

Chantilly sofa, to order, Edra

Cushion, £99, Clarissa Hulse

Silktrench, £1,600, Stanley Korshak

Silk eiderdowns, £150 each, Hargreaves-Gervis

Silk card table, £7,050, Soame

# Smooth talk

Silk adds shiny, sensual opulence to interiors as well as clothes, says Vanessa Barneby

Floor-length silk gowns added a sultry, film-noir glamour to this season's collections at Cavalli, Dior and Valentino. Rarely away from the catwalks, silk's enjoying more limelight than ever as it graces not just fashion, but also art and interiors.

For those with big houses (and loud taste), furniture manufacturer Edra has designed the oversized Chantilly sofa, with loose-fitting silk-satin upholstery that falls in cascades. Pippa Caley specialises in delicate, one-off, screen-printed silk designs. Her signature style combines hand-dyed colours with painterly prints and intricate embroidery on unique wallpaper panels, cushions and canvases. Her fabric can also be used on furniture – room dividers, chairs, headboards – to add silken chic to any interior. Meanwhile, Molly Larkin turned to her favourite wallpaper and fabric house – de Gournay – for inspiration for Shanghai Posey, her new line of silk clothing. The company hand-painted her fabric before the garments were made. Former de Gournay creative director Tim Butcher left the company two years ago to set up his own business, Fromental, which specialises in hand-painted and hand-embroidered silk wall-coverings. This year, it has collaborated with silk-weaving house Gainsborough Silks to produce a new range of sumptuous fabrics.

Finally, the risqué undertones of crimson silk are brought to life in *The Pretty Women of Paris*, originally written in the 1880s for English men visiting Parisian courtesans. This month, Hanbury Press (Hanburypress.co.uk) publishes a new version that's beautifully illustrated and hand-bound in red French silk – befitting for a book about ladies of the night. It's time to follow the silk route. ■

Embroidered silk wallpaper, from £135 per square metre, Fromental

Silkslinks down the catwalk at Valentino, left, and Cavalli

*The Pretty Women of Paris* (Hanbury Press, £28)

Silk chair, £475, Pippa Caley