

COCO CHANEL: HOW SHE CHANGED THE INTERIOR DESIGN WORLD

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*From heritage designs to contemporary patterns, brilliant hues and soft neutrals, **MAGGIE STEVENSON** explores the best wool flooring options for a cosy interior*



INSPIRED BY NATURE

Flowers and foliage have influenced the design of carpets throughout its history, and sinuous trails, sprig motifs and stylised plant forms continue to feature in our most popular patterned carpets.

William Morris is the best-known carpet designer and, although he lived over a century ago, his patterns continue to be revived and reinterpreted today. Modern artists make new demands on carpet makers to produce their ideas as closely as possible to the original and while over 30 colours can be included in carpets woven on Axminster looms, digital printing offers a limitless palette. Printing on carpet is a new technique and until recently only possible with synthetic carpets. Fi Douglas believes that her company, Bluebellgray, is the first to print designs on pure wool pile. 'With digital printing you can make subtle marks,' she says. 'It lets you put a painting onto a rug.'

ABOVE LEFT 'Noir Ruskin Butterfly', 80 per cent wool, 20 per cent nylon, £89.99 per sq m, Timorous Beasties Collection, Brintons
ABOVE RIGHT 'Christine' printed rug, 100 per cent wool rug, £990 for 230 x 170cm, Bluebellgray
RIGHT 'Strawberry Meadow Peacock' carpet, 100 per cent wool, £149 per sq m, Quirky B Liberty Fabrics, Alternative Flooring



ABSTRACT ART

Patterned carpets are a practical choice in areas of high footfall. They show marks and wear less readily and add interest in rooms where there's a large expanse of floor. Traditional designs inspired by oriental carpet patterns are an all-time favourite, as are regular dot designs, checks and plaids, but the new generation of abstract and geometric carpets set out to appeal to those who prefer a more contemporary look. Repeating geometrics and interlocking patterns make a bold style statement, while new designs based on classic motifs such as scroll, Greek key and herringbone patterns are distressed for a softer effect and drawn in colours that reflect current trends for refreshing cool neutrals and pastel tones.



'Oyster Atholl Gardens' carpet, 80 per cent wool, 20 per cent nylon, £89.99 per sq m, Timorous Beasties Collection, Brintons
 LEFT Handmade traditional shyrdak felted wool rug, 1.5 x 2.6m, £2,200, Felt

NATURAL TONES & TEXTURES

If you want flooring that feels warm and soft to the touch, is springy underfoot yet hard-wearing and is produced with low impact on the environment, wool is the natural choice. Arguably, most natural of all is carpet made from undyed wool. 'The wool for these carpets is prepared by washing in pure Yorkshire water,' says Shaun Lewis of Brockway, a carpet maker that uses wool from a variety of sources including British rare breed sheep. 'No dyes are used and all the colour comes from the natural tones of the fleece.' Carpets dyed in neutral hues often include shades that wouldn't appear naturally. Neutral shades and textured weaves are a winning combination and carpets with a loop pile, regular motif or overall random texture exude luxury.



'Eriskay' 100 per cent undyed wool carpet, £40 per sq m, Natural Tweed collection, Brockway
 RIGHT 'Wilton Svelte' in 'Stone', 100 per cent wool carpet, £143 per sq m, Crucial Trading



FINE LINES

Stripes have always been an interior design favourite as they offer scope to combine colours and produce interesting visual effects. 'In the context of a rug, graphic wide bands create a focal point and on the stairs, make a dramatic statement,' says Andy Guard, head designer at Roger Oates Design. 'Classic fine lines are more relaxing, adding texture and overall softness. Pick out individual colours for decorative accessories and paint shades.' Stripes can create optical illusions that have practical benefits, correcting the proportions of your living space. A long, narrow runner visually lengthens a room or hallway, while broad stripes running widthways across an area help to make it feel larger. The bolder the colour contrast between the stripes the more pronounced the effect.



'Camden Wool' carpet in 'Sienna Stripe', £34.99 per sq m, Carpetright
 BELOW 'Bouclé Neutrals' carpet in 'Sloane Steel', 50 per cent wool, 50 per cent polyester, £25 per sq m, Cormar Carpets
 RIGHT 'Westport' flatweave rug in 'Lichen', 100 per cent wool, 310 x 225cm, £2,065, Roger Oates



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- * Alternative Flooring 01264 335111; alternativeflooring.com
- * Axminster Carpets axminster-carpets.co.uk
- * Bluebellgray 0808 164 0130; bluebellgray.com
- * Brintons 0800 505055; brintons.co.uk
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