottish Arts Council (SAC) maintain that the average artist in Scotland earns a mere £9,000 per annum (same family of four). Further, again according to the SAC, that not one artist under the age of 35 can earn a living at their art – meaning they have to do something else to support themselves



Eilean Donan Castle, photograph by T. Fritschi

Eilean Donan

Like so many other ‘contemporary’ castles and ruins, rises from some ancient settlement and/or fortification. Eilean Donan, the Island of (Saint) Donan, a contemporary of St. Columba beheaded with 52 of his companions when a raiding party set upon them on 17 April 618, whose well still runs with fresh water while the castle itself is set atop a tiny islet surrounded by the three deep blue-green salt water lochs of Alsh, Duich and Long. For nearly 800 years a strong hold and keep have been sited here at the edge of the Kyle of Lochalsh on the Mainland with a view toward the Isle of Skye. Her tumultuous past, innumerable guardians and secrets lie as securely beneath her foundations as the sculptured foot marking her precursor Iron Age Pictish settlement still stands opposite. Beautifully sited with the Kintail Mountains providing a sweeping backdrop, Eilean Donan rightfully has starred in movies (Golden Eye, The Highlander, Loch Ness) and graces shortbread tins, CD covers and post cards alike, it is (almost) universally agreed to be the most photographed castle in Scotland.

In 1714, as one of the Jacobite Risings was brewing, Brigadier General Lewis Des Etans (1665-1720) was sent north by the Crown to secure information about the strength of Highland defences. Amongst Des Etans reconnaissance were exceptionally detailed plans of Eilean Donan taken some five years before Colonel Donald Murchison (a Highland Scot) allegedly lit the powder magazine blowing up the castle. Murchison had come to the conclusion that if the Crown were to gain possession of Eilean Donan and a garrison were to be planted there, that it would impossible to defend Scotland from the Red Coats. She lay in ruins for the next 200 hundred years until a descendant, Lt. Colonel John MacRae-Gilstrap, purchased her in 1912. In turn MacRae-Gilstrap would employ Farquhar MacRae, a highly skilled stone mason, to clean up the site he intended to keep it as a ruin. But Farquhar claimed to have had a dream in which he saw, in precise detail, the way the castle originally looked and was given the nod to go ahead to rebuild. Clan MacRae Societies the world over joined in her 250,000 po unds rebuilding over a 12 year period (1920 and 1932) providing contributions such as the oddly mismatched stones, and the timbers (you might recall Catherine Zeta-Jones doing gymnastics on these as Sean Connery looks on during the movie Entrapment) from her Great Hall. Following the completed restoration Des Etans plans for the castle were discovered in the archives of Edinburgh Castle and it’s said that the measurements are within mere centimeters of the Eilean Donan which Farquhar MacRae had dreamt.



Aurora 18kt and diamond pace ring, drop earrings and necklace from Hamilton & Inches, White Dog Photography*



Loch Glencoul and the Stack of Glencoul by Gordon Harrison

other than focus on their core competency of creating beauty. When I factored in the vast contributions that Scots had made to the societies and strength of the economies here in the United States, Canada, New Zealand and Australia and, in spite of the fact that I was amongst 9.1 million people in the United States out of work in a post-9/11 economy, all of this bothered me enormously, and I set about doing something about it.

A luxury brand is born

I loathe homogeneity and the commodity-like aspects of virtually all shopping. When did luxury suddenly mean that with my purchase of a couple hundred or several thousand dollars that in walking down any street anywhere in the world I would see someone wearing what I am? I doubt that I am much different than hundreds of thousands of people who find this slightly offensive. What's more, perhaps because my grandmother was an accomplished seamstress, I feel no need to wear the initials of some anonymous designer working for a multi-national luxury brand conglomerate.

