



Above: Printed roses and zebra stripes lend an exotic and romantic flair to this bed ensemble by Svad Dondi Blumaine.

Left: Tactile and dimensional fabrics from Alma have a pet-like touch.

It's Grr-rreat!

CONSUMERS WARM UP TO FUR FOR THEMSELVES AND THEIR HOMES



Left: Bagnaresi Casa dyes sheared fox baby blue to complement its two-tone velour decorative pillows.

Jennifer Castoldi is the president of Trendase International, a Web-based trend-tracking company. All photos are courtesy of Trendase International.



Above: At LEBA fur can be a tactile accent to a sleek bed style.

Trendase International has found fashion "furocious" for more than a year, and the trend shows no sign of retreating. Fur has been a classic from earliest times for warmth and protection, and remains important in today's newest fashions for both apparel and home.

Recently fur appeared prominently in trade shows in Paris (Maison&Objet and Première Classe), Verona (Abitare il Tempo), London (100% Design), and Frankfurt (Ambiente). It's been seen in retail shops in Paris, London, Milan, and Stockholm. In New York the Costume Institute of the Metropolitan Museum of Art is presenting "Wild: Fashion Untamed" through March 13, 2005. The exhibition explores man's ongoing obsession with animalism as expressed through clothing using fur and feathers. It includes Alexander McQueen's Amazon dresses and Azzedine Alaïa's Tigress bodysuits.

Today, as in earliest times, fur works well across categories, from fashion accessories and apparel to floor coverings, upholstery, bedding, and decorative pillows. Fur can be long or short, sleek or fuzzy, an apparently single piece or patchworked. In apparel it can be luxurious when accented with jewels—faux or real—or cozy when mixed with flannels and tweeds. At home it can add rugged warmth to a log cabin or ski retreat, or sensuous sophistication to an urban penthouse.

New technologies have given it

pizzazz with color, texture, and finishing techniques. Intricate burnout designs can create patterned effects, or the skin's design can be printed on a variety of substrates. The techniques of a hair stylist (trimming, coiling, or even dyeing in a spectrum of natural and unnatural shades) can also transform the look of fur.

Fur is no longer seen as staid and old fashioned, but is hip and trendy. Whether it's long or short, natural or brightly colored, at the window, on the floor, the bed, or on your back, it's definitely furocious. □

TREND DIRECTIONS

- A rainbow of new color options, including metallic
- New fabrications such as patchwork and cutouts
 - Elegant trim
 - Prints on suede
- Intricately detailed embossed leather
- New manufacturing technologies
 - Merchandising apparel and home products together