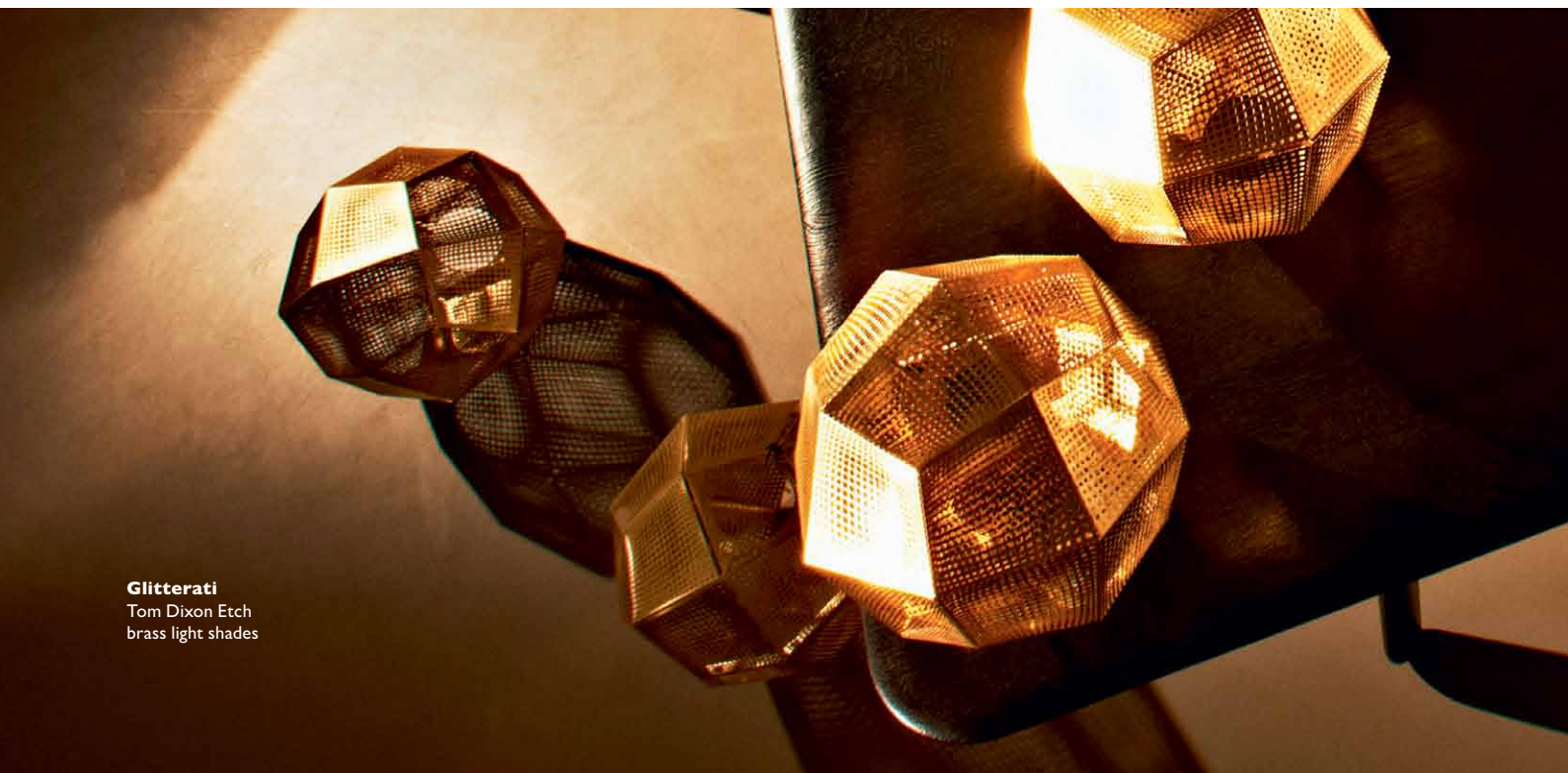




DESIGNS ON THE FUTURE

The contemporary roomscape is in a state of permanent evolution. **Dean Keyworth**, a former president of the British Institute of Interior Design, offers an expert guide to the latest in luxe interiors



Glitterati
Tom Dixon Etch
brass light shades



COLOUR TRENDS

They have been floating around in the design ether for a while, but now the manufacturers have caught up and warmer metallics are definitely the next big thing – brass, copper and bronze will be coming at you in all directions, from bath taps to light fittings, even tables, chairs and in wooden floors. The great thing with these metals is they look authentic in an old house yet can also add a bit of on-trend warmth to a pared-down contemporary interior. Tom Dixon, ex-design guru of Habitat, is one of the pioneers, with his range of copper light fittings and lamps.

