

WALLPAPER WOES?

We've got you covered. Five Monmouth-based designers share tips for wow-worthy walls. *By Haley Longman*

Paint is fine in a pinch, but if you really want to update your space, wallpaper could be the way to go. New trends, styles and textures are a far cry from your granny's wallpaper of yesteryear; 2023's are glamorous and sophisticated. And your choice needn't be especially dramatic or grandiose to contribute to an effective look; sometimes all it takes is a subtle textured paper or a pop of color. Monmouth Health & Life asked five local designers to share wallpaper wisdom—about materials, style, sizing and more.

OUR EXPERTS



Stephanie Alegre,
Stephanie Alegre
Interiors, Eatontown



Jacqueline Holt,
Jacqueline Holt
Interiors, Spring Lake



Andrea Leone, I & I
Designs, Manalapan



**Mary Catherine
McCarthy,** Mary
Catherine McCarthy
LLC, Sea Girt



Teresa Tumminia,
At Home Custom
Interiors, Cream
Ridge



WHY WALLPAPER?

Sure, it takes a bit more of a commitment than paint, but wallpaper can also make more of an impact in your space, our designers insist, and there's a paper out there for everyone and every budget. "Wallpaper is a great way to add color into a project, to create a unique atmosphere in an otherwise dull space or add drama without the cost of real artwork," says McCarthy. Multi-purpose! If you're nervous about a bold print or pattern, consider a textured wallcovering instead—it can add a sense of luxury to a room. "I love a grasscloth, linen, paper weave or silk that can provide texture and depth without feeling overwhelming," says Alegre.

MIND YOUR MATERIALS.

Where you're considering putting the wallpaper will help determine what kind you should get. Our designers agree that vinyl, though not always the most beautiful, is a popular choice for high-traffic and/or high-humidity areas such as kitchens, bathrooms, mudrooms and kids' rooms because it can be wiped and scrubbed down when needed. "Most companies now offer a fantastic array of vinyls and performance papers that are terrific for families," says Holt. Non-woven wallpaper is breathable and removable, meaning that it's perfect for living rooms and bedrooms, while the more high-maintenance grasscloth or silk works for bedrooms, dining rooms and home offices. "Grasscloth is my personal favorite and can elevate any area where you crave a classic style that you won't tire of," says Tumminia.



SELECT A STYLE.

As with any other design element, the wallpaper you select should fit the room and coordinate with everything else within it. "Base your selection off the color scheme and overall design aesthetic of the room," Alegre suggests. "If the room has a more natural and earthy vibe, go for a textured paper. If you want to bring in pattern with the wallpaper, be sure to consider the color scheme of the space." You'll also want to use the room's architecture, hardware and furniture to guide your choices. "I like to select wallcoverings after we've nailed down the palette, layout and any large furniture purchases," Leone reports. However, if a wallcovering speaks to you—even without necessarily being the "matchiest" choice—it may still be the one. "If it feels right," says Alegre, "then it probably is."

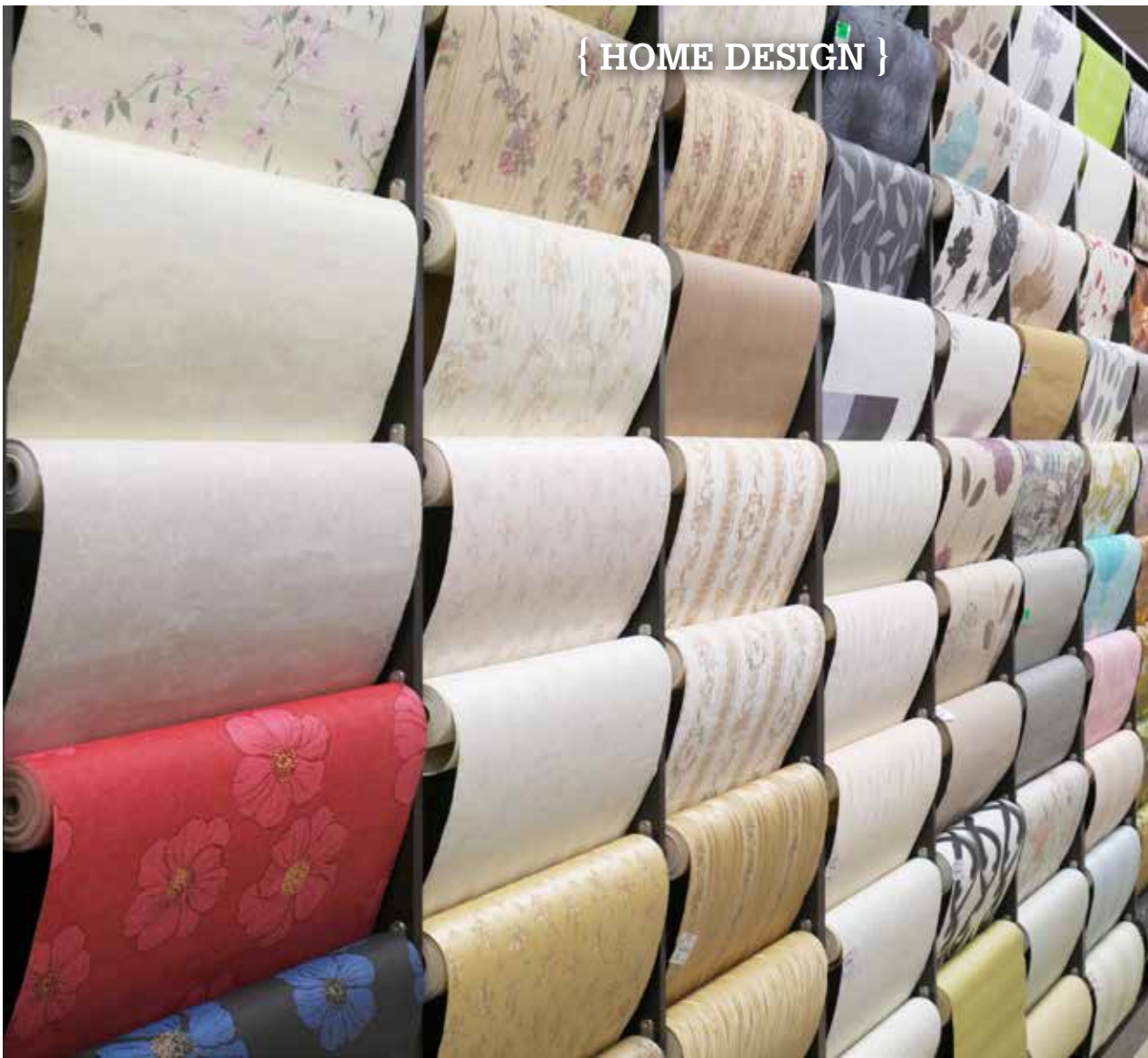
GO BOLD.

