

HOME HELP.

You can bring the Midas touch to your home with gold trim, throws and cushions – and it doesn't have to cost a fortune says **Hugh St Clair**

GORDON BROWN MAY HAVE SOLD OUR GOLD reserves – a decision he must regret given the continued rising price of the precious mineral – but for 2010 interiors, it's a definite return to the gold standard. Gold wall sconces, candelabra, tiles, wall-papers, filigree gold porcelain, even gold cameras festoon pages of the design magazines, which in recent years have regarded gold, particularly on taps, as vulgar and showy. Gilded taps are still going too far but gilt accessories scattered sparingly are all the rage. Perhaps the need for something that glistens is a reaction against the doom and gloom surrounding the financial state of the nation. Wars have been fought in pursuit of gold and it has been used in history in clothing and objects to elevate

When I visit car boots and antique markets I am drawn magpie-like to anything that glisters'

its possessor. When living conditions are hard, a gold throw over a bed or furniture gives a sense of riches. In the latest Toast catalogue, there is a wonderful egg-yolk gold satin bedspread (2.65 metres square) reduced in the sale from £195 to £146. If you want to feel like a lady in a Jean Harlow film you could also go for the matching cushions and hot-water-bottle cover.

One of Britain's most fashionable furniture designers, Julian Chichester gives many of his pieces the light golden touch. He uses gold leaf to edge his Forties'-inspired mirrored glass coffee and side tables and his black chests of drawers have discreet yellowy gold handles. His range of mirrors is stunning, aged gold is used in the frames so the effect is subtle and restrained rather than gaudy. His 'Hobbs'

looking glass inspired by French sunburst mirrors brings in much needed warmth and light in these cold winter months.

This Christmas I received a beautiful set of gold lustre coffee cups. The Royal Worcester Company produced gold lustre ware for Lyons Corner Houses and Woolworths during the middle of the 20th century, and this china is becoming collectible on eBay. Obviously it can't be put in the dishwasher. When I visit car boots and antique markets I am drawn magpie-like to anything that glisters – I always buy metal roses sprayed gold, Forties French, I believe, but they are hard to find now. Caravan Style a shop in trendy Hoxton has reproduced them. At £25 for a 50cm high spray they can be put on a wall or a table or in a vase.

Another way of giving your furniture the Midas touch without spending a fortune is to put gold braid round your cushions or on the bottom edge of a loose cover. Natural linen or cotton covers can be transformed with gold trim. If you haven't visited one of the two VV Rouleaux shops in London you are in for a treat. Founded 20 years ago by florist Annabel Lewis, VV Rouleaux is a treasure trove of passementerie with ribbons, braids, fringing and tassels in silk, satin, crystal and metallic fibres sourced from all over the world. Interestingly department store John Lewis now stocks a selection of VV Rouleaux trims. But for floors of only ribbons and fringes head for their shops in Sloane Square or Marylebone. Their two gold metallic braid trims could easily hem the coat of a 16th-century monarch. ♦

JULIAN CHICHESTER (020-7622 2928; julianchichester.com).

CARAVAN STYLE (020-7033 3522; caravanstyle.com).

TOAST (0844-557 5200; toast.co.uk).

VV ROULEAUX (020-7730 3125; vvrouleaux.com).

IF YOU HAVE ANY DECORATING, design or general enquiries about your house, email Hugh St Clair at homehelp@lady.co.uk. Although he cannot guarantee to answer every query personally, he will endeavour to print answers to a selection of them.



'Hobbs' looking glass designed by Julian Chichester