

The

# ENGLISH HOME

FABRIC & WALLPAPER SPECIAL

*Celebrating the essence of English style*

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## Autumn Collections

First look at the latest fabrics & wallpapers

### FLOOR SHOW

Carpet, stone, wood, tiles

### LIGHT WORK

Smart buys, elegant effects

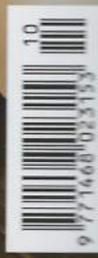
### Behind the scene

Top design studios share trade secrets



## COLOUR EVOLUTION

Beautiful new hues & chic ways to combine them



# *Decorative* FOOTNOTE

Whether muted or more striking,  
carpet adds a further layer of  
style to a room scheme





**T**he selection of carpet is a means of adding interest to a room scheme, even if that effect might be as subtle as that of a pale painted wall. Considering the floor as a canvas will unleash the decorative potential of any room, with both plain and patterned carpets able to achieve this end.

#### PATTERNED PERFECTION

Of all the possible choices for carpet, a patterned design provides the most eye-catching result. "Patterns often add glamour to a space," says Peter Page, director of Tim Page Carpets. However, with the introduction of pattern, the visual balance of interest in a room is altered and attention must be paid to the room's other elements. "Keep other materials simple but mix it up," advises Page. "Add textures such as leather, metals, velvet and such to complement the overall look."

If there are existing patterns in a room, a carpet design need not repeat them. Indeed, combining geometrics and florals, for example, can work beautifully. "Trying to seamlessly pattern-match one style, like a geometric pattern, is incredibly difficult and can also be overwhelming in a room," explains Nicola Oaten, director of interior designer company Bear René. The scale of the pattern is equally important. "Often if clients are looking for something more traditional, the pattern will be smaller. For more contemporary interiors, a larger pattern is often ▶

**OPPOSITE** A bold geometric carpet in complementary colours enhances this patterned sofa.

*Quirky B Ben Pentreath Cube Kent in Gorgeous Greys, £111.20 a square metre, Alternative Flooring*

**ABOVE LEFT** *Abbotsford Heather Kilgour, £69.99 a square metre, Brintons*

**ABOVE RIGHT** *Flower Pressing, £86 a square metre, Hazy Days collection, Axminster Carpets*

**RIGHT** Bold stripes and checks work well on staircases and landings. *Moniak, £180 a linear metre, 170cm wide, ANTA*





**ABOVE LEFT**  
Mika handmade wool and plant-fibre rug in Bainbridge, £260 a square metre, Flock Living

**ABOVE RIGHT**  
This cut and loop pile carpet, in an elegant shade of silver, has been handwoven to create a subtle striped texture. Samode Silver in 100 per cent wool, £102 a square metre, Jacaranda

**LEFT** Made from silk, this flat-weave and cut-pile carpet creates an eye-catching pattern. Penta Chevron in Calcite silk, £2,490 a square metre, Vanderhurd

preferred,” says Page. Where the carpet does not provide the room’s only pattern, varying scale between carpet and other furnishings produces elegant results.

The impression given by a patterned carpet can be more gentle than the adjective might suggest and it can readily create a calming ambience. “Toning a patterned carpet with the colour palette of the room works well when creating a particular atmosphere – in a tranquil bedroom, for example,” says Oaten. Carpet pattern need not be wall to wall, either. Designs that team a plain border with a patterned central section have the visual interest of laying a rug on hard flooring but offer the sound absorption and comfort of carpet.

Floral-patterned carpet can complement period properties particularly, and also provides a solution for a large room that needs to feel more cocooning in its atmosphere. Geometrics make a strong statement and are at their best when a structured room scheme is desired. Striped carpet is an appealing choice and often favoured for halls, staircases and landings where it can emphasise the length of an area.

Overall, one pattern theme for a home may be preferable for continuity. “With the exception of one or two special rooms, such as a bedroom, combining different patterns in adjoining rooms can become quite disjointed,” advises Oaten.

#### TACTILE TEXTURES

Less overt than a striped, floral or geometric motif, plain, textured carpet can nonetheless increase a room’s aesthetic depth. Some designs make use of texture to produce pattern – albeit with a softer aspect than that of a carpet with a colour-contrasted motif or



FAR LEFT *Elgar*, custom-made to order as a rug, runner or carpet, £1,115 a square metre, Loomah

LEFT A short pile is suitable for areas of high traffic. *Capri in Parma*, £34 a square metre, Open Spaces Collection, Ulster Carpets

BELOW Here, undyed wool enhances the herringbone weave. *Natural Tweed in Harris*, £40 a square metre, Brockway

BOTTOM Choose a floor covering that makes a statement. *Cardo in 514 and 134 (pattern)*, £312 a square metre, C&C Milano

pattern. "It's the fine, contemporary textures that do really well: smart, small bouclés; subtle-cut and loop stripes," says Lucy Meager, owner of Jacaranda. "In cool, natural tones these provide an interesting but neutral backdrop to set the stage for patterns on curtains, wallpapers or rugs."

The pile of a carpet is a vital aspect of its decorative qualities, too. "The wide variety of surface texture options give rise to a range of underfoot comfort sensations that affect the luxury feel of the carpet and wear performance," explains Rupert Anton, spokesperson for the Carpet Foundation. "Texture also has an impact upon the surface appearance, producing light and shade effects."

