

# SCALE OF AMBITION

Embrace pattern on furnishings, walls and floors: from dramatic designs to small scale prints and eclectic blends, experts reveal the secrets to using patterns with confidence and panache



## CONFIDENT CHOICES

William Yeoward, creative director, William Yeoward

"I think that the most important thing is to have confidence when putting patterns together. To help this, when we work on a new fabric collection we are very aware of scale and tend to create combinations of patterns that we feel work well together to help remove that risk element and make the process less scary for customers. It does require a lot of skill to balance a room – even with an eclectic blend of fabrics, as pictured (above), you have to consider the relationship between the patterns in order to get a cohesive rather than chaotic result. For example, you may have a large pattern on the curtains, but you wouldn't want that on the sofa and chair; where instead a stripe or a check might be better, and vice versa. Or perhaps a plain curtain and a lovely big print on the sofa with a striped

chair. Often we pre-empt the mistakes people might make and invest a lot of time into how we present our collections in our photography for people to use as a guide. It is about personal passion and confidence, most of all. Stripes in particular are very important to my designs and I think they are essential in helping understand both a fabric collection, and a room in general. Although you need the beautiful, floaty designs, they can be rather abstract and the human brain likes discipline – so a stripe and a check are important elements that give definition to everything else. As well as the stripe on the chair, we have also used a striped leading edge on the curtain. A plain, checked or striped border gives a more finished look and I think it also makes the proportions of the window look so much better. Although we've used a strong, single colour I like to add some 'surprises', so here we have a lovely red stripe. We might put in a flash of yellow or hit of grey... these things make everything else pop and make it all very exciting."

LEFT A mixture of patterns could easily become chaotic, but here a careful use of scale and colour creates a cohesive result. William Yeoward advises to use stripes and checks to bring discipline and definition to a scheme. Astasia and Monsoreto collections, from £55 a metre, William Yeoward. RIGHT A large-scale design can still be used in a bedroom; seek natural tones that will be restful and soothing. Rosslyn wallpaper, £85 a roll, Farrow & Ball. BELOW A monochrome palette could run the risk of being flat and cold. A variety of patterns and textures bring warmth and interest. Grand Siècle collection, from Nobilis. FAR RIGHT Let a bold and vibrant pattern play the star role against a crisp white backdrop. Lombok, £17 a metre, Clarke & Clarke.



## PAPER PATTERN

Sarah Cole, director, Farrow & Ball

"Bold wallpapers can be used to great effect, particularly as an accent wall. Rosslyn BP1938 (pictured) is a larger scale floral design, with pretty metallic accents in the print. This paper will glimmer in the changing light making it perfect for a master bedroom. Although a large-scale design, the chosen colourway is natural in tone, preventing it from becoming overbearing, and it creates a relaxed sleeping environment. Patterns will principally recede or foreshorten space depending on the colours both of the ground and the overall coverage of the printed pattern. As with painting, cool colours will recede and warm colours close in. The best way to make a room appear larger is to use a light ground colour with a small-scale pattern, especially a small cover floral pattern such as a toile. If you want to make a room cosier choose a rich shade in a larger pattern."



## MAIN ATTRACTION

Lee Clarke, managing director, Clarke & Clarke

"Big and bold designs are no longer as daunting as they once were, times have moved on and



## TEXTURAL TONES

Richard Green, general manager, Nobilis

"Although there is rather a varied assortment of patterns in this room, the elegant silver, grey and crisp white palette achieves a sophisticated and coordinated finish.

In fact, in this monochrome scheme the mixture of patterns – from a bold embroidered damask to a simple stripe and tight, small-scale lace design – are needed to create interest and keep the room from feeling a little flat. There is also a danger that the room could feel cold, so rich and contrasting textures bring a tactile and luxurious quality.

These fabrics from our Grand Siècle collection are created from the finest natural materials and are structured with rich, raised patterns, bringing a wealth of textures and creating subtle colour variances that add depth and intrigue. As the fabrics are very opulent, the walls should be kept plain. Here, fresh white lends a contemporary edge to a period setting and provides the perfect foil to the drama of the fabrics."

people are getting more adventurous. If used correctly, whether a room is small or large, bold colours and patterns can be its star feature. As shown above, paired with crisp white walls the bold pattern really sings, but rather than looking overpowering, the bright colours and large design add character and flair. Seeing a bold fabric or wallcovering on its own can seem quite scary, but adding a punch of colour will give a room a fresh and exciting new look, so don't be afraid to take that leap of faith into a new bright and bold world! A good tip is to ask for larger samples to really see the colours and patterns, this will enable you to truly visualise how the fabric will look in a full drop.

