

# How To Create A Designer Look With Wallpaper

By Jeanne Thompson

When you're ready for a dramatic room makeover try decorating with wallpaper. Sprucing up a room with wallpaper is fast, easy and affordable. And if you're reluctant to wallpaper all four walls, you can add design pizzazz by simply papering one wall or adding a border. Borders are available in a wide variety of designs, colors, and sizes, and they can help add architectural interest to many spaces.

In the past borders were used primarily along the ceiling line, in kitchens and children's rooms, but today they are used by designers to highlight many different areas. Borders used around doors and windows can emulate the look of expensive molding or you can try hanging borders vertically to simulate wood paneling. Wallpaper can also be used to hide imperfections on a wall or to help enlarge or decrease the size of a room.

When choosing wallpaper it's a good idea to take fabric or color swatches with you. Many designers use a dominant color on walls or upholstery and pick a complementary color as a wallpaper accent. Another option is to use light colored paint on three walls and a print or geometric wallpaper on a fourth wall. Accessories such as pillows, chairs and lampshades can pick up the wallpaper colors for added interest.

Most home improvement and hardware stores offer wallpaper kits with easy-to-follow self-installation guides. Do-it-yourselfers will find that user-friendly wallpapers in vinyl are easier to work with. To figure out the amount of wallpaper you need, you will need to measure the width of all four walls and multiply by the single height measurement. Subtract door and window areas and add 15 percent to the total so that you will have a little extra to work with. Wallpaper is sold in double rolls. It is important to make sure the wallpaper you buy was manufactured from the same lot, otherwise you may end up with pieces that don't match.

The trend in many new homes today is to use wallpaper in kitchens, bathrooms and

bedrooms. Earthy, spicy tones and patterns that create a theme such as Asian or animal prints are popular in master bedrooms. Children's rooms might use a sports theme, animals or fairy-tale characters. Dark solids like burgundy and forest green liven up family rooms and dining rooms. Neutral and earth tones can help soften or add warmth to a home office or living room.

Along with floral prints and stripes, today's wallpaper patterns include nature-inspired motifs and textures that copy the look of bamboo, tree bark and leaves. For a fun bathroom you might team ocean wave wallpaper with a border of natural looking stones or seashells.

Fruits, wines, wheat and vines are traditional patterns for kitchens and dining rooms. Dens and living rooms look terrific with old-world designs, mosaics, palm trees and tailored stripes. Wallpapers in metallic colors add yet another dimension. Using wallpaper on only one wall creates a focal point and a very contemporary style statement.

The new trend in borders is scalloped edges. Some creative designers also choose one or more border designs and cut out separate pieces from each for a unique, handmade look. Layers of color may be applied over a backing and removed in pieces to create a variegated surface. Gold leafing and botanical patterns are frequently used for enhanced texture and color.

For a modern Asian look, shop for a wallpaper resembling rice paper with colored metal dusted on. Embossed canvas frequently combines large patterns such as fruit with a strong color. These are often used in kitchens or dining rooms or great rooms combining a family room and kitchen/dining area. If you've always dreamed of having a wall made of fine hardwood, stone, marble or leather, check out stone and leather look wallpapers. They look attractive on one wall or can be used as borders for an architectural looking trim.

Leftover wallpaper is often used to cover curtain rods, folding screens, lampshades,

valances and light switch covers. Wallpaper can be applied to most smooth surfaces including wood, metal, varnish, paint and laminate. Other creative spaces to cover might include a shelf, picture frame or window seat. You might even take a particularly attractive wallpaper border or leftover wallpaper piece, mat and frame it, and hang it on the wall as a picture. Today's improved wallpaper manufacturing techniques make it possible to create wallpaper that looks like fine art prints, needlepoint and textures like tweed or rag rugs.

No matter what theme you may have in mind for a room makeover, there is a wallpaper available to help complete your project. A combination of paint and wallpaper can achieve a designer look that is hard to accomplish with paint alone.

Copyright © 2005 Publishers-Edge

