

INTERIOR MOTIVES

Be judicious when choosing wallpaper patterns



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When you visit a studio that lines up dozens of huge and weighty wallpaper books you may have fallen into a trap from which it is difficult to escape.

It is hoped you know what you are looking for. It is doubtful that you know what you are looking AT. There is nothing more confusing than placing bookmarks between pages to review what you liked as you leafed past them initially. The difficulty lies in the fact that you cannot envisage how any paper will look when it covers four walls. Even the most competent professional with years of experience may forget to translate that small scrap into an entire room.

There are so many categories of wallpaper: huge, bold florals, large scale patterns of more pale coloring, medium size designs, paisleys, minute repeat patterns, wide and narrow stripes, a one-color French "Toile de Jouy," varied scenic papers or a vast array of border papers. I could rant on indefinitely, but I will spare you that agony. I will just try to guide you into a judicious

choice.

For very specific reasons dining rooms have their own look, and are a classic room to wallpaper. You should keep in mind you are only in a separated dining room about one hour a day. Additionally, there is a minimum of fabric in evidence, and a maximum of wood furniture shown.

If you own extraordinary dining room pieces they must be the dominating factor, and the paper performs as a background. In that case a wide stripe could be very effective. Hanging good art work now becomes an unparalleled ally. Your furniture is of questionable character? A strong paper pattern could be dynamite. If the design you love is much too strong there is a fantastic ploy. Install a heavy chair rail about 30 inches from the floor, and only use the paper above that. When establishing the exact height of the rail always consider the repeat of the pattern so you don't chop into the middle of it (very disconcerting). Paint a suitable plain color, including white, below the rail.

I haven't discussed hallways and stairwells. We are now talking about a prodigious number of rolls. Expensive, but so complementary to the rest of a home. A meandering design large in scale is within reason. The hallway

and/or stairwell are also large in scale. I recommend the coloring be soft and subtle because other adjoining rooms will have their own schemes, and none of these should be in conflict.

Bedrooms have some of the same qualifications for papers as dining rooms. Great furniture, less distinctive paper. Questionable furniture? Allow the paper to dominate. However, there is one major difference. You will spend many more hours in a bedroom than in a dining room, and you should be appraised that the wallpaper must be more subtle and easier to live with. Yes, the pattern may be large in scale. In that case each of the upholstered pieces need be innocuous, but no less handsome. Plain fabrics in special textures, but with little if any pattern. Should your paper be very minute in scale the rest of the room is uncompromised. You are able to use other patterns in conjunction with your tiny design. Perhaps you will accentuate it with a subtle plaid or a medium-sized whimsical secondary configuration.

Wallpaper can enhance almost any bathroom. If the bath is endowed with marble or handsome tiles, forget paper. That would be gilding a lily. Totally unessential. I have been known to use the most costly papers in baths that

NEED development. I also love to paper closets. These can be flamboyant papers because much of the pattern will be obliterated by what is hanging. Try covering the ceilings as well as the inside of the doors. When the door stands ajar there is a startling effect.

I would love to discuss wallpaper borders. They are an exceptional tool in almost every interior. Borders can be incredible and complimentary to any of the areas we have discussed, without totally papering. The competence of the installer is important. Every corner must be accurately mitered, the pattern carefully matched, even if some inches of the border are wasted between the cuts. You can frame four sides of a window, paper around the frame of a doorway, or use a border around the perimeter of a room ceiling. Use a bit of imagination and initiative.

There are very few papers appropriate to a contemporary interior. Avoid using anything but an exceptional texture. That would be esthetically correct. Keep the background subtle, simple and clean.

Naomi Stone Levy, a Franklin resident, is an interior designer and a former secretary of the American Society of Interior Designers. You can leave her a message by dialing (313) 953-2047.

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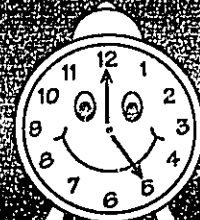
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