The inspiration for the Lombok collection came from my travels last year to Bali. I came across a market stall selling locally crafted garments such as sarongs and scarves, all made from typical Balinese ikat and tie-dye fabrics. The vibrancy and depth of colours were so refreshing that they immediately caught my eye and I thought that, with some changes, they would be fabulous for home interiors. The intricacy of the patterns, coupled with the bold, statement colourways, add a tropical warmth that captures the essence of Bali." ▶



**ABOVE** Embrace large-scale prints to give a room a feeling of importance. Pick out complementary plains and coordinating patterns in cushions. Nymphheus R1206, £89 a metre, 100 per cent linen, GP & J Baker.

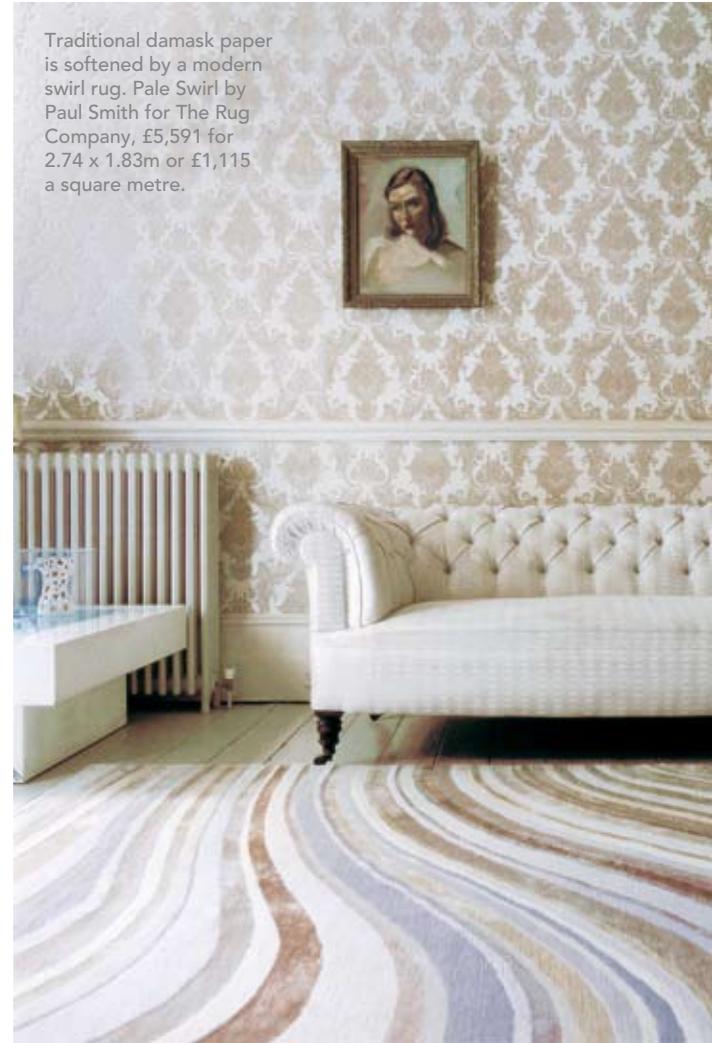
**BELOW** A dramatic design can have impact in a smaller space. Just ensure the dimensions of the wall allow the repeat to be shown to full effect. Pertelote BW45042, wide wallpaper, £59 a metre, GP & J Baker.



**BIG BOLD BEAUTY**

Ann Grafton, managing

director, GP & J Baker  
 "Don't be afraid to use dramatic large-scale prints whatever the size of your room. Bold, beautiful and colourful, they can look stunning when used on walls and curtains in a large room, or as an exciting focal point in a smaller plain room such as on a big, relaxed sofa. Often in a fabric collection there will be several designs on a theme which coordinate, so you can mix other patterns in the same colours, or soften with plains or stripes. Choose strong, pictorial designs for a really adventurous interior and remember, the larger the scale, the more important the room can appear to be. You can, of course, use these fabulous designs in smaller spaces as long as you are aware of the design repeat, ensuring that the dimensions accommodate those of the wall or window. Curtains in large-scale designs can look fabulous framing dramatic floor-to-ceiling or bay windows; the eye will inevitably be drawn towards them, and consequently you will find that most patterns will be designed in such a way that they look equally good when drawn back or closed. Again, always check the design repeat as it is important to match it exactly from side to side on walls and when making curtains. Also, do ensure that the vertical repeat is not cut off in the middle of the main design."



