



Dalton, Jenny. "Industrial Revolution," *Financial Times*. October 2013.

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Designer Tara Bernerd is sitting in the cosy surroundings of Belgraves hotel in London's Chesham Place – the hotel she finished for the Thompson group last year. Surrounded by metal-edged walls and exposed-filament lightbulbs, she is musing on the evolution her work has taken recently. While the style of this designer of luxe homes and hotels around the world has always been "handsome and bold", in recent months she has been pushing her end goal of "a juxtaposition of industrial and elegant that is such a big passion for me" – influenced by French architect and designer Pierre Chareau and his 1920s and 1930s designs.

As well as Belgraves, her latest project, the Thompson Chicago hotel – which opened this week – has allowed her to up the ante on the industrial part of that equation. At the heart of both designs are warm yet gritty details: Belgraves has leather columns edged with brass, a coppery fireplace, Tom Dixon metallic lamps and the aforementioned exposed-filament-bulb lighting; Chicago features a huge antique brass drop pendant lamp in its lobby. The conclusion is that "design has moved on from the stainless-steel-legged

Main picture: Nathalie Dewez Prism pendant light in powder-coated aluminium, £2,350, from The Conran Shop. Below left: Philippe Malouin Gridlock 2 shelves in sandblasted concrete with brass tubes and connectors, from €16,500



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L EVOLUTION

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Warehouse-style chic has a new
textural and crafts-sensitive aesthetic.
Jenny Dalton **warms to industrial luxe**

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Clockwise from right:
Tom Dixon copper-clad
dining table, £7,000.
François Bauchet resin-
soaked felt Cellae
bookshelf, €18,000,
from Galerie Kreo.

Jean Michel Wilmotte
enamelled cast
aluminium oven tower,
£9,700, from La Cornue.
Brabbu brushed-shaped-
brass Koi coffee table,
£4,595, from LuxDeco



North East, where she is from. The strongly geometric range (from £1,700 to £38,000) references Roman design influences and includes the Hadrian console (from £10,950), a sculptural bronze-cast solid base topped with sandblasted oak, and the Bridge side table in walnut and antiqued brass (from £4,400). She admits that there is a distinct heritage and pre-mass-production feel to it all: "We sourced traditional manufacturing expertise and have taken historical British themes and interpreted them in a modern way - I am proud of my Northern roots."

minimal sofa style of the past few years to something with a little more depth and mood."

The past few years have also meant, says Bernard, that it is now easier to source industrially biased components. Burnished or raw metals such as coppers and bronzes and even cast iron - as used in a recent Tom Dixon restaurant interior and his two new table designs (example pictured top, £7,000) - have been gradually creeping into contemporary design. Caitlin McCann, furniture buyer at LuxDeco, the website where the mix of high-end furniture and accessories is international and unusual, noted the beginning of the trend around three to four years ago with the arrival on the market of pieces that "have a certain honesty to them, and usually a lovely textural quality".

Several companies are prospering from this new take on industrial, which is all about a renewed appreciation of materials from the pre-mass-market era. Stanley Wilson's Urban Cottage Industries, the Yorkshire-based manufacturers and retailers of vintage-inspired lighting, has pioneered the return of the exposed-filament decorative lightbulb, and has supplied lighting to Tim Burton and Martin Scorsese movie sets, to the Soho House hotels and countless private homes designed by the likes of Fiona Barratt-Campbell. In the past two years business has gone from 40 different products and a £300,000 sales turnover to a range of 260-plus products and a £1.8m turnover.

Tom Dixon's lighting, accessories and furniture have increasingly returned to the industrial roots of his early-1980s designs. This year in Milan he launched the blocky Mass coat and book stand (£1,500 and £1,750), which are fabulously oversized brass-clad totems and look as weighty as anvils.

Brand-new industrially themed launches include Fiona Barratt-Campbell's noteworthy venture, FBC London, a wood and metal 32-piece furniture collection made in collaboration with manufacturers, metalworkers and bronze foundries in Northumberland and the

recently launched furniture brand Bowles & Bowles, formed by Peter and Charlie Bowles, owners of lighting design company Original BTC, which Peter founded in 1990. The duo's empire has enjoyed growth of 30 per cent annually for the past three years, and the father and son team - who frequently work on domestic and commercial interiors with designers including Martin Brudnizki and Richmond International - wanted to add furniture to their portfolio, inspired by the industrial processes witnessed in the West Midlands factory that produces their lighting components. The younger Bowles admits that the resulting new range of metal mesh sofas (example pictured overleaf, £3,240), lockers (from £289) and a desk (£1,990) are for fans of their utilitarian style. "But the industrial styling could fit into all homes: the design is simple, it's not try-too-hard." They also offer a copper finish as well as the more

standard zinc because it ties into current trends. "It's more toned down, more natural, warmer."

