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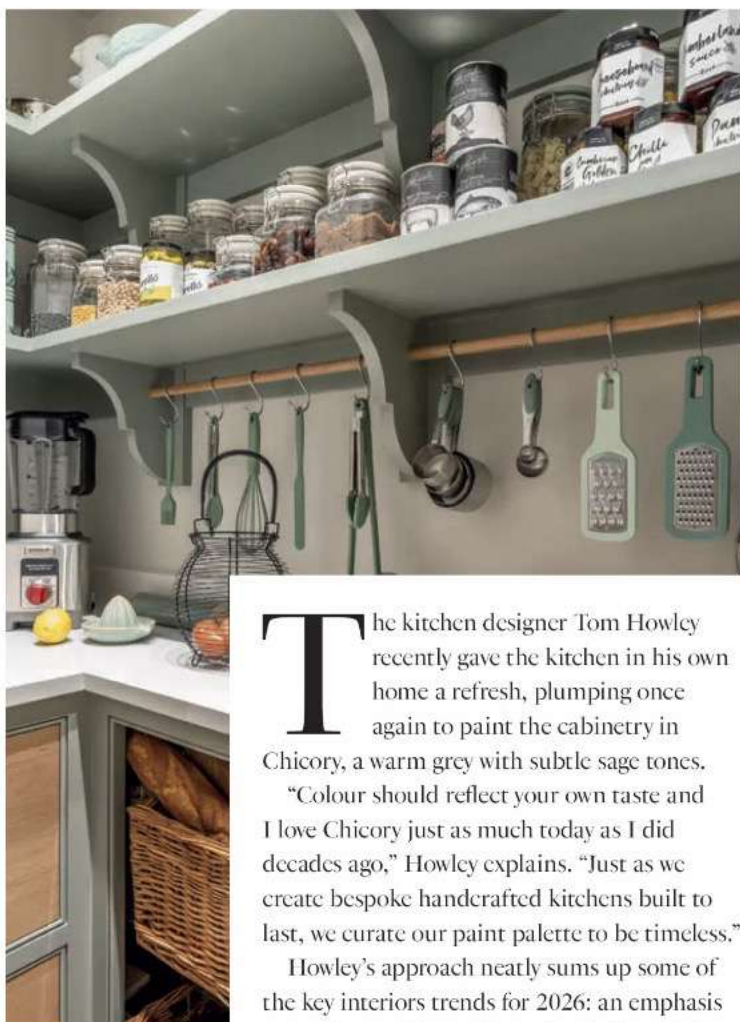
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# 2026 INTERIORS TRENDS OF THE YEAR

THE WAY WE LIVE, THE LOOK OF OUR HOMES AND THE CHOICES WE MAKE OFFER FASCINATING INSIGHTS. **ALEXANDRA GOSS** HIGHLIGHTS INTERIOR DESIGN AREAS TO WATCH IN 2026: IN PARTICULAR THE REJECTION OF AI 'PERFECTION' AND A RETURN TO HANDCRAFTSMANSHIP AND COSY CHARACTER





**T**he kitchen designer Tom Howley recently gave the kitchen in his own home a refresh, plumping once again to paint the cabinetry in Chicory, a warm grey with subtle sage tones.

“Colour should reflect your own taste and I love Chicory just as much today as I did decades ago,” Howley explains. “Just as we create bespoke handcrafted kitchens built to last, we curate our paint palette to be timeless.”

Howley’s approach neatly sums up some of the key interiors trends for 2026: an emphasis on craftsmanship and investing in fewer, high-quality objects. Colours and materials are natural, sustainable and tactile, celebrating the work of the human hand.

“In a defiant move against the perfection of AI, design in 2026 takes a more expressive turn, with interiors that provoke, perform and ultimately remind us of the beauty of the imperfect,” says Jane Landino, head of design and creative studio at Taylor Howes ([taylorhowes.co.uk](http://taylorhowes.co.uk)).

