

AT HOME

NOT YOUR GRANDMOTHER'S WALL COVERING

Easier-to-use wallpaper makes a comeback in interior design

By Merlisa Lawrence Corbett
Special to The Washington Examiner

All the rage in the 1960s, wallpaper nearly vanished from the interior design radar 20 years ago. Today, with new technology making printing, installing and removing it easier, the popularity of wallpaper is surging.

"Wallpaper is back with a vengeance and a sense of humor!" said interior designer Lori Graham. "From fresh reinterpretations of flocked fabulousness, to tactile takes on Mother Nature, we're using wallpaper everywhere, from large spaces like master bedrooms and family rooms to small powder rooms, where wallpaper adds a sense of surprise and whimsy."

Ron Baumberger, a marketing director for Sherwin-Williams, said wallpaper has struggled for the past two decades.

"But people are using it a little differently now," he noted. "You don't see all four walls in the house covered with wallpaper. People are doing only two walls, and borders are still very popular."

The biggest reason wallpaper has re-emerged is that installation and removal are easier.

"Many of our customers have horror stories of trying to get it off," Baumberger said. However,



"Wallpaper is back with a vengeance and a sense of humor," says interior designer Lori Graham. It is being used "everywhere, from large spaces ... to small powder rooms, where wallpaper adds a sense of surprise and whimsy."



PHOTOS COURTESY AKSEIZER DESIGN GROUP

newer, nonwoven products are more durable and allow users to peel the paper off sheets at a time, instead of

strip by strip.

"Some people hear 'wallpaper' and think the dowdy vinyl stuff our grandmothers put up in their kitchens. But the best papers today are handcrafted with silk backgrounds or made of natural fibers," Graham said. "They are exquisite and add dimension and texture to a room. They are modern and vibrant yet sophisticated and stylish."

C. Ashley Spencer is owner of Alexandria-based Casart Coverings, a company that makes removable wall coverings that can be repositioned, removed and even reused. "It's pretty easy, like a Post-it note," Spencer said.

Casart Coverings specializes in reproduced, hand-painted, decorative/faux finishes and murals. High-resolution art is scanned and then printed on canvaslike vinyl with a repositionable, adhesive backing. "It's like a slipcover for your walls," Spencer said.

Spencer suggested using dramatic wallpaper in small spaces like a powder room. Her favorite is a 3-D harlequin design that comes in a variety of colors and can be customized.

Although Casart is designed for easy install and removal, Spencer said, if you plan to keep it up more than six months she suggests using additional adhesive.

"If you can take it down, don't put it up," said interior designer Jeff Akseizer of Akseizer Design Group. "It's important to get professional installers. Picking the right installer

is as important as picking the right paper. Installing wallpaper is really an art."

One of Akseizer's favorites is the Beadazzled Flexible Glass Bead-

Resources

- » swdecorating.com
- » casartcoverings.com
- » lorighram.com
- » mayaromanoff.com



Wallcovering from Maya Romanoff. This wall covering has real glass beads and reflects light to create dazzling walls and ceilings.

Avoid a dated "Laura Ashley look," Akseizer said, by matching drapes, wallpaper and linens. "It's too much."

"Past trends such as painted/faux finished walls or painting one wall in a room a vibrant, loud color have been replaced with paper," Graham noted.

"There are so many more choices and textures available. There is no need to design within the limitations of paint."



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The biggest reason there has been a re-emergence of wallpaper use is that installation and removal are easier. The newer, non-woven products are also more durable.

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