

FASHION IN THE HOUSE

Finger-on-the-pulse designers long ago realised that customers want to immerse themselves in their signature look – be it in the form of a dress, a divan or a duvet cover. So can you have it all? Of course you can, says *Grace Cain*

Illustrations by Zoë Barker



Home. It's been in vogue since that fateful day last year when we all officially hung up our Fendi Baguettes in favour of sourdough starters. When many of us swapped #fashion Instagram for DIY renovation TikTok, or just relished the opportunity to scrutinise the slivers of kitchen behind our Zooming colleagues (sorry, colleagues). But you don't need some writer to tell you that fashion – unlike football – is now coming home.

That said, a cursory Google search will serve up hundreds of articles explaining how luxury fashion brands have used the pandemic as an excuse to pivot into homewares – despite the fact that this is really nothing new. The love story between fashion and interiors has been blossoming for decades, stretching back far beyond lockdowns; beyond the advent of social-media platforms that allowed our homes to become a public statement of personal identity in the same way as fashion; even beyond the hazy pink velour days of the early 2000s, when the only way you could sneak a glimpse of your favourite celebrity's living room was via *MTV Cribs*.

Everyone is familiar with the full skirts and cinched waists unveiled by Christian Dior in 1947, but the transformative fashions of his New Look were just the beginning of a masterclass in branding. Monsieur Dior enjoyed a close working relationship with two interior decorators, Victor Grandpierre and Georges Geffroy. Between them, the pair designed both Dior's private home and his couture house at 30 Avenue Montaigne. At a time when Paris was still reeling from the destruction of war, the sleek neoclassical style favoured by the design duo was almost as shocking – and, ultimately, as desirable – as the sumptuous optimism that the New Look represented. Grandpierre and Geffroy's shared vision helped set the stage for a fully formed brand identity that you can still buy into; Dior Maison's distinctively chic take on tableware, wallpaper, soft furnishings and furniture is all very much central to the brand's empire.

Sartorial know-how has always been just one facet of an Italian design scene in which superb craftsmanship and materials are king. Take Etro, for example. While its signature paisley prints may always have been more visible on the catwalk than on the sofa, the brand was founded in 1968 as a textile design factory, and it has been creating upholstery fabric since 1981. With that in mind, it's unsurprising that the bold prints and vivid palette that are central to Etro's DNA have translated so effortlessly into striking cushions and tableware, as well as quirky home accessories.

An instantly distinguishable aesthetic is always going to work across multiple design disciplines, and nowhere is that more obvious than in the world of Versace. Having first dipped an extravagant toe into the sphere of homewares in 1992, the high-octane glamour that has characterised Versace for more than four decades has well and truly made itself at home. Fuelled by drama and Italian opulence, the brand's signature motifs are easy to spot – the iconic Medusa head, graphic Greek key pattern and dramatic swirls of baroque-style prints are at the heart of Versace's maximalist appeal, whether they are hanging in your wardrobe or draped across the bed.

Although the romance between fashion and interiors is nothing new, the fact remains that people are suddenly paying more attention to it – and perhaps that's partly down to the wider changes that have shifted consumer attitudes towards a more sustainable mind-set. Interiors trends naturally move more slowly than their fashion counterparts, and there's something deeply reassuring about the thought of investing in a really beautiful chair that will be enjoyed every day for years to come, rather than in something that just ends up at the back of the wardrobe. If you love the mismatched florals and irreverent chintz of British brand Preen by Thornton Bregazzi, why not fill your space with its opulent silk eiderdowns, frilly cushions and hand-beaded curtains? Fashion is an armour against the outside world, but your home is the world you create for yourself – and there's nothing new about that idea. □