“Curated eclecticism, blending nostalgia and modernity, continues to lead the charge into 2026,” adds Pat Giddens, one of the UK’s most eminent curtain-makers and upholsterers, whose work ranges from grand country manors to townhouses ([patgiddens.co.uk](http://patgiddens.co.uk)). “While maximalism continues, as a philosophy of joyful abundance, softness brings it into 2026.”

## ALL HAIL HANDCRAFT

The return to traditional craftsmanship is part of the shift away from mass consumption towards a more sustainable home and lifestyle. A key trend at Decorex, where recycled materials and vegan leather took centre stage, craft is now seen in every element of home design, from handmade furniture and cabinetry to pottery.

Interior designer Kit Kemp has long cherished craft. “At the heart of my design philosophy is a love for the handmade: the



## CHARACTER BUILDING

Opening spread, left to right: Sims Hilditch employed material drenching in this boot room to create a cheerful pet-grooming station, ideal for hosing off after muddy walks; Banda transformed this Notting Hill townhouse sitting room with cosy earth tones and a two-metre-long statement antique Aubasson tapestry. This page, clockwise from top left: The shaker-inspired Hartford kitchen styling by Tom Howley gives the home a rustic warmth; the flowing lines of this chalet staircase installed by Portia Fox Design echoes the sinuous lines found in nature; Sims Hilditch's shutters upholstered in a playful print give this welcoming bedroom an artisanal final flourish





PHOTOGRAPHS: TOM HOWLEY; RICHARD PICKAVANCE; CHRISTOPHER HORWOOD; SIMS HILDITCH; NEIL SPEAKMAN; ASTRID TEMPLER

imperfect stitch, the human touch, the sense that something has been lived in before," says Kemp, creative director at Kit Kemp Design Studio ([kitkemp.com](http://kitkemp.com)). "A machine can make the same thing again and again, but each object made by a craftsman will always be unique."

## STITCHED STORIES

An historic loan agreement between the UK and France sees the Bayeux Tapestry, chronicling the Norman invasion of 1066 and the Battle of Hastings, come to the British Museum this autumn.

Historically, tapestries were practical as well as decorative, insulating chilly stone rooms and dampening echoes while also serving as a vehicle for artistic expression and storytelling. And their versatility means they're enjoying a resurgence in contemporary interiors.

While designers such as Banda ([bandaproperty.com](http://bandaproperty.com)) and Sims Hilditch ([simshilditch.com](http://simshilditch.com)) are sourcing antique Aubusson tapestries to lend gravitas and historic weight to their schemes, modern artisanal designs also work to great effect, as seen in an apartment at 60 Curzon designed by Christian Bense's studio, which commissioned a vast custom mohair tapestry ([christianbense.com](http://christianbense.com)).

"Tapestries bring a sense of warmth and tactility back into our homes,"



### RICH TAPESTRY

Clockwise from top left: Sims Hilditch complemented this powder-blue kitchen's country-style fittings and abundance of plants with a charming floral, tapestry-inspired blind, creating a tactile, lived-in aesthetic; this hanging entrance hall tapestry in the design studio's Richmond project adds to the varied textural richness of this home's spacious maximalism; with its palette of deep plum, smoky oak and marble, this Holland Green-designed cloakroom at Rosewood Manor in the Cotswolds exudes character and artistry





#### DOWN TO EARTH Clockwise from top

**left:** Installed in a historic hall in the North Downs, this expansive deVOL kitchen masters the balance of state-of-the-art practicality and period-sympathetic details, with elegant hardware and generous storage; Sims Hilditch backdropped this 17th century manor house's hall with a sumptuous tapestry, giving an imposing grand space an intimate, enveloping feel; Project London combines natural tones and textures to great effect in this Parsons Green bedroom, resulting in a relaxed, Mediterranean-inspired sophistication

confirms Alicia Meireles, creative director at OWN LONDON ([ownlondon.co.uk](http://ownlondon.co.uk)), who even had a contemporary tapestry made to hide a television in a recent Kensington townhouse project.

