

## Homes & Property Interiors

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**M**ETALS have recovered their sophistication for spring, with bling and shine giving way to soft, warmer textures and adventurous sculptural shapes.

Each metal speaks its own language: copper is the current king of the mood board, gleaming everywhere from haute décor at Chelsea Harbour to high street pots and pans at Sainsbury's. Bronze, a copper alloy, also has that gorgeous glow that warms a room. Stainless steel and aluminium are clean, clinical and precise, while rougher steel and galvanised surfaces are more industrial and workaday. Polished surfaces add the depth of their reflections and push light to the back of gloomy spaces. And gold is the ultimate luxury statement.

"We tend to think of metals as a technical man-made material, with a crisp shiny aesthetic," says Ian Hunter, co-founder of the Materials Council, whose "materials library" is



**Left:** a chair by Rubelli in Lady Hamilton patterned silk and metallic fabric

**Right:** brass coffee tables from £2,500 at Keir Townsend, 020 7746 2442



**Below:** this pair of Wave coffee tables by Boca do Lobo are made of hammered copper and have black mirrored tops. £5,975 from luxdeco.com

## metallics

# Design trends

By **Barbara Chandler**

newly installed on the top floor of design gallery 19 Greek Street, W1 (materials council.com). "But many metals are natural materials – and they weather and age accordingly. Oxidation and patination can be desired and celebrated – getting old in the same way as a leather chair."

Hunter adds that, on the whole, metals have good eco cred, being durable and widely recycled – "they're non-toxic, too, and can be used in small quantities due to their excellent strength".

"Classic metallics never go out of fashion," says Josephine Bennett, head of home design at **Laura Ashley**, "but the key trend for this

season is mixing metals. From rose gold to silver, yellow gold and copper, pair different hues for a modern look." (lauraashley.com; 0871 983 5999)

The latest metallic fabrics and wallcoverings are textured, softly gleaming and very glam. Find them all over Chelsea Harbour, notably at Italian silk weavers and designers **Rubelli** with a luscious new collection launched at London Design Week last month.

**Altfield** also has metallic thread woven through silk, although the stand-out item is a wallpaper with hand-laid sheets of silver and leaf (it will cost you well over £1,000 a roll

(altfield.com, 020 7351 5893). Artist **Melissa White** was inspired by old Indian printing blocks to adapt Rococo motifs for a stunning wallpaper with a shiny metallic effect. Find these at Lewis & Wood (lewisandwood.co.uk, 01453 878517). New brand **Anthology** boasts a jewel-like palette enriched with gemstones, minerals and precious metals – think pewter, copper, graphite, topaz and garnet. "New finishes give us larger particles for deeper, more dramatic effects,"

explains design director Claire Vallis. In the nearby King's Road, tile wizard **De Ferranti** does metals with mosaic and "briquettes" in textured and smooth brass, bronze, copper or silver, enhanced with patina, verdigris and even a little rust (deferranti.com).

Metalworking is one of man's most ancient skills and is practised in innumerable forms all over the world. In India are the workshops that clad **Tom Dixon's** striking totem-like bookcases with bronze

(tomdixon.net). At the treasure trove shop and gallery of Moroccan Bazaar at Long Drive, Greenford in Middlesex (a trip worth taking) there are intricate, pierced brass lanterns, dishes and white metal chests, all handmade in Morocco under the careful supervision of the family with a strict fairtrade policy.

**SA Baxter** makes "architectural hardware" (more than 200 knobs and lever handles) by old lost-wax casting – and you can tread a solid bronze floor in their Chelsea