

TRENDS

Feast for the
SENSES

From Morocco to Syria, bold flavours are flooding design, fashion and food this summer. BY CLARE COULSON

North Africa and the countries of the Levant, from Lebanon and Syria to Jordan, have provided a rich source of design inspiration to Europeans ever since merchants and nomads first explored the Silk Routes. Now, designers are plundering those heady themes and intoxicating influences once more.

Dries Van Noten raided his archive of 'ethnic' textiles; Givenchy's Riccardo Tisci manipulated keffiyeh prints into graphic patterns; and Nicolas Ghesquière harnessed traditional Berber hemp textiles at Balenciaga. Isabel Marant summed up the feeling of wanderlust with her spring collection, as her cool troupe of nomads took to the catwalk in jackets embellished with pompoms and coins, and cotton peasant dresses.

Rupert Sanderson has let his imagination run wild with his shoe designs for David McVicar's new production of *Aida* at the Royal Opera House – including incredible studded metallic platforms and simpler Moroccan-leather sandals. Get the look with Net-a-porter.com's latest discovery Tapeet, which creates luxe leather-soled gladiators in beautiful colours.

The trend extends to interiors too. Liberty is showcasing pieces from Bokja, a Beirut-based company that reworks colourful textiles onto antique furniture. Get decor inspiration from the Arab Hall at the newly restored Leighton House, or interior designer Sibella Court's gorgeous sourcebook, *Etcetera*.

Or feast your eyes on Yotam Ottolenghi's new book *Plenty* (£25, Ebury Press), a vegetarian take on the luscious, Middle East-inspired aromatic cooking of his cafés. □

The Arab Hall at Leighton House, London

Scarf, £375, Dries Van Noten at Liberty

Bangle, £35, Annik Bask

Eau de parfum, £78 for 50ml, Annick Goutal

Dish, £45; teapot, £40; glass, £16 for six, all Moroccan Bazaar

Etcetera by Sibella Court (£20, Murdoch Books)



Eau de parfum, £42 for 50ml, L'Orientaliste



Table, £205, BTC by Design



Spice pots, £65 each, Niki Jones

Sandals, £230, Tapeet at Net-a-porter.com

Tapeet at Net-a-porter.com

Scarf, £100, Isabel Marant at Liberty

Rings, from £795, Tiffany & Co

Tapeet at Net-a-porter.com

CLASSIC FILM

MANOLO BLAHNIK
REVIEWS...
DINNER AT EIGHT
(1933)

This is Hollywood at its peak: it's the most perfect comedy that MGM made in the 1930s, with the best combination of talent. Adapted from a Broadway play, this tale of Manhattan high life depicts glamour and decadence, but also the effects of the Depression. Society hostess Millicent Jordan (Billie Burke) holds a dinner party for guests including nouveaux-riches Dan

and Kitty Packard (Wallace Beery and Jean Harlow) and former stage star Carlotta Vance (Marie Dressler). Dressler was always playing high-society matrons, and in this she is ugly, old and fantastic, but it is Harlow who really stands out: she is divine and very touching. Her character is having an affair with a doctor (Edmund Lowe), and she does nothing but eat chocolates in bed the whole time. Here you see her as a fabulous comedian à la Monroe – the common sort of girl who appears dim but is not; I love that kind of vulnerability – with such repartee. All the dialogue is dazzling; it's non-stop wit. Director George Cukor had an incredible touch with women. □

Jean Harlow and Edmund Lowe in *Dinner at Eight*