I count myself as being a very good shopper with a get-in and get-out philosophy, but patient to a fault if I have to wait to own something that is made especially for me. The geographic reach of my first trip covered nearly a third of the Mainland of Scotland (thus excluding any of her islands). After all the research I had conducted, what struck me most acutely was that if I had been unable to find the Scottish gold brooch I had set out for. How many others visiting Scotland would experience the same frustration in not being able to find some illusive object of desire, or the perfect 'guilt' gift in exchange for that week of golf at St. Andrew's? And, especially if you are only visiting for three days, it's unlikely your



Antique Scottish Montrose Agate and silver brooch, Greyfriars Antiques photo by Adrian Gould*



St. Andrew's Cross, Adapted throw (lambswool or cashmere) from Johnsons of Elgin, photo by Jonathan Greet*

tourist dollars are going to impact the more remote areas where the most benefit can be derived from the smallest trickle. Ah, but to be able to say, "You have to wait but I ordered something truly special for you from Scotland", heroes and heroines are made of much less. Something else truly astonishing, while England has Asprey and Burberry, France Hermes, Italy Brioni, Gucci and Fendi, Germany Escada no one had ever thought to establish a definitive luxury brand of products made exclusively in Scotland.

Coupled with the research, an appreciation for exquisite handcraftsmanship and the unique, a career in marketing and communications, and an acute understanding of emerging technology - my newfound passion for Scotland was about to gain wings. I set out to create the definitive source for luxury from Scotland - with a twist. I would dispense with the brick and mortar store front and with warehousing, my venture would be Fair Trade modelled (33% mark-up on more 90% of the offerings) with a further incentive to purchase by providing financial support for Scottish charitable organizations on a per product basis - The John Muir Trust being our first. Participation would be 'by invitation only' so that we could regulate and ensure the quality of the products offered as well as paint an intimate portrait of each participating 'trading partner' and finally we would leverage the Internet to provide people the



Albannach surround Mary T Designs Run of the Moor and Calluna* felted, hand-frame knitted Shetland wool throws, photo by T. Fritsch*

world over immediate access to some of Scotland's most talented yet inaccessible artisans and craftspeople.

Along the way to launching my venture a year ago accountants would ask 'how are you getting to 19,000 units a month?' for those interested to know we'll never be about 19,000 units a month - of anything.

Friends would tell me to get offline and go to bed, I would doubt (as any newly minted entrepreneur without an



Katie Targett-Adams wears Victoria's Twisted Riding Habit by ShonaghK in Ardalinish Tweed, photo by Adrian Gould*

MBA and a trust fund surely does) my sanity and then I would receive an email with the associate blessings serving to assure that 'this' was precisely what I was meant to do with all that I know.

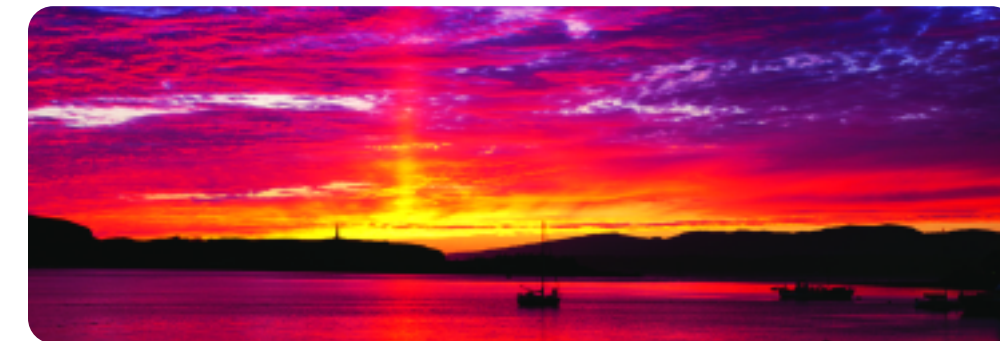
I can't begin to imagine if your life's work is being fulfilled, or if the impact of your actions will ultimately make the world a little bit better place for all, or if you find beauty in what you do and choose to surround yourself with the arts each day, but I hope so. Whether you are about to make



your first visit or your hundredth, as soon as you come home to Scotland you'll intuitively understand Scott, and Burns and Stephenson - and she'll provide you with all the awe and inspiration

that could be captured by a thousand lines of poetry. ■

Teresa Fritsch is the Managing Director and Chief Creative Officer of the Edinburgh-based e-commerce initiative called Thistle & Broom, Limited. Her award winning website <http://www.thisleandbroom.com> offers extraordinary, often one-of-a-kind and bespoke luxurious products culled from across Scotland. 8% of Thistle & Broom, Ltd's pre-tax profits endow carefully selected charitable organizations, which serve to preserve, protect or restore an element of Scotland's culture, history or wild spaces.



Oban Sunset by David Robertson