

FINDING A WAY TO ENLIVEN YOUR SPACE is now easier and more creative with a variety of new wallpapers and coverings on the market. From different textures, patterns, colours and eco-friendly options, these chic wall accents have come a long way from the monotonous, antiquated floral designs of past decades.

"I'm seeing a lot of metallics and starbursts on wallpapers now," says Terry Doiron, owner of Oak leaf Interiors in Dartmouth, Nova Scotia. "They've added other hues and I think that there's a lot of beautiful, soft greys out there." Doiron's store carries wallpaper and paint from British company Farrow & Ball, whose wallpaper patterns offer a range of contemporary and traditional designs.

Other popular wallpaper brands on the market include Graham & Brown, Kravet, Phillip Jeffries Ltd. and Rollout Custom Wallpaper. Rollout is a Vancouver-based company that designs and prints custom wallpapers.

Local designers are also incorporating wallpaper designs in their new home-décor offerings. Barry Roode is the creative director of Mushaboom Design, a design company based in Mushaboom, N.S. that specializes in custom wall-covering patterns. Sturdier than wallpaper, wall coverings often have a second layer underneath for durability, allowing for easy removal.

Roode has long been an advocate of sustainability and ensures his wall coverings address the cause by using digital printers and green-alternative products such as UV curable ink. "One of the great things about digital printing is that I can work with a variety of manufacturers and print more or less locally," he says. "For Atlantic Canada products, I'll be able to work with a printer in Atlantic Canada... This does two things—it supports local business but then it also drastically reduces my environmental footprint by eliminating a lot of shipping. This technology allows a more rational way of working."

He adds that digital printing saves money for his clients by eliminating the need for minimum orders. "It allows for a really tailored project to be done," he says, noting that he welcomes client's ideas when creating customized patterns and colours.

Inspired by his walks through Taylor Head Provincial Park, Roode created a line of wall coverings called the Taylor Head collection. It showcases hues of red, green, yellow and brown with fluid lines depicting natural images of flowers, trees, leaves and crashing waves. "If you've seen my designs, you'll see that they're



OPPOSITE PAGE: To give your room a timeless and neutral look, go for a striped wallpaper design like this brown and cream pattern from Graham & Brown.

ABOVE RIGHT: This wallpaper from Graham & Brown features delicate floral patterns with metallic highlights, complementing a space that has neutral accessories.

RIGHT: Natural elements such as trees, crashing waves and blowing breezes in the Taylor Head Collection from Nova Scotia's Mushaboom Design add visual interest, creating a unique and adventurous option.



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pretty bold and this first group isn't really meant to be used in the sense that you would want to fill a whole room with it," he says. "It's like a feature wall kind of display." Many of his wall coverings function as "art replacement" in a décor.

Wallpapers and coverings also offer a creative alternative to paint. When looking for the right design, keep in mind the room's function and the statement you're trying to create in the space. "It all depends on what you want out of your room,"

Roode says. "You have to fall in love with the wallpapers or coverings much like you would fall in love with a painting or a drawing or a photo. You have to think about what items you have in your home and what would work with your home."

On the practical side, he suggests hanging busy patterns in areas of the home that are not "in front of your eyes all the time, like an area behind the sofa." Textured patterns work best in areas for relaxing or sitting.

A colourful and dramatic wallpaper like this custom pattern from Vancouver-based Rollout can be the focal point of a contemporary space.

Doiron recommends using wallpaper in a modern space for bringing in a little cozy appeal. Place a large-patterned wallpaper in a smaller space, such as the front entryway or powder room. "Don't forget that stripes and striés are classic, as they are neither traditional nor contemporary, so they can go in any space." She adds that stripes are a good neutral option if you think a floral design might be too decorative for your space.

Though Farrow & Ball requires a three-roll minimum per order, the wallpaper line uses eco-friendly water-based paints and functions much like Roode's wall coverings. Doiron explains that a touch of wallpaper can really add that "wow factor" to a space. "I think that if you want that extra kick or if you want a specific look, you can use wallpaper," she says. "It has a certain sense of pulling you in. It has a little bit of sound absorption—at least it feels like it does—so it wraps around you a little bit, giving you that nice, warm and fuzzy feeling." ■