

Fabulous FURNITURE 2001

Get adventurous with paint, wallpaper look

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SPECIAL WRITER

While most house guests don't see your bedrooms and bathrooms, the most important people - family members and close friends - can be treated to some extraordinary decorating styles in these rooms that we go to for comfort and relaxation.

Choosing the right wallpaper and paint are the biggest jobs for most homeowners.

Others take a few steps away from the norm. There are no limits for the truly imaginative decorators, like customers of Joe and Jennifer Rutherford, owners of Upon a Wall in Plymouth.

They've been creating hand-painted wall murals of landscapes, jungle scenes and a wide variety of other wall drawings for three years. Most of their work is in children's rooms and is done in a realistic or whimsical style.

Underwater murals and forest scenes with animals, birds and trees that reach from the wall into the ceiling are the most common choices.

"In a child's room we try to put something over the crib," he said. "We take into account where the furniture is."

A lot can be done with the shape of the room and by using corners, like painting a tree that includes two walls and incorporates overhead drawings.

Family pets and other personal additions, that have special meaning to the family, are often added to the mural, too, Joe Rutherford said.

"It's an original piece of art that's created on your wall," he added.

The couple recently designed a three dimensional, whimsical

village for a child's room that included a painted stone frame around an actual clock. The family also wanted an 8-foot-tall bronze giraffe incorporated into the room.

The Rutherfords decided to add a small zoo to the village. They added painted and silk leaves on the ceiling and wall around the giraffe and etc. some foliage in his mouth to make it look like he was eating.

"It's always neat to see the way the kids react when they come in and see the room for the first time," Joe Rutherford said. "You know that someone won't walk into the room and say, 'I have that wallpaper at my home.'"

An Ann Arbor family recently had the couple paint a meadow scene in a powder room. Fish and other underwater aquatic are most often requested for bedrooms, Joe Rutherford explained.

The cost for the wall murals ranges from \$300 to \$6,000, but are priced between \$1,200 to \$1,800.

For more information about Upon a Wall call the Rutherfords at (734) 354-9350, or visit their Web site at www.uponawall.com.

For other decorating techniques, Lydia Bruski, assistant manager at Sherwin-Williams in Plymouth, said the hardest task is choosing the paint color.

"We recommend pulling a color out of a comforter or a towel color you like," Bruski said, adding that the most common mistake is choosing a hue that ends up too dark or too light once it's on the wall.

"We recommend looking at color strips in all kinds of light," she said, adding that she recommends people view the sample in

the room in which it will be used.

Another important step, Bruski said, is to prepare wall surfaces, making sure they're clean, dry and dull. Sand the wall lightly if the application is on a shiny area.

"Another problem is cutting in around edges," Bruski said. "There are edging pads that roll around edges for a clean, smooth finish."

Some of the most popular wallpaper books for children's rooms are "Can you Imagine" and "For Boys Only." Clouds on ceilings are a popular choice for children's rooms, too, she added.

"There's also a border that goes around the top of the room and looks like a tree is hanging down with vines that look like they're coming from the trees," Bruski said.

One woman, she said, cut the vine out of the wallpaper and hung it around the window creating a dramatic effect.

"A lot more people are starting to get back into wallpapering," Bruski added.

Hearts, stars and flowers rule in girls' rooms. "Fairy designs are actually very popular and there's a lot of whimsical designs," Bruski said.

Using different paint techniques, like applying color glazes over a solid color; sponging; ragging and brushing are used a lot more today than ever before, too.

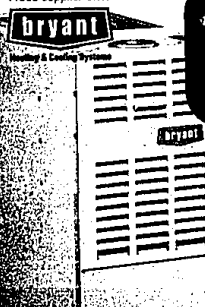
There are wallpapers that replicate these styles for those who aren't confident enough to do it themselves. If you're just starting out, keep in mind, Bruski said, that the low traffic counts in bathrooms make them the best place to practice, Bruski

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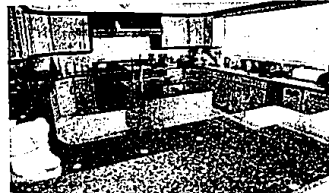
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