

# Climbing the Walls



FIND OUT WHY AN OLD FAVORITE IS EN VOGUE ONCE AGAIN.

By *Tori Woods*

# N

ever mind all those home-improvement shows in which designers attack wallpaper with a venomous fervor normally reserved for ceiling fans. Wallpaper is back in a big way, and we do mean big — oversized patterns, attention-grabbing color and over-the-top texture are dressing up the walls of modern, stylish rooms.

Travis Abbott of Travis Abbott Interior in Cleveland (who actually answered his cell phone from a wallpaper showroom when we spoke) says that, until recently, faux finishing techniques rendered wallpaper a touch passé.

“What we’re seeing now is a lot of wallpapers that actually look like faux finishes,” Abbott says. “The patterns are much more stylized than they used to be, much more exciting. The colors are far more interesting and

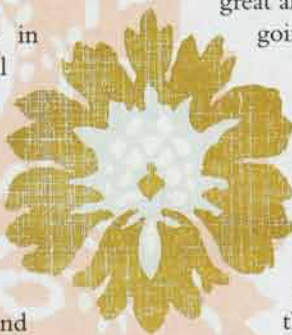
more sophisticated.”

In combinations that can include chocolate browns, cerulean, pinks, greens and oranges, many types of wallpaper are making fresh and funky statements. Neutral palettes are also still current, especially if the paper has a textured feel, like stained grass cloth.

Oversized patterns are hot as well, as elements of traditional designs such as damask are blown up to create stylized drama. A large space between “repeats” (where the pattern starts over again) accentuates the impact of the design and creates a clean, modern look.

Although faux finishing is far from over, wallpaper is a great alternative for certain rooms. “The advantage to going with wallpaper ... is that it’s much easier to take down,” Abbott says. “It’s less mess, and it’s a lot easier to find someone to take care of it for you.”

With all of the colors, patterns and textures available, which style of wallpaper is right for your room? We picked four fetching patterns from the new Waterlily line by Thibaut, a company that has been papering walls since the 1880s.





## THE BATHROOM

*Kaleidoscope*

**What it looks like:** Shown in a calm, soothing blue with silver metallic accents, this pattern is geometric and fun without being stodgy. It accentuates the silver, stainless and pewter bathroom fixtures that are popular in bathroom design right now.

**Why it works:** "Bathrooms can be cold rooms because there are no soft furnishings," says Stacy Senior, marketing director at Thibaut. "Adding wallpaper to a bathroom is a great way to warm it up and make it more interesting. It softens the room and adds contrast to white tiles."

**Who would love it:** Someone seeking serenity can relax as this tranquil pattern helps any bathroom mimic the atmosphere of a soothing spa.

## THE DINING ROOM

*Mimosa*

**What it looks like:** The oversized, stencil-styled pattern in funky aquas, blues and greens creates the background for a festive, modern gathering place.

**Why it works:** Dining rooms are normally larger spaces, so the larger scale of this wallpaper suits a bigger space. "The 36-inch repeat keeps it from being too busy. Even though it is bold, it would not appear busy because it's open and airy, and doesn't repeat too often. You don't see the same shape hitting you over and over again," says Senior.

**Who would love it:** Someone with a taste for bold colors and graphic prints can cook up a totally fresh room with this wallpaper.

## KITCHEN

*Saffron*

**What it looks like:** The subtle pattern and two-toned coloring of this paper will harmonize with the wood stains of kitchen cabinetry.

**Why it works:** "It has an unusual shape to it that's very modern. The movement of the branches lends curve and adds flow to the room. It softens all those angles in a kitchen," Senior says.

**Who would love it:** Someone who loves organic produce will crave the crisp, natural charm of this design.

## ENTRYWAY/ FOYER

*Waterloo*

**What it looks like:** Large medallions spaced on textured linen serve as a graphic focal point. It's reminiscent of damask that's been cut and re-spaced in chocolate browns.

**Why it works:** The spacing keeps the wallpaper current, and the metallic accents add a touch of glamour to tricky decorating spaces like hallways, entryways and foyers.

"It's really sharp because it adds so much definition to the wall," Senior says. "A foyer is a great place for wallpaper because there are no furnishings ... you need something to look at, especially if you don't have a lot of artwork. It makes an impact."

**Who would love it:** Someone who wants traditional with a twist, who thinks a formal foyer doesn't have to be boring, will want this revamped, elegant paper.