





# Go Up the Wall with Wallpaper

The only thing more tiresome than watching paint dry, is staring at a dried wall.

For the past few years wall décor has been slipping into a lackluster state with no hope of revival. Consumers have been experimenting with layers of color in their homes and on their walls, in search of something to mix life back into their design schemes. Now, wallpaper is back with a vibrant vengeance that is sure something to stare at.

Known as “wallcovering” in the biz, wallpaper has made a major revival, and it is nothing like the pop art and geometric patterns of the past. Today’s designs feature elegance and creativity, without compromising personal taste. “We are seeing clean crisp designs as wallpaper manufacturer’s respond to customers’ demands of innovative patterns,” says Jan Niels, president and creative director of Interior Design Gallery in Austin. “Designs are larger, more important, and more fun.”



## “Today’s wallpaper presents more of a design statement than a painted wall because of the content and pattern.”

– Stephanie Villavicencio, ASID, of Bella Villa Design Studio

Many of today’s collections are inspired by the originators of the art form, as leather, raised inks, and tree and feather motifs have reappeared in modern designs.

Since its birth by the French designer Jean-Michel Papillon in the early 1700s, wallpaper has been announcing itself as the haute couture item for walls. Papillon developed “papiers de tapisserie,” which used inexpensive imitations of the materials brocade, Indian chintz, Spanish leather, and Tapestry to decorate walls. His designs also imitated the architectural elements of cornices and wood paneling. His materials served the same purpose as some of the more costly decors of the century, while retaining the comforts of the high life without losing a shred of elegance for his customers.

During the next century, wallpaper technology continued to improve with new techniques of printing and manufacturing that gave rise to better quality papers that featured ink, oil, or water based colors in their image designs. It wasn’t long after that wallpaper graced the homes of many middleclass citizens in Europe and France before it found its way to America. Since then, it has risen and fallen in the eyes of consumers throughout the years in its attempt to spark color and life into the drearier rooms of their homes.

Today it seems wallpaper has made that final ascent into decorating ecstasy with a fresh approach to color, detail, and textural



Photo courtesy of York Wallcoverings



Photo courtesy of York Wallcoverings

patterns. “The designs have matured into more of a statement than the smaller floral patterns of past designs,” says Stephanie Villavicencio, ASID, of Bella Villa Design Studio in Austin. “Today’s wallpaper presents more of a design statement than a painted wall because of the content and pattern.”

People are flocking to their local home improvements stores in search of wallpaper that will feed their appetite for the color and pattern combinations that have been lost to them for nearly two decades. The Wallcoverings Association (ARA) contributes the revival of wallpaper to everything from consumer confidence with design experiments to changes in imaging and printing technology. However, the major contributor is the home ownership boom over the last decade that fed an increase in home décor media coverage. “With remodeling on the upswing, there are many clients who loved wallpaper several years ago and are thrilled it is coming back,” says Susanne Lee of Susanne Lee Interiors in Austin.

Now more design information is available to the public than ever before, and everyone is stripping their walls bare in preparation for a decorative pattern that will add a fresh look to any décor. So, what exactly are the top trends this season? Take a look at the rundown of which colors, textures, and designs fill the sample books of the top interior decorating firms.

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With an abundance of the choices, it may be difficult to bring a room fashion forward on your own. Niels suggests hiring a creative interior designer who knows how to best utilize wallpaper and faux finishes as opposed to simply just paint. “Our designers search for timeless patterns and colors that coordinate with the architectural style and the homeowner’s personal desires or taste,” she says.

So once at a local design studio, unlike with paint, don’t be afraid when reviewing wallpaper sample books, as the color shown will be the true color on the wall. For the more conservative consumers, solid-colored wallpaper is a favorable substitution for paint. Mary Dózie of Designs of the Interior in San Antonio says wallpaper is a cheaper alternative for consumers trying to obtain their perfect shade of hue. “Many people are looking for economical ways to achieve the luxurious look of faux paint on special accent walls,” she says. “When you have a very heavy, dark paint on a wall, the most expedient and economical way to refresh your look is with wallpaper. It achieves this in a very consistent way.” In addition, today’s wallpaper is also more durable than paint. While paint should be reapplied every three years, wallpaper can last 15 to 25 if installed properly. In turn, it provides a “quick-fix” that is virtually a permanent addition to any home décor.

With durability comes innovation, as more wallpaper designers are becoming “green-conscious.” The wallpaper manufactured today contains no lead, mercury, chromium, or cadmium that could be harmful to the environment. Designers are also saving local forests by selecting wallpapers that use harvested wood pulp from managed forests in their production. Even the products used in installation meet the government’s environmentally safe regulations, as many adhesives are water-based. “Wallpaper companies have moved into a greener product that breathes and is easy to apply and remove,” says Villavicencio.





# Wallpaper 2008

For the past few years wall décor has been slipping into a lackluster state with no hope of revival. Consumers have been experimenting with layers of color in their homes and on their walls in search of something to mix life back into personal design schemes. Wallpaper has become this year's hot ticket, interior decorating tool with a fresh palette of designs that incorporate everything from texture to artistic prints. Below is a list of the different wallcovering options available to consumers today. If you're not sure which design route to take, then go nuts and create a look that is totally your own!

