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## Glamorous and dynamic: key words for home texture

Interior designers are pushing the envelope by applying their know-how to metallics, stone, leather and tiling



Aubergine Lucca by Quentin Reynolds



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By Nicole Swengley

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We're getting more touchy-feely as the trend to feature glamorous textures in our homes takes hold. Surfaces are increasingly dynamic, with tactile materials spicing up the aesthetic. 'Mixing textures creates contrast and adds character,' says interior designer Fiona Barratt-Campbell. Steve Charles, co-founder of decorative surfaces specialist Decorum Est, observes: 'Textures that wouldn't have been considered 10 years ago are now featuring in homes.'

But subtlety is the key to maximising impact. 'Less is more, so it's best to use small hints,' advises Sara Cosgrove, head of interior design at the Studio at Harrods. Here, we reveal how.

### **Marble and stone**

'People want beautifully figured marble fit for Versailles,' says Alvaro de Ferranti of stone specialist De Ferranti. The trend is for large slabs, often with profiles at skirting and cornice level. 'We even use boiserie-style marbles to mimic wood joinery. For bathrooms, we mix marble with mother-of-pearl cut into interlocking shapes such as scallops (from £2,880 per sq m), and we use new technology to laminate thin marble sheets onto backlit glass.' Technical advances also allow stone specialist Lapidida to engrave marble with surface effects like raindrops or quilting (from £1,500 per sq m). 'People want a bespoke element,' says Lapidida's managing director Jason Cherrington.

Rare stones are also in demand. 'Take Marron Cohiba,' says Sara Cosgrove at the Studio at Harrods. 'This dark chocolate granite with high levels of quartz feels smooth as leather and is ideal for kitchen worktops.' Steve Charles of Decorum Est adds: 'We use volcanic stone, raw or with bronze bricks or glass, for a jewel-like finish in bathrooms. Or we apply bronze to a textured stone like travertine to create a feature wall.' [decorumest.co.uk](http://decorumest.co.uk); [deferranti.com](http://deferranti.com); [lapidida.com](http://lapidida.com); [thestudioatharrods.com](http://thestudioatharrods.com)

## **Metallics**

Metals are prized for their glamour and durability. 'It's the quality of finish that's important,' says Karen Howes of Chelsea-based designer Taylor Howes. 'Giving metal tables the same level of bronze finish as car spray makes them look amazing.' She uses bronze for dramatic effect on grand double doors, glass-topped tables, staircase risers and handrails.

In Fiona Barratt-Campbell's debut FBC London furniture collection, metals are featured for 'textural contrast and impact'. For example, the Lawrence table (from £9,650) has a laser-cut aluminium base with a lacquered or sandblasted oak top. Just want the surface effect?

Decorative artist Quentin Reynolds, at Saffron Interior Arts, gives walls the appearance of rare burnished metals. [fbc-london.com](http://fbc-london.com); [saffroninteriorarts.com](http://saffroninteriorarts.com); [taylorhowes.co.uk](http://taylorhowes.co.uk)

## **Leather**

Leather's assets are legion. It offers excellent insulation, softens acoustics, repels dust and has innate warmth. 'It looks particularly smart in smaller areas like powder rooms, where we wrap walls in Atelier Meriguet-Carrière's Louis XV-type embossed leathers,' says Sara Cosgrove at the Studio at Harrods. 'Leather flooring, such as Alma's, is incredibly luxurious and a brilliant lint-free solution for dressing rooms. We work with Helen Amy Murray to create laser-etched, leather headboards, which are backlit to glow gently, and with Fameed Khalique to source unusual leathers, such as Kyle Bunting's hand-dyed hide rugs.'

Khalique's metallic leathers, dyed bronze, copper or anthracite, are also in demand for use on walls and upholstery or for wrapping over doors or cabinetry. 'People want a rich, dramatic look,' he says, citing the leather strips hand-woven with silk (from £362 per m) or water hyacinth (from £194 per m) by New York-based designer Be Inthavong.

'Homeowners are moving away from flat, smooth, pigmented leather,' confirms Bill Amberg, whose studio creates glamorous leather fittings, including cladding for walls (from £300) and floors (tiled from £350 per sq m; rugs/carpet from £400 per sq m). 'Recently, we shrank a whole bull hide to lift its surface texture for a client's bedroom wall.' Check out Amberg's handiwork in the chic, leather-lined Fumoir at Claridge's. [alma1938.com](http://alma1938.com); [billambergstudio.com](http://billambergstudio.com); [fameedkhalique.com](http://fameedkhalique.com); [helenamurray.com](http://helenamurray.com); [ray.com](http://ray.com); [thestudioatharrods.com](http://thestudioatharrods.com)

## Tiling

Low-maintenance and durable, tiling introduces texture imaginatively. Innovations, such as acrylic tiles incorporating fibre-optic lighting, offer a fresh approach — although demand remains high for hand-made, hand-painted feature panels in ceramic or stone. 'If you want to give walls a lively new aesthetic, try Metrofarm's dynamic 3D concrete tiles,' suggests Annabelle Filer, founder of materials sourcing and advisory company SCIN.

Natural stone tiles by Porcelanosa are very popular, while wafer-thin, porcelain Kerlite from Domus Tiles is a bathroom favourite for the Studio at Harrods. Bisazza's glittering glass-mosaic tiles add glamour to walls, floors and surfaces and London-based Paul Marks of 21st Century Mosaics employs a variety of materials in his eye-catching, bespoke designs. Colourful, recycled aluminium tiles from Fameed Khalique clad walls, floors and counters (from £239 per sq m) and last month he launched DXU cast aluminium wall tiles by Dumas Umemoto (from £89 per tile), which have the appearance of bronze, gold or copper.

"A craft element can add a luxury finish," says Steve Charles of Decorum Est. Tara Bernerd, of Knightsbridge-based designer Tara Bernerd and Partners, agrees. "Layers of texture create interest," she says. "Laying vintage ceramic tiling around a concrete floor, as we're currently doing in a Chicago hotel atrium, creates a boho-chic look that also works well in kitchens and halls." [21stcenturymosaics.com](http://21stcenturymosaics.com); [bisazza.com](http://bisazza.com); [domustiles.co.uk](http://domustiles.co.uk); [fameedkhalique.com](http://fameedkhalique.com); [porcelanosa.com](http://porcelanosa.com); [scin.co.uk](http://scin.co.uk); [tarabernerd.com](http://tarabernerd.com)