



The ever-growing fascination with beautiful bedding has evolved beyond the monotony of white-on-white hotel qualities and sky-high thread counts, with a whole new palette of monochromatic shades in slightly coarser weaves now at our doorstep.



eco-logical bedding



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Textile design is now based on exquisite natural colour ranges, with greys and clays translated from slate and putty to warm up the interior in a contemporary way. Freed from the elastic shackles of fitted sheets, consumers are invited to dress the bed in diverse harmonies of layered tactileities, ranging from cool linens to textured cotton voiles to mohair throws to transparent duvet covers filled with visible down. Suddenly, making the bed resembles a Zen-like exercise in balanced composition, touch and lightness.

Eco-conscious consumers will now seek the benefits of naturally-dyed textiles and proof that a company's processing avoids the excessive polluting now synonymous with the textile industry in many countries.

These seeds of consciousness were the beginning of Couleur Chanvre, a French collection of home textiles produced in the heart of the Rhône-Alpes region. Uneasy with seeing environmental pollutants encroach upon their local streams and rivers, the company's founders channelled methods deeply rooted in France's textile heritage, taking positive action with the use of natural dyes on hemp ('chanvre' in French).



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Known for its durability, hand and beauty, hemp has been prized throughout the ages for being both strong and delicate as a textile. Like silk, it is hypoallergenic and a thermo-regulator, while the agricultural benefits of hemp crops include drought resistance and intensive soil enrichment.

Following months of research into techniques that were commonly used before the mid-19th century, the company's initiatives unified greener approaches to hemp cultivation, artisanal fabric construction and vegetal dyes sourced at an external specialist called Couleurs de Plantes: a horticultural institute based in southwest France, whose patented process ensures advanced colour-stay and minimized water and waste consumption. The supplier also bypasses synthetic colour fixturs, instead using beeswax, aloe vera and linen oil.

The effect is immediate, multi-sensorial and calming. A range of fourteen natural powdery shades reflects the roots and other botanicals crushed and boiled to colour the cloth. Not only is it aesthetic, naturally-dyed bedding also has the remarkable ability to promote a more restful sleep, intrinsically linking us to a more intimate form of well-being.

photos Martine Houghton, creative and style director Nelson Sepulveda assisted by Geetali Lele many thanks to Couleur Chanvre www.couleur-chanvre.com, and to Caravane, 'Day and Night' dhobi patchwork, www.caravane.fr, text Sharon Bowman & Phillip Fimmano

