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THE INTERNATIONAL RESOURCE FOR INTERIOR DESIGNERS



THE FINISHING TOUCH

An exquisitely made tactile handle is a joy says **Marie-Veronique Swannell**



During the 18th and 19th century – the heydays of decorative bronze hardware – door and furniture handles were given proper consideration and allocated substantial budgets. The huge historical catalogues and archives of the serruriers d’art, as they were known in France, bears testament to the high status of door furniture at the time, when the quality of cabinetry was judged largely on its ‘bronzes’. Somehow the significance of door handles waned in the aftermath of Modernism, to the extent that by the 1980’s door handles were hardly a consideration, and there was in fact very little to choose from. While most handles available today are sadly banal, the likes of Haute Déco have brought about a renaissance at the high-end of architectural hardware, offering distinctive handles which make the perfect finishing touch to interior projects.

Door handles tend to be specified with two main objectives either in the context of couture interior projects where every detail feeds into a theme, or to provide a style statement in their own right, be it with statement handles or by adding colourful or metallic accents. Large format Push-Pull handles, with luxurious contemporary textures work equally well as stand-alone style statements or within a larger scheme.

There is a noticeable shift in consumers’ interest in craftsmanship and their skills to create unique and beautiful products. Because door handles are the one architectural detail that we come into direct and repeated contact with, a well-chosen, exquisitely-made handle is appreciated time and time again. Singularly, door handles are not just seen but held in the hand. Handling exquisitely-made, tactile handles that have been lovingly hand-polished is a joy that appeals to our sense of touch.

On this note, layering texture has been a trend in design for some time but we now see there has been a noticeable increase in interest towards handles adding to the textural palette. Handles can cross-reference to other textures used in the property: parquet flooring, timber-cladding, wall-coverings, leather upholstery and polished concrete.

Of late, the return of colour within interior schemes has been talked about and used in homes across the globe. The new generation are enjoying the mix of strong wall colours and decadent and printed fabric designs to create an eclectic interior. With this return to bolder schemes comes a focus to decorative detail. We no longer have to embellish with only cushions and lampshades because there is also a huge market for fittings and colourful knobs. They make the ideal finishing touch for coordinating wardrobes and furniture to walls or fabrics and alongside a plethora of colours, in a variety of textures and surfaces on the market, including glossy lacquers, bold Pop-Art colours, precious gem colours, or contemporary Mediterranean colours, rooms can be successfully punctuated with luxurious, multi-layered finishing touches.

Today, with less people moving house and more people renovating or updating their homes, instant makeovers can be achieved with smaller elements which can transform a space instantly.

As we are continually told in life that the first impression is the lasting one – for an interiors project, it seems a distinctive handle on the front door is a good place to start.

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A member of Chelsea Design Quarter

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HAUTE DÉCO'S couture handles are famed for luxurious textures, adding understated glamour to prime residential projects. Signature doorknobs – more aptly described as door jewellery – epitomise Haute Déco's house style: this unique concept, perfected at the company's workshop in South-West England, sees a new twist with the launch of Monograms, a novel take on personalised doorknobs.

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