Warm and industrial may not seem like natural stylistic bedfellows, says Paul Middlemiss, The Conran Shop's buying director. But that is how the look has moved on since it was last making waves: namely at the end of the last century with the influx of modern, urban, New York loft-style living. This time around, he says, "we want to create soft, lovely homes, not warehouses". Where industrial looks are penetrating the Conran Shop floors, and their shoppers' homes, it is as subtle accents - such as Nathalie Dewez's wiry Prism pendant lights (example pictured on previous pages, £2,350), or in the collection of Muller van Severen - one of the hottest new names in furniture design - with its seductive, black metal-framed Outline chairs (£3,795) or pencil-slim black metal curvy floor lights (£895). "It is basically craft furniture; it is soft and contemporary," says Middlemiss.

"Modern interiors can be very clinical and introducing industrial hints can make a scheme feel like somewhere to kick your shoes off and relax," adds Caitlin McCann, who has been enticing shoppers to LuxDeco with extraordinary designs such as the Tura Scultura dining table (£29,995) with a hyper-decorative nickel stand, plus the brushed-shaped-brass Koi coffee table (£4,595, pictured above left), and brass and leather Hoplon bookcase (£7,115) by US brand Brabbu, which is a "master of combining luxury and glamour with an edgy industrial angle".

Elsewhere, industrial-style updates are penetrating diverse interiors collections: for example, the Jean Michel Wilmotte-designed oven tower in enamelled cast aluminium (£9,700, pictured left), at La Cornue; and SCP store's delightfully solid Base dining table by Jorre van Ast for Arco (£3,870, pictured overleaf), which has a huge solid-oak top with a concrete





"It's a reappreciation of early industrial methods and folkloric influences – a strong shift against opulence just for the sake of it"

base. SCP also has the fabulously nostalgic 1930s-designed Pigeon Hole desk by Xavier Pauchard for Tolix (€1,855), made from raw or coloured steel and divided into 24 Post Office-style compartments.

The brilliant and quirky London-based designer Bethan Laura Wood has created storage tower "cages" for her Milan gallery Nilufar. Based on her love of "the temporary structures of the city – scaffolding, awnings and exterior fire exits", they feature powder-coated steel legs and supports coupled with laminated decorative marquetry, so that the completely original display cases (from €16,000 to €45,000) are "miniature buildings and high-rises" and things of great industrial beauty.

The Campana brothers, long fans of using found or post-industrial leftovers, have recently exhibited a new screen and chair called Racket (prices on request) at their first US solo show at the Friedman Benda gallery in New York. The two designs feature a bent-tubular-brass frame filled with a nylon-stitched seat and backing (like a tennis racket). Another bent-brass piece of theirs is the unusual Fitas Buffet (price on request, pictured top right). Gallery co-owner Marc Benda describes the Campanas' work as "effortlessly blending local crafts and traditions into a language that is very much an expression of this century". But he could easily be talking about a number of other key designers.

Philippe Malouin, for example, is becoming the poster boy for a new, inventive, "DIY"-design generation. He recently launched a range of bespoke shelving units (example pictured on opening pages, from €16,500) inspired by brutalist design and fashioned from a series of brass tubes and sandblasted concrete, as well as simple yet textural lighting and desk accessories made from good old MDF, which, when sanded and polished as part of an experiment by a studio assistant, closely resembled stone. This has been layered and coloured to create a lamp (from €2,000) and desktop containers (from €1,100). "It's interesting to give a nobility to an industrial construction

material that is hidden as much as possible in design," he says.

There may be little intrinsic value to MDF, but "my collectors know the labour of love that went into making the pieces", he says. They also understand the "shift in core values" that Malouin sees as being at the heart of the new take on industrial. "It's a reappreciation of early industrial methods and folkloric influences – a strong shift against ostentation and opulence just for the sake of it. It's about a DIY approach to making things. I never want something to look DIY, of course. Designs need to be very polished. But the contradiction between the two ideas is very interesting."

