

INTERIORS

Getting touchy-feely with the furnishings

You won't be able to keep your hands off this style of homeware, from laced tiles to bobbin lamps, reports *Fiona Brandhorst*

Soft and irresistible: this season's must-haves for your home are all about touch. Tactile interiors are blurring the lines between soft and hard furnishings, turning a room from a place you inhabit to something you experience.

"Velvet was a popular fabric on the runways for autumn/winter 2016 and is now firmly established as one of the season's key interiors trends," says Joe Burns of design and developer Oliver Burns. "Velvet lends a sense of warmth, depth and luxury to a room. Its versatility and durability adds texture from statement focal pieces such as an armchair, sofa or headboard, through to cushions or throws."

For blowout items to break a budget, Touched Interiors has a range of custom made wall panels, from diamond-shaped velvet to red leather studded with Swarovski crystals. Prices start from £250 for a 45 cm sq panel (touchedinteriors.co.uk).

No longer a throwback to the Seventies, flock - or coating a surface is material - is flying again. Nina Campbell's La Gioconda wallpaper range features a spot motif printed in flock with a contrasting outline (£95 per roll, ninacampbell.com) while Osborne and Little's Pantanal wallpaper includes ocelot and leopard prints in beaded and metallic finishes (£119, johnlewis.com).

Walls are also borrowing from floors, with reclaimed wood adding texture, depth and warming tones inspired by nature. "The natural knotting and movement in the timber's grain is a really beautiful, tactile surface which is warm to touch and very organic," says Sophie Ashby, director at Studio Ashby.

The Yorkshire yard of interior designer Bert & May is brimming

with woody options. Prices start from £49.50 per sq m for reclaimed wood cladding (bertandmay.com). Family-owned Danish company Dinesen stocks full lengths of sustainable Douglas wood and oak from £100 per sq m (dinesen.com).

London's landmark South Bank Tower commissioned interior designer Rachel Winham to design the show apartment. "We used a blend of rich copper, claret and tan tones and soft fabrics in a variety of textures including fur, silk and cashmere to create a warm and inviting space," Winham says. "These luxurious materials, when layered with cushions and throws, add a richness and depth." French Connection's new autumn range nods to the trend and includes the Thick Cut Glass ceiling lamp with a lustrous-faceted surface (£165, frenchconnection.com).

Rebecca Wakefield, creative director at Banda Design Studio, says the tactile trend taps into the growing interest for entertaining in the home. "Increasingly our clients want something unique which is beautifully made, sustainable and with provenance, which guests will comment on at dinner parties."

But it's not just about show-off and sparkle. Athina Bluff, founder of Topology Interiors, a virtual interior design service that starts from £75 per room (topologylondon.co.uk), says that our obsession with touch comes from something deeper. "We have a desire to enhance our sensory experience with the items we surround ourselves with in our homes," she says. "Simply looking at something is not enough. Adding the element of touch clearly appeals to our sense of curiosity that perhaps stems from our childhood development."

Texture is a key element throughout Artisan, a boutique collection of apartments by Dukelease in London's Fitzrovia, which has taken its design cue from the district's historical fabric trade. "We've used materials



Sparkle: Custom-made, diamond-shaped, velvet wall panels from Touched Interiors

TACTILE TREATS PAD OUT YOUR HOME



Chandelier E170, by Bobbin & Bow (bobbinandbow.com)

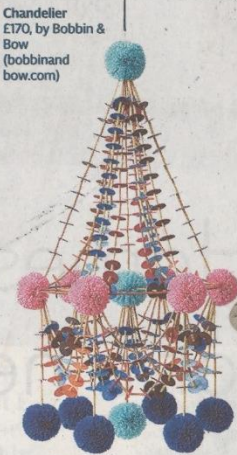
Atika cabinet E149, by Atkin and Thyme (atkinandthyme.co.uk)



Garland Relief tile E281.47, by Patricia Urquiola (surfacetiles.com)



Scarlett bed E879, by Living It Up (livingitup.co.uk)



Pantanal wallpaper E119, by Osborne & Little (johnlewis.com)



Zara chair E799, by Living It Up (livingitup.co.uk)



Wood wall cladding E100 per m sq, by Dinesen (dinesen.com)



Meridian headboard E1495, by Touched Interiors (touchedinteriors.co.uk)

in unexpected ways: fabrics on walls and doors and lace detailing on bathroom tiles from Spanish-born designer Patricia Urquiola," says Katherine Neathercoat from the scheme's interior designer, Rolfe Judd. Urquiola's similar bas-relief tiles are available from £281.47 per sq m (surfacetiles.com).

Of course, the tactile trend is

closely linked to our growing obsession with making things. For those keen to create their own statement piece, Bobbin and Bow runs workshops to make showy but soft chandeliers from rye straw and paper. For the less crafty, the company also undertakes commissions starting at £170 (bobbinandbow.com).