### EARTHINESS 2.0

From plum to olive green, bone to mushroom, natural earthy colours aren't going anywhere, but they are getting a glow-up. "The palette of 2026 draws inspiration from a sun-baked aesthetic," says Landino. "Moving beyond traditional notions of 'earthiness', these tones will feel more modern, expressive and refreshingly vibrant, with confident terracottas, chestnut browns and soft clay hues."

Organic curves continue to be huge in everything from armchairs to mirrors; bathrooms are havens of dark wood and natural clay tiles; and metal lighting and furniture from the likes of Cox London ([coxlondon.com](http://coxlondon.com)) are sculpted to echo trees, branches and leaves.

### PRACTICAL KITCHENS WITH PERSONALITY

Warm, dark woods are key for kitchens in 2026. Alongside Sumac, one of Tom Howley's new limited-edition cabinetry colours is Hazelwood ([tomhowley.co.uk](http://tomhowley.co.uk)), while fellow kitchen design firm Davonport says more customers are now







going for walnut or truffle oak. “Warm rich wood and a clever mix of old and new furniture make your home look interesting, exciting and different,” says Helen Parker, creative director of deVOL ([devolkitchens.co.uk](http://devolkitchens.co.uk)).

The trend for a “dirty kitchen” – a second prep kitchen hidden away so the main kitchen can be kept looking fabulous for entertaining – is going nowhere. “Alongside the showstopper kitchen, homeowners are increasingly seeking back-of-house butler kitchens, complete with professional-grade appliances, staging areas and multiple dishwashers,” says Charu Gandhi, founder and director at the interior design studio Elicyon ([elicyon.com](http://elicyon.com)).

## ‘FIFTH’ AND ‘SIXTH’ WALLS

Making the ‘fifth’ wall – the ceiling – stand out with bold colour and pattern, murals, wallpaper and architectural detail is still on trend, but 2026 could involve embracing the ‘sixth’ wall, aka the floor. “Painted floors are incredibly cost-effective and totally transformative, either as a dramatic burst, an anchoring detail, or just a way to breathe new life into a room,” says Joa Studholme, colour curator at Farrow & Ball ([farrow-ball.com](http://farrow-ball.com)).

Colour drenching takes a step further with “material drenching”, layering a material across the walls, cabinetry and furniture. “This is one

of the most effective ways to create cohesion and character, while limiting the palette ensures the space remains striking without overwhelming,” says Marcelina Janiszewska, head of interior design at Project London ([projectlondon.co.uk](http://projectlondon.co.uk)). She adds that it works particularly well in dressing rooms, cinema rooms and bathrooms.

## FINISH FIRST

Brushed chrome and sanded stainless steel create warmth, while high-gloss lacquer table tops and gloss-painted windows and joinery bounce light and catch the eye. “It’s a shift towards homes that feel bespoke and deeply personal, where even the silent surfaces speak,” says Brian Woulfe, founder and managing director of Designed by Woulfe ([designedbywoulfe.com](http://designedbywoulfe.com)).

Yellow is still in vogue. The designer Veere Grenney ([veeregrenney.com](http://veeregrenney.com)) has designed dopamine into every inch of his London kitchen, with units painted in high-gloss yellow and glazed Victorian white tiles. “My kitchen feels like a dose of pure joy,” he says.

## COSY CONVIVIALITY

Staying in has long been the new going out. The cool crowd love games nights – mahjong is the latest craze, just ask the Duchess

**ALL AROUND**  
Above, left to right: By colour drenching this Parsons Green family home's sitting room with a refreshing powder-blue paint, Project London has created a living space that's functional, elegant and plays up the property's period scale and character; OWN LONDON took things a step further with material drenching in this west London home renovation's bathroom, with wraparound super-luxe retro calacatta-marble surfaces for a striking yet anchoring ambience





**HUMAN TOUCH**  
Clockwise from top left: This Kensington family home, designed by OWN LONDON is finished off with a fun contemporary-style tapestry which was commissioned to hide the sitting room's television while the space is being used for hosting and screen-free entertaining; bringing together an abundance of natural woods, stone and hues, Sims Hilditch has transformed this kitchen-dining space into a soothing heart of the home; conceived by Kit Kemp Design Studio, this Snug Suite at Ham Yard Hotel has a deliciously lived-in crafty feel, from the jolly clashing upholstery to the framed, hand-sewn artwork