Looped piles will not show light and dark areas when walked on and vacuumed, and are frequently chosen for this quality of firmness because it makes them suitable for busy areas. They offer the natural appearance of coir or sisal with the benefits of carpet. The loops may be level throughout or, for even greater texture, at different heights. Some carpets feature a random pattern of multi-level loops, emphasising the natural look, and loops at varying heights can be employed for subtle, patterned effects such as ribbed stripes. Carpets that feature loops along with cut pile are also a possibility, with interesting textural results. Whilst it is practical and durable generally, loop pile is best avoided in homes with pets that have claws as they can unthread loops.

Twist carpet is also popular for its textural appearance and ability to cope with everyday foot traffic and vacuuming without showing prints or marks. It also has the benefit of being hard-wearing. ▶





### CARPET PILE TYPES

- **Twist** Made from tightly twisted yarn. Textured in appearance, it comes in plain or heathered finishes.
- **Loop** Loops of yarn are left uncut. Height can be uniform or multi-level.
- **Velvet** Yarn loops are cut into upright pile, creating a smooth appearance.
- **Saxony** A luxurious, deep pile, but prone to flattening.
- **Cut & loop** Both uncut loops and cut pile are included in this type of carpet.

### CLEANING

Use an upright vacuum cleaner with a beater bar and brush for cut-pile carpets such as velvets and twists. Only use a cylinder vacuum and the suction head for loop pile carpets.



With this style of carpet, selection will be between a single colour in a preferred shade, or heathered designs, where the yarn shows complementary flecks of colour. Preference will be influenced by whether a solid colour or a gentle tonal effect is sought.

With its cut pile, velvet carpet has a soft feel and smooth appearance. It has an attractive, suede-like quality, with the pile appearing to darken if it is rubbed one way. **“People are often under the misapprehension that twist pile carpets are harder wearing than velvets,”** says Anton. **“This is not true. On a like-for-like basis – that is, pile fibre and weight – the difference is purely aesthetic.”** Patterned carpets generally have a smooth velvet finish.

For a sensuous effect, the deep-cut pile of a Saxony carpet can be alluring. However, the qualities that make it an outstanding selection for a bedroom decorating scheme are to its detriment elsewhere. **“It’s certainly to be avoided in heavy traffic areas,”** says Anton.

Whilst tufted carpets are produced when yarn is inserted into a backing fabric, Axminsters and Wiltons are woven in traditional style, and flat-weave carpets share this more labour-intensive method of production. The latter has a looped pile, but it is flatter than other carpets, with a pleasing texture, and is especially suitable for halls, staircases and landings.

### CONSIDERING COMPOSITION

The composition of a carpet also plays an important role in a room scheme. Wool carpets have a matt appearance that will last, making the floor a subtle part of the decorative whole. Wool also absorbs and retains dye well, producing depth and a clarity of colour. **“Whiter wools, such as those from New Zealand, are often used for the lighter shades of cream and pale-shaded ranges such as grey,”** explains Bridgette Kelly, consultant at The Campaign for Wool. **“British wool is excellent**

in pattern and woven collections, but it is also good for the heather and flecked-effect carpets.”

Wool is sometimes blended with synthetic fibres, including at the standard of 80-20 or 80-10-10 mixtures, with wool as the highest percentage. There are 50-50 blends, too. **“Look to achieve a higher level of wool within the blend, as the many performance benefits of wool will reduce as the blend decreases,”** advises Kelly. Carpets made from man-made fibres are best where stain resistance is at a premium.

Silk and silk-like fabrics create a distinctive sheen and bring a luxurious touch to a room. They can be mixed with wool, bringing the qualities of both materials to the carpet, or used alone. Silk alternatives include viscose and Tencel, both made from wood pulp that has been processed into cellulose. **“The Tencel pile moves and crushes when walked on like silk velvet, it then reflects light in different directions to give a wonderful, lustrous texture that is so characterful it’s almost alive,”** explains Jacaranda’s Lucy Meager. Both are soft underfoot, too.

Carpets made from plant fibres such as sisal and rush are now familiar choices when natural texture is sought, and other naturals have joined the line-up. **“Two relatively new fibres to consider are hyacinth and okra,”** says Anjana Sethia, founder of Flock Living. **“They are sustainable and ecological, strong and resilient – especially in our plaited special weaving method.”** The possibilities occasioned by combining yarns is also exciting designers. **“Combining plant fibres with wool has opened up a whole new range of looks and styles for us, and the possibility to create something unique. For example, by using ombré-coloured wool, interwoven with okra fibre, to create striated textures, or adding plaited plant fibre details to rich, dark wool colours, or combining wool, in several tonally matched shades, with plant fibres, in patterns based on heritage tweeds,”** says Sethia. ■

**ABOVE LEFT** Make a bold statement. *Quirky B Liberty Fabrics Flowers of Thorpe in Summer Garden, £149 a metre square, Alternative Flooring*

**ABOVE RIGHT** By contrast, a neutral carpet subtly enhances a room’s features. *Croft in Soya, £40 a square metre, Habitus Collection, Ulster Carpets*