

One Wall Wonders: Turn Wallpaper into a Room's Artwork

(ARA) - A little bit goes a long way. That's certainly true when it comes to one of the hottest trends in decorating: Wallpaper - hung on one "feature" wall - that takes on the look of artwork.

Bold patterns and reach-out-and-touch textures are the newest way to update your décor, and today's great-looking wallpapers look especially fresh as the focal point of a room. According to Karin Holms, features editor of "Better Homes & Gardens' Beautiful Homes" magazine, "Covering all four walls with a single wallpaper is a classic and enduring look, but papering one wall with a strong pattern and adjacent walls with a coordinating pattern is a great way to mix things up and have some fun with wall décor."

New York-based interior designer Jamie Drake, famous for his daring use of color, often chooses very bold and bright floral patterns that he says "could be overwhelming in an entire room, but create a real splash on a single wall." Drake recommends bringing out the colors in the wallpaper with lampshades, throw pillows and accessories for a very polished look.

Several wallpaper companies are creating exciting new wall décor products - some are luxuriant murals; others are more like giant stickers - that let the imagination run wild. Here's how to use them to create a feature wall in your home:

Wall Choices: Open-concept rooms are great candidates for creating a feature wall. Choose a wall that welcomes you into the room, since that will become the focal point. A wall that marks off a dining area is one fail-safe option; a less obvious choice is an expanse of wall with a staircase. A feature wall can also solve decorating dilemmas by diverting attention away from adjacent walls with too many doors, windows or other details that are hard to decorate around.

Frame a Pattern: Instead of hanging wallpaper from ceiling to floor, consider framing a large piece of pattern between decorative panel moldings with either simple or ornate framing corners, depending on the desired effect. Paint the frame a contrasting color to accentuate the pattern. A coordinating stripe or textured wallpaper on the remainder of the wall will really make the pattern pop.

Layering Effects: Bold, highly ornate patterns can be balanced with more muted coordinating designs on adjacent walls. If papering an entire wall even seems like too much, simply center a portion of the pattern on the wall and frame it with picture molding.



Photo Courtesy of Seabrook Wallcoverings



Photo Courtesy of Brewster Wallcovering Company

Above the Fireplace Mantel: Paintings and mirrors are the expected above-the-mantel decorating choices, but gorgeous wallpaper can add unexpected panache to a room. A few decorative accessories that play off the colors in the pattern create a wonderfully interesting display.

As a Headboard: Run a pattern above a bed and up to the ceiling to create the look of an elegant headboard. In a room with twin beds, this wall treatment gives the room an airy, uncluttered feel.

continued on next page

New Directions: Hang a strip or two of wallpaper sideways across the wall for an unconventional banner effect. In high-ceilinged rooms this creates a clever new take on the striped look.

Wallpaper Frames Art: The more textured wallpapers can also help highlight special artworks. After Holms hung grasscloth wallpaper in her home office, she wallpapered a 4-foot by 5-foot piece of pressboard with wood veneer wallpaper, and on that she hung a collection of etchings and lithographs. “The layered effect is so dramatic,” she says. “It gives the artwork more prominence, much like layers of mattes inside a frame.”

For more tips on decorating with wallpaper, visit www.wallcoverings.org and click on “Wallpaper How-to.”

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