

Make yourself at home

Traditional touches and exotic flourishes partner perfectly this season, says **Sara Emslie**

It may be grey outside but this season's interiors are bright and uplifting; the perfect antidote to winter's gloomy days. The look is spirited, charming and wholesome. Patchwork fabrics, embroidery, quirky designs and organic textures abound. Our houses are our homes and for comfortable living we should dress them accordingly.

Home-span British crafts, complemented by modern designs, are enjoying a well-deserved revival. Think handmade, artisan and utility

Mix and layer textiles of different styles to create a laid-back vibe that's glamorous but with a twist

— but forget notions of austerity and hardship. There's a hint of the exotic too: rich colours and textiles capture the spices and silks of India, Turkey and the Far East, providing a touch of decadent glamour to functional surroundings.

Focus on a few such accessories to add luxury: pretty embroidered cushions with designs inspired by geometric Moorish tiles, jewel-encrusted ceramics, mother-of-pearl accessories and reflective metals.

Award-winning designer Ann Broad (www.annbroadcollection.com) suggests "teaming glass accessories in amber and gold with silk cushions in violet and pewter for a warm, luxurious feel".

Lighten dark winter nights with silver and gold candle holders, combining them with soft velvety textiles and shades of burnt orange, pink, nude, dusky plum and bold purple for a sumptuous touch.

Abigail Ahern, interior designer and owner of hip boutique Atelier Abigail Ahern (www.atelierabigailahern.com) says this season's look is "bohemian chic: an enchanting mix that characterises modern glamour".

She advises leaning on new purchases with existing ones, and "layering textiles of different styles to create a laid-back vibe that's glamorous but with a twist". This may be a winter of content after all.

Instant comfort and charm

Cover story
Indulge with luxurious, tactile fabrics. Grey velvet quilt (right), £195. **Graham and Green** (0845 130 6622; www.grahamandgreen.co.uk)



Glow for gold
Add cosy glamour on cold nights. Metallic hurricane candle holder (above) from £35. **Nicola Farhi Home** (020 7494 9051; www.nicolafarhi.com)



Hot-house charm
Edwardian two-column radiator, £54 per painted section. **Holloways of Ludlow** (020 7602 5757; www.hollowaysofludlow.com)



Warmth underfoot
Treat your feet to homely comfort. Wix, Jones Szani hand-knotted wool rug (below), £800. **Heal's** (08700 240 780; www.heals.co.uk)



Artisan appeal
Hark back to cottage charm. Hand-crocheted wool throw (above), £175. **Toast** (0844 557 5200; www.toast.co.uk)



square. Alternatively, opt for the soft, tactile qualities of natural sheepskin from The Celtic Sheepskin Company (from £65 for a 92 x 71cm rug). For a more contemporary look, try Roger Oates' selection of modular felt rugs, from £160 per metre for a 140cm width.

However, if you want the look of a contemporary and more clean-lined hard flooring, which is a bit softer underfoot but without the intrusion of extra layers, it may be worth

considering materials such as vinyl, as it gives you the look of natural stone minus the coldness. This is a particularly good choice for the kitchen area, where rugs can prove to be a hazard. Try Antico for a range of limestone, slate and concrete-effect tiles, from £58 per square metre.

If else fails don't forget that cashmere bed socks and furry lined slippers, available from The White Company, are very "this season".

Level best: above, left to right, **Cumbrin Gray**, **Jura Grey** and **Lined Washed Wood**, all by **Antico**; inset, far left, from top, **Roger Oates' Inner Stripes rug**, and **The Celtic Sheepskin Company's sheepskin rug**