- **Lining Paper** - This is a single layer of plain paper, which is used for good surface preparation. It evens the porosity of a surface and can strengthen a substrate.
- **Pre-Pasted Paper** - Pre or ready-pasted papers have a coat of adhesive applied during the manufacturing process. The adhesive is reactivated for application by being passed through water in a water trough before hanging.
- **Simplex** - A simple type of wall hanging. A single thickness of paper with a design printed on the face.
- **Vinyl** - This is pure vinyl, which is laminated to a paper or linen backing. It can be used anywhere and is well suited to service areas as it is washable and easy to clean.
- **Vinyl Coated** - Paper with a vinyl or acrylic coating to the face. Either type of finish is extremely hard wearing.
- **Duplex** - Two sheets of paper, which are bonded or laminated together.
- **Anaglypta** - this is a very heavily embossed type of duplex paper. (From the Greek Ana Relief Glypta Cameo). It must be painted after being hung and is used on walls as well as ceiling. It is not recommended for use in service areas.
- **Metallic** - Also called foils, these papers have a large percentage of metal on the surface, predominately Aluminium or powdered metals can be added to the ground paper.
- **Embossed** - The design side of the paper is raised and the reverse side is hollow.
- **Hessian** - Closely woven Hessian (Hemp or Jute) is stuck to a heavy paper backing.
- **Grass Cloth** - Made with the fibers of a honeysuckle vine being attached to a paper backing.
- **Printed Papers** - There are two forms, ground and pulp. Ground papers are coated with paint before they are printed. Pulp is where the pattern is printed directly on the natural color of the paper. Some decorative Ground Papers to follow.
- **Flock** - This has a luxurious velvet feel. It is made by dusting powdered silk, wool or flock onto a tacky patterned surface paper, creating a piled effect and is back in fashion after a long break!
- **Chintz** - patterns are made to imitate cotton chintz forms.
- **Jaspe** - printed linear veins of inter mingling colors
- **Satin** - A sheen is achieved on the paper from polishing or glazing the ground before putting the design on it.
- **Satinette** - A sheen is achieved by adding mica into the ground.
- **Moire** - these have a satin or satinette ground and have a finely engraved embossing.
- **Gravure** - The pattern of this paper is applied to the surface with rollers; a photographic process has produced the pattern.
- **Mural** - These depict a scene or landscape. They are often made of several lengths.

**“It’s not just flowers, toile, or damask anymore. When the client wants more than just one color on the walls, wallpaper can add so much character and drama to any room.”**

—Susanne Lee of Susanne Lee Interiors



Photo courtesy of Seabrook Wallpaper

Follow the green lead, Interior Design Gallery introduced their exclusive pressed bark paper last year. Imported from Africa, the bark from trees is harvested, allowing the trees to remain standing to regrow its outer layer over the debarked area. The harvesting process also provides jobs for African families. Niels says it is the greenest product on the market. “It is unique and is a significant step forward in sustainable or environmentally friendly wallpapers,” she says. “Our exclusive pressed bark paper is a tone on tone and is a great message, a wonderful warmth without saying too much.”

The fresh trend of eye-catching designs, bold colors, and environmentally sound origins has become so tempting to consumers, that global sales of the decorating item have proven that wallpaper is something to gaze upon for years to come. New Jersey-based Thibaut’s world-wide business increased 100 percent last year, and Brewster Wallcovering in Massachusetts has shown a 50 percent increase from their China distributors every year since 1999, according to ARA. Even though Americans purchased a note-worthy 10 billion bolts of wallpaper in 2006, France purchased 43.8 million bolts, while China purchased 70 million, and Russia purchased an astonishing 177 million wallpaper bolts, according to ARA. Locally, Susanne Lee Interior’s sales of wallpaper have increased 100 percent in the last

two years. The American designs for wallpaper have been taken to heart by so many near and far, that these sales have helped establish them as the top trend this year, encouraging designers to continue to think up innovative techniques and patterns that are sure to stick.

“Wallpaper has emerged into such great bevy of styles,” says Lee. “It’s not just flowers, toile, or damask anymore. When the client wants more than just one color on the walls, wallpaper can add so much character and drama to any room.” ■

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- **Seabrook Wallpaper**  
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- **Thibaut**  
1-800-223-0704, www.thibautdesign.com
- **York Wallcoverings**  
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## WALLPAPER TRENDS

**Hot Colors:** According to the Pantone Color Institute, Blue Iris is the color fashion designers are mixing it up with in their color palette this year. Therefore, it's only natural that the wave of blue and complementary colors would inspire wallpaper designers as well.

- Aqua and watery blues
- Metallics—combinations of bronze, copper, gold, and silver
- Golden hues and soft yellows
- Green—a byproduct of this country's new eco-friendly focus
- Navy and black
- Navy and chocolate
- Chocolate and grey

**Textures:** Designers are having fun exploring their artistic senses, as they bring together different elements to create wallpaper that is aesthetically appealing to both the eyes and the hands.

- Glass beads on wallpaper
- Wallpaper enhanced with sand
- Suede
- Raised inks—think Van Gogh
- Textural damasks

**Designs:** Almost anything goes for wallpaper designers, as they have become innovators in a medium that has only begun to show its potential. From large Victorian-era patterns to silhouetted images, anything is up for grabs in their design challenge as they attempt to create something visionary and unique.

- Tree and leaf motifs
- Simplistic designs enhanced with raised inks and deep embossing
- Large designs influenced from the 1950s in unexpected color combinations
- Paisley patterns
- Trellis designs
- Feathers motifs—peacocks and other festive feathers
- Wall murals and large-scale photographic images