Marianne Goebel, director of Design Miami/Basel, cites work such as Malouin's as emblematic of a new generation of designer and a new approach to design. At Design Miami/Basel in June, aside from Malouin's collection of MDF works, designers such as François Bauchet at Galerie Kreo showed industrially researched works, including the Cellae bookshelf (€18,000, pictured on previous page), made from technical, commercial felt that is punctured and soaked in resin until it hardens; and Anton Alvarez at Gallery Libby Sellers revealed a beautifully coloured collection of furniture made from wooden structures wrapped in industrial-grade, glue-coated thread (from €900). All three examples, says Goebel, are evidence of designers experimenting with potentially unglamorous commercial materials or techniques, "because they either want to develop new materials, or to see existing materials in a new light, pushing their boundaries".

Clockwise from top left:
Bowles & Bowles mesh sofa with copper finish, £3,240.
Estudio Campana bent-steel Fitas Buffet, price on request.
Jorre van Ast for Arco oak and concrete Base dining table, £3,870, from SCP

Goebel, like Malouin, acknowledges that the "warmer metallic" aesthetic of the likes of Tom Dixon's lighting and Fiona Barratt-Campbell's homage to the industrial North is a signifier of a crucial change in social values. "This generation

has seen that globalisation is not Utopia. The industrial revolution that allowed us to use our plastics and mass-produced materials has come to a certain peak. These designers are more concerned with their immediate environment, with collaborating with skilled craftsmen whose client base has dwindled because their techniques aren't necessarily valued, and with bringing traditional craft skills and materials into the now."

If this is all starting to sound a little too earnest, don't forget, says Tara Bernerd, that a hint of industrial styling in your home also "gives it that little bit more attitude".

GRITTY SLICKERS

Anton Alvarez, 07857-773 832; www.antonalvarez.com and see Gallery Libby Sellers. **Arco**, www.arco.co.uk and see SCP. **Bethan Laura Wood**, www.woodlondon.co.uk and see Nilufar. **Bowles & Bowles**, 228 Design Centre Chelsea Harbour, Lots Road, London SW10 (020-7351 2130; www.bowlesandbowles.com). **Brabbu**, www.brabbu.com and see LuxDeco. **The Conran Shop**, 81 Fulham Road, London SW3 (020-7589 7401; www.conranshop.co.uk). **La Cornue**, 020-7591 0110; www.lacornue.com. **Estudio Campana**, www.estudiocampana.com and see Friedman Benda. **FCB London**, 66 Pimlico Road, London SW1 (020-7730 9555; www.fcb-london.com). **François Bauchet**, www.francoisbauchet.fr and see Galerie Kreo. **Friedman Benda**, 515 West 26th Street, New York, NY 10001 (+1212-239 8700; www.friedmanbenda.com). **Galerie Kreo**, 31 Rue Dauphine, 75006 Paris (+331-5310 2300; www.galeriekreo.fr). **Gallery Libby Sellers**, 41-42 Berners Street, London W1 (020-3384 8785; www.libbysellers.com). **Jean Michel Wilmotte**, www.wilmotte.fr and see La Cornue. **LuxDeco**, 020-3586 1536; www.luxdeco.com. **Muller van Severen**, www.mullervanseveren.be and see The Conran Shop. **Nathalie Dewez**, www.n-d.be and see The Conran Shop. **Nilufar**, Via della Spiga 32, 20121 Milan (+3902-780 193; www.nilufar.com). **Philippe Malouin**, Studio 6, Deborah House, Retreat Place, London E9 (020-3222 5531; www.philippemalouin.com). **SCP**, 135-139 Curtain Road, London EC2 (020-7749 7393; www.scp.co.uk) and branch. **Tara Bernerd**, 1 Hans Street, London SW1 (020-7245 1658; www.tarabernerd.com). **Tolla**, www.tolla.com and see SCP. **Tom Dixon**, Wharf Building, Portobello Dock, 344 Ladbrooke Grove, London W10 (020-7400 0500; www.tomdixon.net). **Tura**, www.tura.it and see LuxDeco. **Urban Cottage Industries**, www.urbancottageindustries.com.

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