Traditional damask paper is softened by a modern swirl rug. Pale Swirl by Paul Smith for The Rug Company, £5,591 for 2.74 x 1.83m or £1,115 a square metre.



**BALANCING ACT**

Suzanne Sharp, creative director and co-founder, The Rug Company

"It may seem a little daunting to opt for a bold pattern on walls, and a striking patterned rug on the floor as well, but here the two work in harmony together to create a stylish and unusual look. The damask paper is a strong statement and if it were paired with more traditional carpeting and a dark chesterfield, the overall feel would be a little old-fashioned. Here, partnered with a light upholstered sofa and the contemporary design of a Paul Smith Pale Swirl rug (hand knotted Tibetan wool and silk), the effect is chic and unexpectedly calming. Part of the success is down to using two large scale patterns that create some balance, despite their contrasting styles. The subtle colour matching of creams and golds is cohesive, but the gentle introduction of other colours prevents an over-coordinated feel. The look would be rather different if the swirls ran across the room instead of vertically, where they draw the eye to the walls. There is also a lovely placement of a large swirl ending right at the edge of the sofa; always look at details such as this to create a perfectly finished room that pleases the eye." ▶

## Trade Secrets



### FLOOR FILLER

*Sophie Conran, designer*

"Patterned carpets seem to have had a spell where they were out of fashion. Today, people are beginning to embrace the potential of patterned flooring, but this is perhaps still a

little daunting simply because it is unfamiliar. Wallpapers have become accepted and home-owners can see the beautiful effects that a patterned paper can have, and a carpet is just the same. I was thrilled to have the opportunity to work with Axminster and this exciting medium. My favourite is a Persian-inspired terracotta wool carpet called 'By the Fire'. I love to see pattern in a room; it makes it feel much more interesting and cosy. Here (pictured right), a pretty floral design has been used with an assortment of other patterns and contrasting colours. I don't feel that you have to match the patterns and colours, simply decorate in a way that feels comfortable – a patterned carpet does not have to be restrictive or limiting, but can offer a great foundation to work from. As a general rule, a large-scale design needs a large room to show it off, and a smaller print looks lovely in a smaller room."



Take pattern to the floor with a pretty carpet. Helping Hands carpet in Baking Cakes, £80 a square metre, Sophie Conran for Axminster Carpets, exclusive to John Lewis.



Small-scale prints can have as much impact as a larger design. Here, a faded palette softens the effect. Kitty wallpaper, £38 a metre; and all other fabrics, Kate Forman.



### LESS IS MORE

*Kate Forman, fabric designer and owner of Kate Forman Designs*

"I tend to stick with a paler palette in bedrooms as in this picture, giving a feeling of calm and harmony, as this is

so important in the sanctuary of the bedroom. The small scale of a design can give as equally dramatic a look as a larger one, allowing you to cover more wall space without it being too overpowering. It is also possible to mix more soft furnishings and upholstery with small prints without overdoing it, making it easier on the eye. Using a slightly faded effect also softens the impact of all-over pattern. Introducing larger scale designs in less imposing areas, such as on cushions or lampshades, balances the room and can create an impressive effect without dominating the overall scheme. Large or fine stripes or checks sit happily with small florals or contemporary designs. Keeping small designs as simple as possible, with plenty of space between the design, allows the room to breathe and keeps it from becoming confused or twee.

Small patterns work best in small spaces, certainly where wallpaper is concerned, although this is not necessarily the case with fabric and larger window drops, where this rule doesn't always apply. Personally I prefer a 'lived-in' feel. Mixing textures, scales and patterns works well for creating this, giving a less planned and overly designed look. Small is beautiful, and smaller scale prints can certainly achieve this without losing any impact and can often help improve a difficult space (perhaps one that is cold or awkward) by adding a feeling of cosiness and warmth." ■