DESIGNER TIP: METALLICS

Be careful not to mix up too many metals in the same room – a traditional brass door handle next to a chrome light switch or socket looks plain odd.



Let it shine
Tom Dixon Beat lights in brass, and, below, Venetian-style Marmorino wall finish

WALLS

‘Stylish wallpaper is always going to feel more luxurious than a few coats of emulsion’

Although it has been a beloved part of British interiors since it was popularised by the classic makeover TV show *Changing Rooms*, I am not too sad to announce the death of the decorative cliché that is the feature wall. One wall with an over-the-top pattern is distinctly passé in 2014. This is not to say that wallpaper is no longer on trend – it has just gone upmarket. The key to

DESIGNER TIP: WALLS

Consider the functional qualities of your wall covering as well as its appearance. Marmorino, for example, gives an extremely tough, but dramatic effect for an entrance hall, while leather panelling is ideal for a cinema room thanks to its cocooning and insulating properties.

the must-have look for any luxury interior these days is texture. This can range from papers that emulate suede or leather, grass cloths and even hand-painted scenes on a background of silk. Because all these wall coverings are more concentrated on texture than pattern, you do not need to be afraid to use them on all four walls. However careful you are in choosing the exact shade of designer paint, a wall covered in a stylish paper is always going to feel more luxurious than a few coats of emulsion.

The craze for texture has also moved on from mere papers to more permanent wall coverings such as ‘Marmorino’ – polished plaster embedded with marble dust and given a final sheen with beeswax – or bespoke leather panels overprinted to look like ostrich skin or stingray.

BATHROOMS

Since our unfortunate flirtation with avocado and peach in the 1970s, advances in bathroom design have not been much in evidence. In the past few years, however, there have been some exciting developments in this area, both technically and aesthetically. On the technical side, led by very eco-aware German sanitaryware manufacturers, we now have taps and shower heads that mix air into the water flow so that one has the impression of a cornucopia of H₂O without the huge consumption. You can even fill your bath to exactly the right temperature remotely via your smartphone. On a more prosaic level, technology for shower trays and wet rooms has advanced dramatically so that you can enjoy the sleek, walk-in shower look without the fear of costly leaks to rooms below.

On the aesthetic side, organic and elemental are the keywords, with Jaime Hayon's curvy, all-in-one basin, table and lamp, or Patricia Urquiola's soft-edged taps, baths and basins. Teamed with subtle stone walls and floors and effective, but discreet

lighting, these beautifully designed pieces will make your morning ablutions feel like a trip to the spa. If your tastes err more towards boys' toys than spa-like tranquillity, your bathroom could be the place for a bit of guilt-free bling, with loads of luxury gadgets now on the market. Enjoy a steam cabin that serves as a shower, but transforms at the press of a waterproof button into a steam room complete with herbal infusion, mood lighting and your own music playlist. Then step out and reach over for the fluffy towel warmed via heating pads secreted behind a wall of book-matched marble and catch up with the sports results on the TV built-in behind your mirror – heated, naturally, so that no condensation obscures your view. Even the more intimate activities have gone up market now with Toto WCs incorporating a remote control rise-and-fall seat cover, heated seat and automatic warm water flush. Who needs that penthouse hotel suite now, when you can have it all in the ensuite at home? ▶

FLOORS

It is not just walls that have had the luxury treatment in the past few years. Floors are not just made for walking any more. They should be dressed to impress. Wood flooring continues to be a popular choice with designers, but it has undergone many technical advances to keep up with the way we live now. For example, the 'engineered board,' which has a layer of the timber you want to see on top, but is comprised of a 'sandwich' of different woods underneath to ensure that the floor does not warp or move too much with temperature changes. This means it can be used in conjunction with underfloor heating. There is now also a huge range of finishes that can be applied to wooden boards. They can be oiled, varnished, smoked, even ingrained with metals including silver, gold, zinc and bronze.

