

INSPIRING WALLS

Depending on who you ask, wallpaper may hold a bad reputation.

It's been around since at least the 1700s, and as with most things, wallpaper has gone in and out of fashion. A room adorned in wallpaper can sometimes evoke an image of a musty home in desperate need of a deep clean, ripping itself off a neglected wall with cobwebs and dust filling in its lack on the drywall beneath it. Or it may even perhaps raise a sense of madness when the particular shade in question is yellow, thanks to Charlotte Perkins Gilman.

But wallpaper has been making a comeback in the design world, and it's an important one to keep on your radar, especially if you're redecorating. According to Roxane Mosleh, an interior designer based in Bridgehampton, "Wallpaper is timeless," she says. "It gives [designers] the ability to create dimension in a space."

To further enhance its status as a smart interior design choice, Mosleh tells us that wallpaper is a "wonderful option for new homeowners as it can provide protection to walls in high traffic areas. For those really looking to protect their precious walls, residents can make a smart decision by choosing a sturdy material such as commercial grade vinyl, or even wood or cork."

And in addition to being a practical choice for homeowners, wallpaper also provides an opportunity to create drama in a space where paint simply falls short. Interesting designs, abstract shapes, and bright colors can easily breathe new life into a room and keep a space contemporary. Unless you're planning on hiring the 21st century equivalent to Michelangelo, painting a room just won't be able to achieve an eye-catching mural the way that wallpaper can.

Roxane Mosleh went on to say, "The downside? If wallpaper does rip, it's far more difficult to repair once the damage is done. And as with most things in life, the higher the quality of paper, the prettier of a penny you'll pay for it."

"Painted walls can easily be repainted with the existing color or a new one altogether to refresh a room, but unfortunately sometimes even the strongest of wallpaper can tear. Because wallpaper can damage the walls it's attached to upon removal, wallpaper is best suited in areas of the home that don't hold on to moisture. So go crazy with eccentric designs in your powder room, but keep it out of the master bath where you're taking hot, steamy showers every night."

If you just don't know where to start when it comes to making a choice for a wallpaper in a room that's being redecorated, Mosleh suggests considering a few factors before making a final decision. She tells us that homeowners should think about 1.) what the space will be used for, and 2.) the colors that they're drawn to the most. From there, an interior designer should be able to help find a wallpaper that will benefit the space and in a material that makes the most sense for the room's function.

For those not using an interior designer and going at it solo, picking up swatches from local design stores or having them sent to you by bigger warehouse brands is an important step along the journey to choosing a wallpaper design. That way, you'll be able to hang them up, see how the true colors match with your furniture, and feel the material in your hand to get a sense of its sturdiness and durability.

The one thing you don't want to do is rush. Even if the very first interior design website that you check has you filling your cart with swatches, don't be afraid to shop around and consider as many options as you possibly can. Wallpaper "is on an upswing because of digital design advancement," Mosleh says. "The murals and complex papers on the market are allowing for so many more options, styles, and price points to be offered." There are numerous options to choose from when selecting a wallpaper design, and for many it will be about the material as much as it will the design.

Most importantly, the spaces we create for ourselves in our homes can be a source



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of inspiration -- and with the flexibility in design that wallpaper offers, opting for it over paint can make all the difference. The interior designer told us that her Hamptons home was once the clubhouse to the Southampton Hunt and Riding Club, which stood on the property where Jackie Kennedy Onassis learned to ride horses as a young girl. For her and her husband, professional equestrian trainer Bobby Ginsberg, maintaining the historical integrity of the home was equally as important to them as bringing their own sense of style into the space they occupy together. By holding onto the history of the structure, they're able to surround themselves in a space that inspires.

For many, that same inspiration can be found in the very design ornamenting the walls that they live within. Wallpaper can represent something that's important to you or recall a memory that your family shares.

You can express to all who walk through your doors that your home is meant to be a place of calm through natural colors and organic shapes; you can reminisce on a family rainforest walk with illustrated monstera leaves. Wallpaper has the ability to not only enhance a space aesthetically, but it also holds the power to remind you that you can shape your house into a home where you feel surrounded in comfort and warmth. Wallpaper can induce the emotion that you want to feel inside a space, whether that's vibrancy, focus, or peace.

"Every single space, if designed well, should tell a story," says Mosleh. "When someone asks why hire a design professional, I simply say because we are trained to curate, we are trained to transform... We are trained to listen to the needs of someone's lifestyle and, with the space provided, create beauty and function."

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