

Is Lingerie Still Made in the UK?

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Yes! The good news is that a few working lingerie factories still remain in the UK although their numbers continue to diminish due to both an aging workforce and aging machines.

Retro lingerie brand What Katie Did are proud to support British lingerie manufacturing having worked with the same factory in Nottingham for nearly a decade. The factory is family owned and operated and now in its fourth generation.

While the production of fast fashion thrives in the Midlands, the skills in making loose fitting clothing are completely different to the precision needed for lingerie. The manufacturing of lingerie requires highly skilled machinists who are trained to work with the delicate fabrics and laces used in lingerie production. In addition, when it comes to lingerie several different machines are needed, which each require a sewer who is experienced in that one machine; from the bartak machine to the lockstitch machine, overlocker machine and three point stitch machine; all require a different skill set and it's rare to find a machinist who is experienced in all of them.

Over the last 20 years What Katie Did have watched British lingerie factories gradually close with their highly trained machinists moving to other jobs outside the industry and the machinery being sold off. Once the employees and machinery disperse it's almost impossible to put them back together again, which is why they feel it's so important to support British manufacturing.

The challenges presented in UK lingerie manufacturing are two-fold. Firstly the profit margins are very slim which means that investment in new machinery is minimal. Secondly the machinist's job is very skilled, yet lowly paid, which is putting off younger people learning the skills.

What Katie Did manufacture their 1950s inspired Liz Lingerie and Trixie girdles which have been made for several years. Seasonal ranges, including the just launched Berry Dot Lingerie, are also produced in the same factory using UK sourced fabrics. While it is more expensive to manufacture in the UK they work with simple vintage inspired designs, avoiding the lengthy intricate stitching their made in India designs feature, which enables both the British and Indian pieces to retail at a similar price.

More information on What Katie Did's Berry Dot Lingerie:

UK: <https://www.whatkatedid.com/collections/berry-dot-lingerie>

US: <https://us.whatkatedid.com/collections/berry-dot-lingerie>

Lingerie made in the UK Feature:

<https://www.whatkatedid.com/blogs/magazine/vintage-lingerie-made-in-england>

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