

FINANCIAL TIMES

HTSI

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STRENGTH IN BEAUTY

CONFIDENT STYLE,
NO COMPROMISE

PLUS

40 YEARS OF INEZ AND VINOODH
MODERN INFIDELITY,
A LUST STORY

LISA EISNER TALKS TASTE

LE SIRENUSE MARE HAS ARRIVED

FIVE WAYS TO UPGRADE
YOUR WORKOUT

CC MOULTON
VISCOSE-MIX THE
CC CUSHION IN
TORTOISESHELL.
£169

INTERIORS

COCOA POPS

Bitter or sweet, chocolate tones are trending. By *Inès Cross*



Does your living room need a lick of Salon Drab? How about a coat of Mouse's Back? Despite their somewhat unappealing names, these Farrow & Ball shades are enjoying renewed popularity of late, says the paint company's colour curator Joa Studholme: "Browns feel warm and artisanal." In a moody riposte to Pantone's white and airy Cloud Dancer, chocolate hues are having a moment.

"Browns delivered the largest incremental uplift for the brand last year," says Studholme, highlighting Broccoli Brown as a current favourite. UK Google searches for hazelnut-colour paint rose 150 per cent at the tail end of 2025, according to retailer The Paint Shed.

Stylist and creative consultant Lucy Williams painted her kitchen island in Farrow & Ball's Cola (in stark contrast to her pale-blue Yonder cabinets). Kendall Jenner's bathroom at her new Wyoming mountain retreat blends dark-wood panelling with pops of yellow and chartreuse. At Chatsworth House in Derbyshire, a new collaboration with Edward Bulmer Natural Paint makes the case for browns on a grand



FARROW & BALL modern emulsion paint in Broccoli Brown, £64 for 2.5l. Above left: NORDIC KNOTS wool rug in Grand Walnut, £595

Right: Your Décor Delivered in a Box, an installation by Alessandro Moriconi presented at Maison & Objet in collaboration with Les Puces de Saint-Ouen. The walls are painted in Cola by FARROW & BALL.

BED THREADS
DOUBLE DUVET
COVER IN
CACAO, £180



scale, bringing nutty shades to walls and woodwork across its stately spaces, from some of the galleries to the garden grotto.

"I often use shades of brown on skirting boards and cornices, but then a different colour for the wall itself," says interior designer Brandon Schubert. In the front sitting room of his own north-west London flat, however, he has done the opposite, swathing the walls in milk-chocolate linen and painting accents pale yellow, to create a dramatic yet cosy "evening room".

For Liza Laserow, co-founder of Nordic Knots, "brown shines when it's part of a layered interior, rather than the sole note in the room". Across the brand's ranges of rugs, fabrics and bedding, she has noticed a consumer shift towards "deeper tones" that "feel grounded and intimate". Walnut versions of its recently launched Grand wool rug (from £595) and extra high-pile Teddy Velvet (£135 for a cushion cover) have become bestsellers. At its new London showroom on Mount Street, a walnut-upholstered sofa and armchair are displayed alongside a steel-blue Mohair rug – added by Laserow to steer away from the "grandma" vibe.

When it comes to making brown feel cool and contemporary, "texture is everything", suggest husband-and-wife duo Angus and Charlotte Buchanan, co-founders of Buchanan Studio. Their sofas and ottomans are often upholstered in muddy colours: "Whether it's shearling, velvet or



the raw natural patina of our distressed brown leather, the materiality introduces a sense of modernity." Their pillowy Studio Chair (£4,790) in a graphic cocoa-coloured stripe has been popular for more than a year (and pairs well with the hot-pink cube tables they designed in collaboration with Swiss manufacturer USM).

"DEEPER TONES FEEL GROUNDED AND INTIMATE"

For those still dubious about a brown scheme, interior designer Alessandro Moriconi, whose clients include the Belmond hotel group, suggests focusing on "one strong piece to anchor the space: a leather chair, wood panels, or even something as simple as a brown bedsheet". This could be French flax linens in shades of Cacao by Bed Threads (from £320 for a double-duvet cover set); Studio Ashby's walnut Rhino Chair (£9,500); or fabric accents from CC Moulton (woven ikats and toiles in Tortoiseshell, Cosmos and Cassel) and Rose Uniacke, who offers a springy alpaca-blend bouclé called Brown Bear.

"Building lighter materials around that central piece allows the room to breathe," adds Moriconi, for whom the desired effect is a "kind of quiet drama".

"I think what we're seeing isn't so much a shift towards 'brown as a trend'," say the Buchanans, whose new collaboration with Original BTC includes glass table and floor lamps in a chocolate colourway, "but, rather, a growing appreciation for tones that bring longevity to a space." ■ HTS



BUCHANAN STUDIO
SHEARLING THE
STUDIO CHAIR IN
BEAR, £7,990

Above: NORDIC KNOTS hand-spun yarn Jute Frame rug in Dark Brown, from £795. Below left: CC MOULTON toile de fond silk-mix Ra lampshade in Crimson, £400, and toile de fond silk-mix curtain in Cassel, £240 per metre



LIGHTING

BRIGHT SPOTS

Portable lamps for non-stop glow.
By Clara Baldock



1 GUBI frosted-glass Obello lamp designed by Bill Curry, £299. 2 TOM DIXON plastic Pose light, £210. 3 LEE BROOM opal glass and aluminium Chant lamp, £285. 4 & TRADITION lacquered steel Caret Matteo Fogale 2022 light, £165, twenty twenty.com. 5 IN COMMON WITH pewter and brass small Gemma table lamp, \$1,850. 6 SOHO HOME lacquered oak Ferguson lamp with linen shade, £350. 7 OKA iron Mini Grisewood Wireless table lamp, £150. 8 WESTWING metal Small Walter table lamp, £129. 9 GREEN WOLF glass Ambra Curve light, £380.

PHOTOGRAPHS: BASTIAN RICHARD (2), MATTEO VERZINI