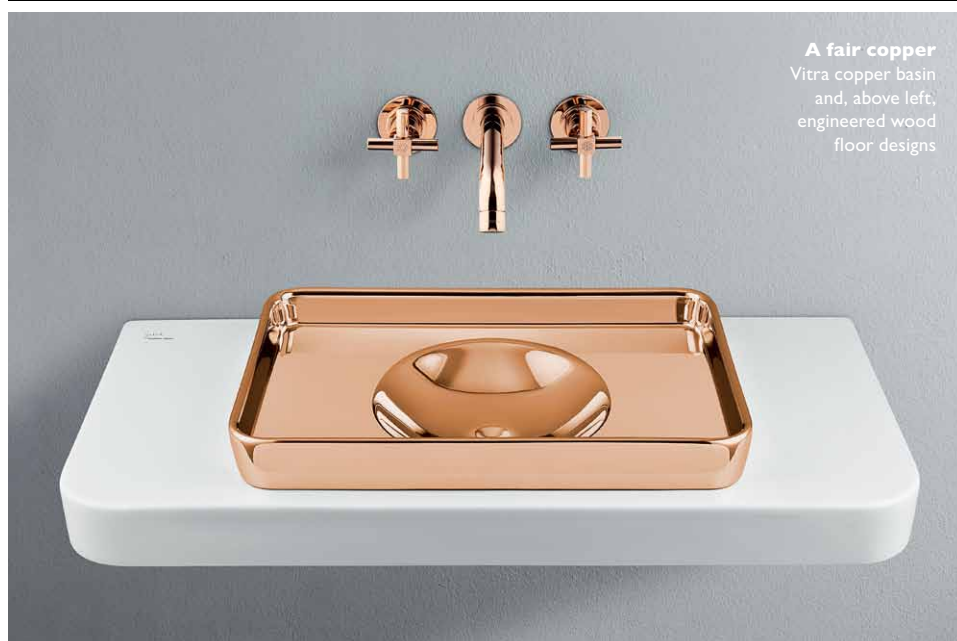
For a softer, more cocoon-like interior, the fitted carpet is back, but again in a more opulent guise. Silk or equally tactile, but harder wearing, viscose 'faux' silks wall-to-wall are the latest thing for upmarket bedrooms.

DESIGNER TIP: FLOORS

Don't be afraid of pattern on the floor. Whether it be tiles in the kitchen or carpet in the sitting room, a bold pattern can make a real statement without being as overpowering as something similar would be on the walls.

DESIGNER TIP: BATHROOMS

If you don't have it already, underfloor heating pre-programmed to reach the right temperature just as your alarm goes off will transform your mornings.



A fair copper
Vitra copper basin
and, above left,
engineered wood
floor designs



Ideas to borrow
Berlin's new Das Stue hotel and, below, a room at the new Andaz in Amsterdam

THE HOTEL EFFECT

If you travel a lot and stay in decent hotels, you are almost bound to draw ideas from the styles you see in your temporary abodes around the world when it comes to decorating your own home. This is certainly the case with many of my own clients, who operate their businesses internationally. 'Innspiration' does have to be approached with caution, however, both from an aesthetic and practical point of view. The walk-in shower with giant shower head and view of Kowloon Bay is amazing on the 30th floor of a brand new skyscraper with industrial plumbing and onsite maintenance team, but might not be such a good idea in your Victorian house back in London. Similarly, the silvery suede wall panels you fell in love with in that trendy West



Hollywood boutique hotel might suffer slightly in cohabitation with young children and pets at home. For colour schemes, remember that the light is very different across the globe and the zingy green and bright orange scheme that gave you so much energy in your suite in Sydney may not be quite so effective on a rainy day in Edinburgh.

The best hotel inspirations are from the comfort point of view – the bedside table at exactly the right height and big enough to accommodate your charging phone, book and tablet. Or the well-thought-out bathroom lighting that's bright enough to adequately illuminate your shaving or make-up routine, but not so harsh as to add on even more years to your face than the jet lag. And, if you really cannot live without that zingy green and orange colour combo, how about using it in moderation at home for cushions on an elegant grey sofa?

ARTWORK

From the prized boy-band poster in a teen's bedroom to a priceless Old Master in a stately drawing room, art is an important factor in any interior design scheme. Philip Mould, fine art dealer, art historian and host of BBC's *Fake or Fortune*, maintains that a period portrait is 'the artistic equivalent of a costume drama – it can set the whole tone of the room, from a highly decorative and detailed Elizabethan in courtly dress to the saucy ebullience of a 17th-century Baroque likeness of Nell Gwynne.' The paintings in which Mould deals are very valuable statement pieces around which a whole room's décor can be built. Most of us, however, start with the room and look for pieces to fit in afterwards. With this dilemma in mind, the online gallery newbloodart.com, which specialises in recently graduated artists, has a virtual 'art in situ' function where you can upload a picture of a room and see how any of the gallery's paintings would look on your very own wall. Buying from fledgling artists is a little easier on the pocket, too – prices start in the hundreds of pounds. Whatever style of art you choose, hanging correctly (not too high, not too low) and lighting well can transform even a modest piece into a gallery-quality star. If you are feeling brave, rule breaking, such as hanging a piece of modern art in a contemporary frame directly above an ornate, antique chest, can produce a stunning and highly individual effect. ⁷ Dean Keyworth is founder of Armstrong Keyworth Interior Design

