

Lookbox

a showcase of the latest trends in urban homes, furniture and home accessories

Issue 24 2011 | \$8.00



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Small
homes
big statements

**THE SMALL
SPACES
ISSUE**

FEATURING
WALLCOVERINGS TO BREATHE
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IDEAS FOR THE WALL

So just how can wallcoverings improve small spaces? Here are the ways:

1 Feature highlight

Jane Tan of Tat Ming Wallpaper Company suggests, "People can use a feature wall effect, where a wall selected, usually behind the sofa or TV, is decorated with something special, say, a wallcovering that is like a mural or has a sharp colour." This immediately opens up the space visually. As such, because it creates a big impact in a little area, this has also become a common interior trend.

2 Subtle sophistication

Having so many items in tight areas is practically impossible. One way to keep the space well-decorated is with choice furnishings and letting the walls denote a mood of elegance. By applying a wallcovering that has subtle prints, home owners get the refinement they aspire without cluttering their space. Try neutral tones with embossed patterns.

3 Stripes to stretch

Another idea, which is simple and effective, comes recommended by Nicholas Lim, product executive at the Wallcovering Division of Goodrich Global. He says, "Choosing an interesting design can easily change the ambience of your room, such as a striped wallcovering. It will definitely elongate the look of the room." It can be a vertical or horizontal orientation; either way, it gives the illusion that the room has a high ceiling or a wider expanse.



Image courtesy of Goodrich Global

(TOP) Reduce needless decorations and create impact with an embossed wallcovering
(LEFT) Changes in the wallpaper industry has meant personalised prints, among other things



Image courtesy of Tat Ming Wallpaper

4 Metallic shine

Besides playing with proportions, wallcoverings can also utilise light to enhance the space and simulate an impression that the area is bigger than it actually is. Some interior designers advise this by telling home owners to select wallcoverings that are metallic or have some semblance of sheen. This is to let the light – whether natural from a nearby window or artificial from lamps – bounce off from the wallcovering and be reflected on to other surfaces, triggering a bright and airy feel.

5 Dark and cosy

On the other hand, home owners shouldn't refrain from dark colours. Gone is the rule that such hues will dwarf a room. With much consideration, dark wallcoverings can imbibe the place with intimacy and cosiness. As a safety measure, complement with one or two furnishings with bright tones for that needed pop of colour, or add a mirror to scatter the light in the room.

PERSONAL VS. PROFESSIONAL

There are certainly more ideas that can be done with wallcoverings for small spaces. Think wallcoverings as borders lining the walls or even framed as art. The limit as they say is only in a person's imagination, and in this case, the vast range of available wallcoverings (see sidebar for the latest trends). To this Darryl asserts, "Personally, I feel wallcoverings work best in small spaces like the apartments we have here in Singapore. The little pockets of spaces allow the owner to create different moods with the different rooms; and imagine a house where, with every room you enter, there's another extension of you being portrayed there."

Planning the desired space though also requires knowing how wallcoverings are put up. The question is whether to enlist the help of a professional or do without one, and this is where usually another debate ensues. The best bet is, of course, to go with the former. Both Darryl of Imperial Products and Jane of Tat Ming concur that expert help is a worthy investment. "The appropriate tools, glue, wall

preparation and technique will make the wallcovering more durable," explains Jane.

Darryl doesn't discount the other alternative as well. He suggests doing some homework such as online research and watching YouTube video demonstrations. As Nicholas states, "Remember, your wallcovering will only look as good as your preparation." The Goodrich Global representative is confident that wallcoverings are easy to install and that all it takes is a level of commitment, mostly on research. He explains further, "Different widths and materials would mean a different level of difficulty. Residential rolls with a width of 53cm that comes with a pre-pasted adhesive backing will be most suitable for first-timers to try out." This wallcovering only needs to be applied with water on the back for it to be hung. But prior to installation, walls have to be in their best state – smooth and free from cracks – and home owners should carefully read the instructions that come with the roll of wallcovering. That said, like what Jane remarks, "Wallcoverings are considered as one of the fashion accessories to our homes."

Dark designs work well too. Just add a mirror or a pop of colour to break the tone



Image courtesy of Tat Ming Wallpaper

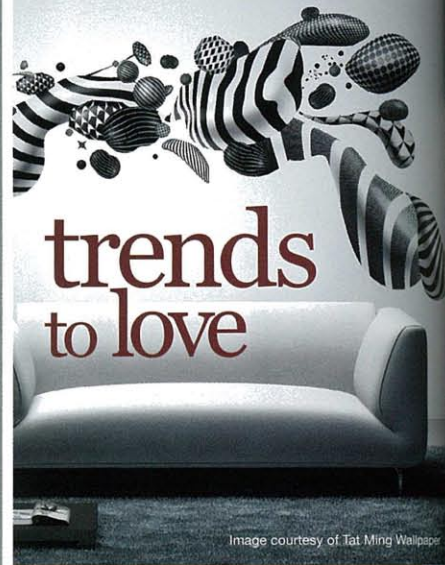


Image courtesy of Tat Ming Wallpaper

trends to love

Aside from improving small spaces, present wallcoverings can also handle other concerns that home owners may have. Look at the list below and see how you can hit two birds with one stone through your wallcovering application.

GOING GREEN

Good news for green-living home owners: Many wallcovering companies are moving towards sustainable practices. Identify green wallcovering products by spotting the eco-label that has been put in place by industry organisations and government agencies, like the Green Label Singapore by the Singapore Environment Council.

DIGITAL SOLUTIONS

If there is a lack of oomph in your home, wallcoverings can inject your character onto the wall with a digital print. Tat Ming Wallpaper Company can customise your print with your own photo, or a photo they can purchase online. You can also pick from their mural collections designed by an assortment of artists.

PAPERLESS PRINTS

Wallcoverings have evolved greatly to simulate other materials like metal, brick, wood and stone. Unlike the yesteryears when wallpaper was simple and flat, the main advantage of this, aside from an exciting appearance and touch, is that as opposed to having the actual brick or wood, wallcoverings achieve the same effect at reduced space!

SOUNDS GOOD

Tired of clattering noises or kids' chatter from the next room? Try acoustic wallcoverings from Imperial Products or Goodrich Global. These comprise the latest thermo-form technology, which diffuse sound waves. The good acoustics can even inspire you to create your own music room. **115**