

Reasons to be cheerful

Interior designer **Fiona Applegarth** reports on how the latest trends from Paris can transform your home

I sense that everyone needs to add a little cheer to their life at the moment, especially when we're bombarded all day by news of the stricken economy.

Most people agree that home is where the majority find solace, a sanctuary where at the end of the day you can put your feet up and enjoy the cosiness and privacy of your own surroundings.

I've just returned from Paris where I spent three days visiting the massive Maison et Objets exhibition. This is the renowned trade show for the interior design industry and is held every six months. It is where major companies across Europe show their new ranges and hope to inspire those in this field for the next season ahead.

It was no surprise that I found myself, as always, swept up with excitement of the latest trends and it reinforced my belief in the importance of getting your home interiors right.

Sub head please

During a tricky property market, it is now more important than ever to not only keep your home in good condition, but also to maximise its impact if you are trying to secure a sale.

There are plenty of ways to lift your spirits by improving the look of your home – and you don't need to break the bank.

There are now amazing collections of wall coverings whose qualities, literally, make the walls feel that they are coming alive.

As shown in Paris, and here now as well, the trends are for geometrics, spots and loops with iridescent shimmer to add a touch of glamour. Some collections are inspired by nature's skins, textures and colours from plants, minerals and animals, such as leaves, tree bark,

and hides of large animals such as elephants and rhinos.

Technological developments have provided the means for the introduction of amazing vinyls, allowing the rise of things like fishnet textures, optical illusions and glossy sculptural images.

Even just the use of a feature wall with a theme or texture can dramatically transform a room and give it a different identity.

My first love has always been fabrics. The diversity available allows for experimentation with mix of colour, texture and design. What better way to add a bit of dramatic effect than to put together a selection of amazing cushions, throws, and curtains?

Paris companies continue to display beautiful satin and luscious velvet fabrics, many with the inclusion of metallics. There was also no shortage of glamour with more beaded trims, and crystal tiebacks.

The emphasis, in general, still appears to be on pure, uncomplicated stylish chic. There is also a more feminine approach to design. This sits closely alongside the more masculine shapes we have become accustomed to with contemporary furniture which has simple, straight lines.

Apart from the above, the careful selection of a mirror, rugs, artwork or lighting can also contribute to dressing the room and creating maximum appeal. For example, big oversized pendant lampshades are very fashionable and add a bold, confident statement. A bright colourful rug, in the centre of a neutral coloured room speaks volumes.

All in all, there's a lot to look forward to with the coming trends, so adding a touch of excitement now could just be the lift you need. ●

essential info

Fiona Applegarth is director of Sable Interiors, the Thames Ditton-based interior design company.
Website: www.sableinteriors.com