Walls are the customary location, sure, but you'll really make a statement by papering in unexpected places, such as shelving or built-ins. "Papering the back wall of built-ins will make them a decorative focal point and create a gorgeous backdrop for collectibles," notes Tumminia. Paper can do wonders in a child's or nursery closet too. "Pair the paper here with Lucite hanging rods," says Holt. "It looks amazing with all the adorable little clothing hanging in the closet!" Another idea is to create a theme by papering a headboard wall in a bedroom, says McCarthy, or paper stairwells or hallways to create the effect of a feature wall.



CONSIDER SCALE.

Besides finding a style you love, you'll want to consider the size of your room and the scope of your wallpaper print, if applicable, before pulling the trigger. Most of our experts agree that a large print can enlarge, rather than tighten, a smaller space. "When you use a bold paper in a small space, it's stimulating and more exciting," says Holt. Not into oversized prints? Leone says that a simpler wallpaper can have an effect in a room that's similar to painting a contrast accent wall. "You can achieve the same brightening look with a light-colored wallpaper that's rich in texture," she notes.



TRY BEFORE YOU BUY.

A wallpaper can sometimes feel like a tattoo—painful to get, and even more painful to remove! So, before you move forward with your selection, try it out first at home. “Order samples,” Tumminia says. “Even better if you can get three or four [rolls] of the same pattern to make a larger sample area.” She says to use painter’s tape to affix them to the area where you’re thinking of papering, and keep them there for a few days to really test them out. Just be certain to observe the samples in different lighting conditions and in a spot on each of all four walls before committing to the whole room. “There can be a huge variation from what you see online or even in person to when it’s actually in your room,” says Leone.

MAINTAIN YOUR WALLS.

How can you make sure your wallpaper looks good as new for years to come? The first order of business is to have a top-notch installer, says McCarthy. For more regular touch-ups, the designer advises following the manufacturer’s care recommendations before applying any kind of harsh cleaning agent or moisture to wallpaper. “Routine dusting will keep your wallpaper in great shape,” adds Alegre. “It’s important to consider that, just like a fabric, a natural wallpaper can stain.”

It wasn’t easy choosing just one, our designers report, but each picked a top-choice wallpaper to recommend. (Two specific brands seem to be popular!)

▪ “Lately, we’ve been in love with Thibaut Blue Arbor wallpaper. It’s so great for bathrooms, bedrooms and dining rooms.” —Jacqueline Holt, Jacqueline Holt Interiors, Spring Lake

▪ “Thibaut’s Canyon grasscloth (pictured) is a particular favorite of mine for its beauty and versatility. It has gorgeous texture and variations in color and is available in several colorways: bronze, black, metallic gold, white silver and aqua.” —Teresa Tumminia, At Home Custom Interiors, Cream Ridge

▪ “One of my favorites is the opulent Wandle Indigo/Madder from Morris & Co.’s Archive IV collection.” —Mary Catherine McCarthy, Mary Catherine McCarthy LLC, Sea Girt

▪ “I love the Rivets Collection by Phillip Jeffries, which comes in a wide range of colors and finishes. There are so many great places to showcase this wallpaper in your home; I’ve used it in an office, as well as an entryway and hallway.” —Andrea Leone, I & I Designs, Manalapan

▪ “Phillip Jeffries is one of our favorite vendors for wallpaper. Their Saint Germain Hemp comes in many colors and is a great wallpaper to add depth and texture to any space.”

—Stephanie Alegre, Stephanie Alegre Interiors, Eatontown

