

DESIGNER'S CORNER

## Designing With Wallpaper That Wows

With myriad styles and textures, there's no reason for boring walls

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*Tempaper Peach and Berry Medley Wall decals do the job of an entirely paper wall, yet you choose where to place them.*  
COURTESY OF TEMPAPER



Wallpaper is a little bit like magic. It can add a sense of artistry to any space or makeover the mood of a room without changing anything in it.

“The best thing about wallpaper is that you can turn an empty, white-walled room into any dreamy place you want, whether the Wild West, the Caribbean or a Parisian palace. You can go anywhere,” said Carleton Varney, president of Dorothy Draper in Palm Beach, Florida.

Today’s wallpaper comes in myriad styles, which can instantly dial up the design quotient, said DeAnna Hain, executive director of marketing for York Wall Coverings in York, Pennsylvania. “Within a space, the walls take up the most square footage, so it’s a major opportunity to express your style through color, pattern and texture,” she said. Wallpaper also helps set the tone, whether warm and inviting, bright and colorful, or calm and relaxing.

And it's come a long way since great-grandma's fusty florals. "In recent years wallpaper has taken on a whole new life. Not only can you find great prints and patterns, but you can even find wallpaper that mimics popular architectural elements that your space doesn't actually have," Mr. Varney said.

Wallpaper can also enhance a room by adding dimension and interest. For example, natural grasscloth infuses texture and color, whereas a strong pattern is an exciting backdrop for decor, said New York-based Barbara Karpf, founder and president of DecoratorsBest, an online retailer for high-end textiles and wallpapers.



Cole & Son Orange Blossom wallpaper available through DecoratorsBest turns a sunroom into a greenhouse.

*Courtesy of Cole & Son*

And it can be applied anywhere, from a small powder room to the soaring vertical space of a great room—or used in an unexpected spot such as on the ceiling or framing a bed. The key, Mr. Varney said, is to find the right balance between beauty, function and impact.

"I like to balance out wallpaper with some solid walls, especially when going bold with the print, pattern and/or color," he said. He also loves to take advantage of wallpaper in older homes. "Walls that are cracked and damaged don't repaint as well, so wallcoverings are the perfect veil," Mr. Varney said.

Whether you wrap an entire room or add a small accent panel, wallpapering is worth its weight in decor gold.

### **Artistic Flair**

Beyond stripes, geometrics and florals, one of the most interesting iterations of wallpaper is in mural form. "They cover the wall and provide unique art at the same time," Ms. Karpf said. Once available only as a hand-painted decorative feature, wallpaper

murals now come in a wide array of patterns that can feel like an immersive art installation. Custom-printed papers from companies like Calico take your wall size into account to create murals without cutting off the motifs. They'll even render the mural as it would appear on your walls for approval.

York Wall Coverings recently launched several mural offerings, "which truly elevate each room into a work of art," Ms. Hain said. The line includes impressionist floral scapes, tropical panoramas and provincial scenes. "Because the murals offer such a strong design point of view, they can easily be the star of the space," she said.

Hand-painted wallpapers can also function as art. Mural wallcoverings from De Gournay, for example, remain in high demand, Mr. Varney said, as do hand-painted wallpapers from Gracie, a company known for its chinoiserie designs. Scenic wallpaper from Zuber also has the ability to elevate a room. For example, in the main lobby of the Greenbrier hotel in West Virginia, Varney used Zuber's Scenic America wallpaper to cover the walls. "It's a classic, and I love the impact Americana historical style has," Mr. Varney said.



Delicate chinoiserie wallpaper by Dorothy Draper & Co. decorates the dining room of the Greenbrier Hotel designed by Carleton Varney.  
*Courtesy of Tempaper*

### **Application Made Easy**

When you aren't sure you want to make a long commitment, removable wallpaper is easier to install and remove than traditional wallpaper, won't damage the wall and affords the ability to create instant effects. "The peel-and-stick utility makes it easy for customers to create a defined space within their home," said Jennifer Matthews, creative director and co-founder of Tempaper, a line of removable wallpaper. That could mean everything from "decorating an accent wall behind a desk for an instant home-office nook [to] covering a bookshelf as a decorative piece," she said.

“Making wallpaper easy to remove has fundamentally changed the game,” Ms. Hain said. Her company offers Premium Peel & Stick iterations in everything from geometrics and botanicals to textures and metallics, as well as traditional wallpaper that features Surestrip technology, which has an innovative pre-pasted adhesive backing that allows for easy installation and removal. “You can constantly update your space as your design tastes and preferences evolve,” she said.

And although peel-and-stick wallpaper has been on the market for several years, it’s now available from upscale design brands, Ms. Karpf said. “Scalamandre is launching its iconic Zebra pattern in peel-and-stick ,” she said.



Surfaces by Tempaper for The Home Depot mimics the look of hexagon tile with removable wallpaper.  
*Courtesy of Tempaper*

## All About Effects

No longer limited to one dimension, wallpaper has become a tactile experience. Think velvets and grasscloth, faux stone and wood, or even leather. Palm Beach, Florida-based Carleton Varney Ltd. offers wallpaper that gives the illusion of Roman columns, crown moldings, chair rails, dado and fretwork, for example. “Phillip Jeffries has some really interesting new textured wall coverings, like nail-stud trim and those that look like cork with a metallic finish, adding even further tactile quality and dimension to a space,” Mr. Varney said.

Then there are effects such as marble and tile-crafted collages and patchwork layouts. “We recently introduced new styles through our partnership with Candice Olson, and one of the patterns, ‘Opposites Attract,’ repurposes recycled windshield glass in a fun dance of tiny beads that reflect light to create a feeling of subtle motion,” Ms. Hain said.

Incorporating luxe materials is another popular trend. “Our recent introduction of the Ronald Redding 24 Karat Collection for York Wall Coverings is inspired by the finest quality of pure gold,” Ms. Hain said.

Ms. Matthews has been playing with holographic materials and textural black-on-black using pearlized inks. “The bold-but-subtle look has been popular with our customers,” she said.

### **Innovation for a New Normal**

Wallpaper can be used for a variety of home updates, including high-impact backdrops for Zoom calls, whether it’s a calm and serene scene to support a more relaxing work environment or one that’s colorful and bright to inspire creativity.

Ms. Matthews notes many of Tempaper’s customers are using Chalkboard and Dry Erase prints to recreate a classroom environment for home learning. “Wallpaper helps to create a distinguished space no matter how or where it’s used,” she said.

What’s more, homeowners can use special wallcoverings to update their amenity spaces, such as home theaters or home gyms. For example, York QuietWall Acoustical offers soundproofing, using color and style to wrap walls in calming quiet for sound clarity and control, Ms. Hain said. “QuietWall Acoustical is also great for spaces like bedrooms, nurseries, home libraries and offices where quiet is key.”

York also offers a High-Performance collection designed for the wear and tear in multifunctional spaces. These waterproof wallcoverings replicate designer patterns, are durable enough for high-trafficked areas and can be bleach-cleaned in line with CDC guidelines.

“Wallpaper is constantly evolving to meet the needs of homeowners and designers. The world has changed, and the use of wallpaper has as well,” Ms. Hain said.