



INDULGENCE

# The Fabric Of Our Dreams

Velvet is the ultimate textile indulgence. Surround yourself with it.

What could be more plush than velvet pillows tucked amongst a velvet comforter? Wrap up and chase away the chilly days.

TEXT CHRISTINE HOLM

**M**arketing writers love velvet. They easily spark our imaginations with such sense-evoking phrases as “velvety-smooth texture...velvety-soft skin...velvety-rich feel.” They know that appealing to our sense of touch works because they know we love velvet, too.

We love it because velvet is so undeniably lovable! Imagine running your hand across a velvet pillow. Just the thought of a velvet comforter is enough to conjure up the need for a midday nap amidst the soft, luxuriant fabric. Sure, cotton may be the fabric of your life, but velvet is the fabric of your dreams.





▲ Burn-out velvet patterns in gorgeous shades of blue, add just the right touch of elegance to these pillow shams.

▼ There's simply no substitute for the rich feel of velvet!

is a plain weave with a cut pile, according to Brandon. "This type of velvet generally retails between \$16 and \$25 a yard," she says. Velvet is often made even more luxurious by creating it with silk or satin.

Fashions come and go, and so did the velvet rage of the 1920s flappers. "Velvet is also commonly used in interior design applications, from curtains to upholstery to accent pillows," Brandon says. That's where we're expressing our dreamy fixation with velvet these days—in rich, ruched and tucked pillows accented with embroidery and burn-out prints; in supple, sumptuously upholstered side chairs; and in seductively dyed bed linens and fashions from pillow shams to softly draped comforters and throws.

During this season of darkening skies and dropping temperatures, live the dream. Cuddle your tactile senses; engage them to the hilt and connect with the look and feel of ancient royalty. Swathe your bed with its rich folds; swaddle your baby's nursery in its pampering hand. Line your life with the affordable indulgence of velvet in all its moody hues. You're worth it. ■

*Photos courtesy of Bella Notte Linens*

While it may seem velvet has been the subject and object of our dreams for a long time, it's only relatively recently that this sensuous fabric has been available to everyone. "It has only been in this century that velvet has become affordable to the masses," says Karen Brandon of Textile Fabric Consultants Inc. "The industrial revolution brought with it the chance for the common person to experience luxury that was for centuries reserved for royalty and the rich. In earlier times, only royalty and nobility could afford to own garments of velvet. It requires more yarns to create and a number of extra steps in the process, which adds to the expense of velvet garments. It was also common for supplementary sets of yarns to be placed on the surface of the fabric to create a brocade effect, making the design intricate and interesting. As the nobility knew and as we can still see today, some of the richest colors can be produced when dyeing velvet."

It's all that richness we associate with nobility that makes velvet so coveted. The expense associated with creating it may have been reduced with the advance of mass production, but we still adore it for its unparalleled look and feel; it still insinuates a wealth of style akin to royalty.



▲ Moody and luscious, velvet adds depth and character to any décor.

▲ ▲ Shades of purple and khaki make these velvet accoutrements a hot topic.

But what is velvet, actually? According to fabriclink.com, velvet is a "medium-weight, cut-pile-constructed fabric in which the cut pile stands up very straight. It is woven using two sets of warp yarns; the extra set creates the pile. Velvet, a luxurious fabric, is commonly made with a filament fiber for high luster and smooth hand." The word "hand," as you might suspect, refers to the way the fabric feels when it is touched. The most common type of velvet



