



2 Victoria Law and Laura Whatley L&V Art and Design

Starting a business together seemed almost inevitable for Victoria Law and Laura Whatley, who could be two peas in a pod if it weren't for the fact that one's blonde and the other brunette. 'We get on so well it's quite boring for everyone else,' laughs Laura.

The pair met in 1988 at the Richard Green gallery in London's New Bond Street, and worked there together for 10 years. 'Almost since the moment we met we've been firm friends,' says Victoria. 'We realised that we had the same taste, the same interests and the same attitudes towards things. In time, we even talked about working together, but over the years we were never both free at the same time.'

When Laura decided to give up her job running a clothes boutique in 2011 – by which time Victoria had set up on her own as a fine art consultant – the dream of working together could, at last, become a reality. 'It evolved very naturally,' says Victoria. 'We were really fortunate in finding our ideal premises, and everything seemed to fall into place. We bought our first pieces together at the Marché aux Puces in Paris, and launched in November 2011 as L&V Art and Design – specialising in an eclectic mix of 20th-century furniture, pictures and *objets d'art*.'

As the business has gone from strength to strength, so their relationship has continued on its solid footing. 'We do everything together – all the good jobs (the buying trips to Brussels and Paris), and all the bad jobs (cleaning the gallery and standing at antiques fairs at 6.30am in winter), and 90 per cent of the time we agree on everything,' explains Victoria. Humour is key, she adds. 'We spend most of our time laughing. We just have a great time.'

They play to their strengths – Laura's is financial, and Victoria's is computing and the website – but when choosing stock they are uncannily of a mind. 'We're just very much in tune,' says Victoria. 'It's rare that one of us really doesn't like something that the other one does when we're buying but, if it happens, then we simply don't go for it.'


And now that they have been up and running for a couple of years, can they imagine not working together? The answer is a joint and resounding 'No'. As Laura says: 'Neither of us would want to do it by ourselves – it would be so hard. When there's a good friend that you can discuss everything with it's much easier, and much more fun. We recommend it highly.'

❖ L&V Art and Design, Unit E7, The Old Imperial Laundry, 71 Warriner Gardens, London. 020 7819 9655; landvdesign.com. L&V is also at the Decorative Antiques & Textiles Fair, Battersea Park, London from 1st-6th October; decorativefair.com



TOP The clean lines of this Gordon Russell walnut writing desk, c1950, suit a contemporary look **ABOVE LEFT** There are smaller *objets d'art* to suit all tastes **ABOVE RIGHT** Brass bunnies rub shoulders with a Murano paperweight and an etched glass vase **RIGHT** An elegant pair of handmade leather riding boots with brass-ringed wooden boot trees graces the shop floor





Laura (right) and Victoria have been good friends for 25 years but only went into business together a couple of years ago

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