

Yipes — stripes make a comeback

Countering the current popularity of burgeoning floral wall-paper patterns is a quieter motif: stripes. Timeless in appeal, these wall coverings are inspired by items ranging from men's dress shirts to moiré ribbons.

Not only are stripes fresh and crisp, they're just as comfortable in rustic cabin settings as they are in a room filled with traditional furnishings.

"A striped wall covering makes friends easily with all styles of furnishings and themes," says Lyn Peterson, president of Motif Designs, known for its numerous striped wall covering collections. "Stripes are very architectural, but they're also a very safe choice."

Indeed, the straight-edged quality of the stripe can bring a sense of order to a room filled with various florals and prints. "More and more consumers are asking for patterns, such as stripes, that lend relief from all the flower power," says Harold Imber of Wall-Tox Wallcoverings.

"Stripes can equal relief, and that's why nearly every wall-paper collection now offers at least one or two striped designs."

Just as stripes are used in couture to create the illusion of height or width, so too can they seemingly alter the dimensions of a room. To "widen" a narrow room, for example, try running the wallpaper horizontally. Likewise, stripes used vertically in a room with a low ceiling will appear to add height by drawing the eye upward.

The width of the stripe selected is crucial, however. If using narrow stripes in a large room, for example, the lines will tend to blend together. On the other hand, large stripes used in a small room can be overwhelming. For best results, choose a stripe with a scale that's compatible with the room's size.

Likewise, wall coverings that feature sharp contrast — such as black and white stripes — should be used with caution so they don't overpower a room. One good way to showcase these bolder designs is to place them below a chair rail, where they are below eye level.

If the blending of various prints, plaids, and solids is confusing, remember that any of them can be mixed with a stripe.

To mix several sizes of prints in one room, begin with common colors. Diversity in the scale of the patterns — tiny prints juxtaposed with larger motifs — also thwarts any heavy-handedness, as does the inclusion of at least one print with a dominant white, airy background.

For guidance, try this basic formula: one large-scale print, a medium stripe, a small dark print, and a small light print. Keep in mind, too, that a vertical stripe needs a stopping point. If the space has no molding to stop the eye, it's important to use a border at ceiling level. If there's no companion border, create one by cutting off a 4- to 6-inch-wide strip of the wallpaper and hanging it horizontally.

Cedar to the rescue of musty closets

Closets can collect more than clothes: They can collect mustiness, silverfish, and moths. Rather than shutting the door on the problem, consider taking action by lining closets with aromatic cedar, suggests Remodeling Ideas magazine.

The tart scent of cedar may smell fresh and natural to humans, but it smells like trouble to insects, especially moths. They will usually steer clear of cedar closets, but can be attracted to the clothing in an unprotected closet, where they will lay eggs. When larvae hatch, they may eat very small holes in fabrics.

Most hardware centers sell cedar planks and cedar flakeboard panels. The planks can be three-eighths-inch boards. Most planks are between 2½ and 4 inches and more difficult to install but provide an attractive, smooth, solid-wood look.

Flakeboard panels are created with light and dark cedar chips. They are usually one-quarter-inch thick and 4 feet by 8 feet, although smaller sizes

are sometimes available. The finish is rough, and the panels should not be painted or sealed.

In general, cedar

panels cost half as much as planks. To cover 50 square feet with planks would cost about \$54. The same area could be covered

with panels for about \$28.

If adding a new closet or stripping an existing closet to the studs,

consider closing it in with cedar. Cedar planks or panels can also be placed over existing drywall.

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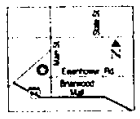
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