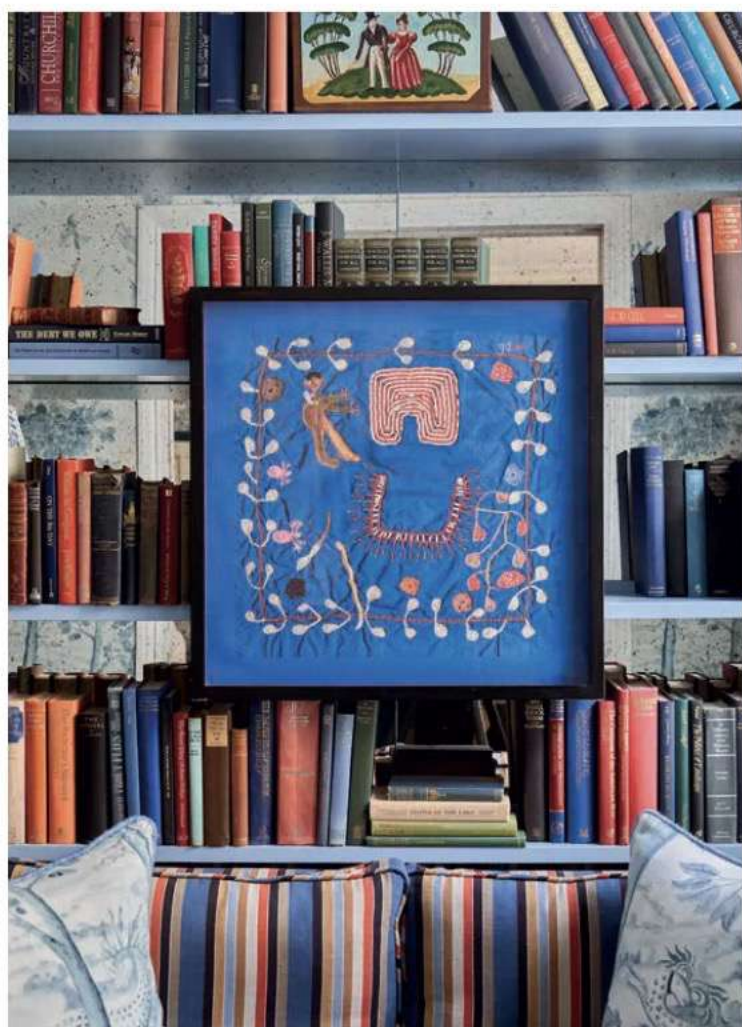
of Sussex – and home bars are now de rigueur, with the finest versions featuring integrated tech such as climate-controlled wine storage and integrated music systems.

Taking a lead from private members' clubs, a bespoke club fender is the ultimate cosy status symbol. As well as maximising guest seating, a custom-made upholstered fender is a great way to add something unique. "People increasingly want items that can't be found online or on Instagram," says Bronya Hallett, who runs Sedere & Co ([sedereandco.com](http://sedereandco.com)).

## THE AMERICAN INVASION CONTINUES APACE

We've seen the "Donald Dashers" converge on London and the Cotswolds in the wake of Trump's re-election, but could we also see "Mamdani Movers"? Estate agents report calls from New Yorkers enquiring about moving across the Atlantic in the wake of the new mayor's plans to levy a wealth tax.

There's plenty in our interiors stores to make Americans feel at home. The cult brand Pottery Barn – familiar to any millennials who watched *Friends* – launched in the autumn, and luxury home furnishings retailer RH opens its hotly anticipated Mayfair gallery in 2026, offering Londoners "a curated world of luxury living, dining and design services". **L**



PHOTOGRAPHS: ONE MENAGERIE/DARREN CHUNG; SIMON BROWN