

high fibre

By Tony Smyth & Gemima Ng

ha+d takes a look at the latest trends in fabric design, and reviews some of the latest products on the market.

CHOOSING A FABRIC for hospitality use is a case as much as anything of ensuring that the selection will work with the rest of the interior and that it will last more than a couple of seasons.

It's not just a matter of selecting a nice red fluffy cushion or throw to accent a space, but also taking into account the wear-and-tear that the fabric will be subjected to from the average hotel guest. Does your taffeta look wrinkly? Does your poly-weave have flair? And can your bed linen stand up to being a luggage carousel?

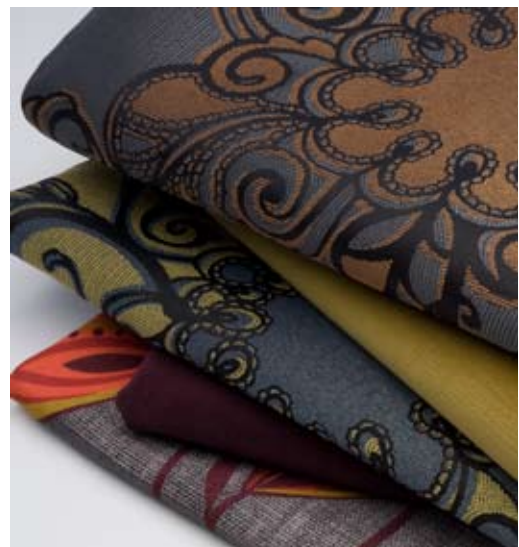
Durability is key to choosing the correct fabric, advises Amber Nave, visual arts specialist at Fabricut Contract. "Make sure that the application suits the fabric construction," she says. "Look for inherently fire resistant [FR] fabrics for drapes and be familiar with how the different materials will hang." Nave adds that bed linens need to stand up to frequent high-temperature washing as well as to luggage and other heavy items being placed and dragged on them.

As with fashion, colour trends in fabrics come and go, but current trends appear to be focusing on muted rather than bright colours.

"All indications are that the colour trends are going to lean to more muted tones next year. Pink is the new red, lots of frosted pearl and satin finishes, rich orange and berry hues paired with spicy browns and bronze metallics, and earthy soil will replace cool gray tones as the strong neutral. Teal and turquoise will continue to be red hot," comments Sandy Kotan, managing director of Thicas Interiors.

Karen Keating, design director at Kravet Contract, agrees. "We are seeing a trend toward 'toned down' brights, happy colours leaning in the secondary range on the colour wheel. The darker colours are in a new jewel family, plum, ink, berries mixed with quince, spice and warm neutrals." Sophisticated pastels are also in use, she adds.

The toning down continues when it comes to pattern trends, notes Kotan, with more subdued patterns now in use. "Patterns are not as extravagant as one



or two years ago. Patterns will go more rustic, with tribal and natural themes. Think cow prints, textured burlap feedbags and tribal accents," she says.

Pattern is very eclectic right now, comments Keating, citing as examples ethnic mixes including African influences, layering of patterns, clean stylised looks as well as the continuation of mid-century classics.

Global influence is still influential in textile patterns, observes Wendy Deschene, custom design manager at Hunter Douglas Hospitality. "Overall, we're seeing a lot of designs with a handcrafted feel, where pattern is being created using texture. Nature-inspired designs and organic shapes are still a major trend that is very prevalent. At the same time there are clean, large-scale graphic prints that are highly saturated in colour with modern silhouettes and text. This contrast is creating a broader trend in juxtaposition of opposites: organic versus bold and graphic," she notes.

Juxtaposition is also evident in textures, says Deschene. "Designers will pair a dull and tactile fabric with something really slick and shiny. One concept being seen is cut velvet with metallic yarn. It's about taking traditional fabrics and adding modern elements. Creativity in finishing techniques is also being seen, for example pleating and embossing, appliqué and embroidery. Embellishment and handmade detail is a constant feature," she says.

Chenille also continues to be popular, noted Marcy Graham of Chella Textiles and the trend will edge towards bold colours. "I think we will see a return of strong and bold – where solids will be used as accents on big patterned or striped surfaces and not vice versa," she adds.

Paul Richmond of RichmondTanya Hospitality in Shanghai says, "In Asia, the pattern trends are becoming more simple with accents being created by pillows and other decorative products in solid and traditional Chinese styled designs. He adds: "Jacquards' for upholstery are in and typically draperies are solid and are sometimes manufactured with accents created by sewing contrasting trims on the leading edges and bottom hems."

Opposite page, clockwise from top left:
Chella Aretha Ink display;
Chella Sketchbook Floral array;
Nouveau Boho by Stacy Garcia;
Fabricut Contract's Escort Protect - Sentinel.
This page, clockwise from top left:
Evans & Brown from Hunter Douglas;
Fabricut Contract Sixties - Tidewater;
outdoor fabric range by
Pedroso & Osorio from Thicas;
Crypton Green from Kravet Contract.



Another trend noted is for innovative use of fabrics, with materials used for example as headboards and objets d'art rather than merely cushions and throws. However, while designers are always looking at non-traditional uses of fabric, they do need to ensure fabrics comply with fire retardant regulations [FR], cautions Diana Dobin, senior vice president and chief sustainability officer at Valley Forge Fabrics. "While it is exciting to see creative uses of fabric as wall upholstery, for example, designers need to know the relevant FR codes," she says.

When it comes to selecting fabric, with tighter budgets than in previous years, operators are increasingly demanding performance orientated products with ease of maintenance and non-fading materials, and it is this durability which often takes priority over pattern and colour considerations.

In selecting fabric for bedding, the current trend is all about keeping it classic, according to Deschene. "Bedding is all about simple wovens, tone on tone patterns, and lots of white. There is a subtle evolution back to colour, but an appreciation for cleanliness that is going to stick around," she says.

Latest collections

Kravet Contract are about to launch a Faux Leather collection featuring Sta-Kleen that will enable pen and marker to be dry-erased on the spot.

Thicas are introducing a European colour palette with new products from Portugese firm Pedroso & Osorio and a new Italian leather line Prodital Leathers.

Chella Textiles is offering an elegant retrospective of the Chella collection in black and white featuring Shadows & Light.

Hunter Douglas Hospitality, meanwhile, is working on a follow-up to its Evans and Brown collection launched last May.

The Thomas Schoos FRESH Collection for Valley Forge Fabrics is made from 100% Post-Consumer Recycled Polyester. Once what was a plastic water bottle is now a luxurious textile. All FRESH fabrics can be reclaimed through their established Reclamation Programme. This completes the closed-loop process. ♻️

Above left, top to bottom:
Pedroso & Orisario from Thicas;
Crypton Green from Kravet Contract.

Above, right:
Thomas Schoos FRESH
from Valley Forge Fabrics.