



Wallpaper takes centre stage in a dazzling comeback, **CYNDI TEBBEL** writes.

Roll up, roll up

THE MINIMALIST interior has finally given way to an explosion of colour and rich textures, sparking a newfound passion for just about every kind of wallpaper. Seriously hot right now are classic retro prints, such as the Florence Broadhurst designs popularised in the 1950s, '60s and '70s: exotic orientals, opulent botanicals and bold metallic geometrics tailor-made to suit your colour scheme. You'll also find a striking collection of high-tech, 3-D architectural wall coverings featuring "natural" grasses, fake furs, wood veneers, brilliant glass beads, mother of pearl, metal sheeting and all manner of synthetics.

What are the trends?

Laura Ashley says its signature florals are still popular, but they're mixing them up with stripes. And there's a distinct Asian flavour in prints such as Oriental

Garden, Summer Palace and Kimono.

Signature Prints, the distributors of the Florence Broadhurst range, says the trend is for "subdued colours and whole environments in wallpaper rather than just a feature wall". The colour palette is muted and patterns are bold: bamboo grids, op-art geometrics, stylised birds and flowers.

Flock (embossed or fine-pile wallpaper) is back in the Jane Churchill collection, with hot pink and mustard flock on a pearlised background.

Hang the expense

With wallpaper costing anywhere between \$150 and \$400 a roll, you may want to create your own. Digital technology gives anyone the means to create what insiders call "a conversational" by filling an entire wall with

a favourite photo, work of art, trompe l'oeil, even a mission statement. Meanwhile, companies such as Annandale Paint & Wallpaper sell plain, white textured wallpaper you can paint over, with prices starting from about \$40 a roll.

DIY or call the experts

Arjun Sondhi from Annandale Paint & Wallpaper says that, with the right information, anybody can hang wallpaper. "The technology has moved ahead and the trend is changing to unpasted papers: the quality is so good, the paper doesn't shrink and they are very easy to hang. Even traditional papers - which must be pasted and soaked before hanging - give excellent results."

For silk and other fabric wall coverings, call in an expert. Professional paper hangers work on the basis of \$100 a roll, but when you're working with expensive materials you can't afford to leave anything to chance. "A professional doesn't just hang the paper, they put in a lining to ensure it lasts longer," says Sondhi. "A good wallpaper hanging should last 10 or 15 years. If you don't line it, it tends to curl up at the edges."

Cut and paste

Clockwise from top: Laura Ashley's Erin Duck Egg; Florence Broadhurst Storm Blue on Matt Brushed Gold Mylar; and an iconic Broadhurst geometric print, Steps, used by designer Greg Natale in a Sydney apartment.



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INTERIOR DESIGNER **Greg Natale**

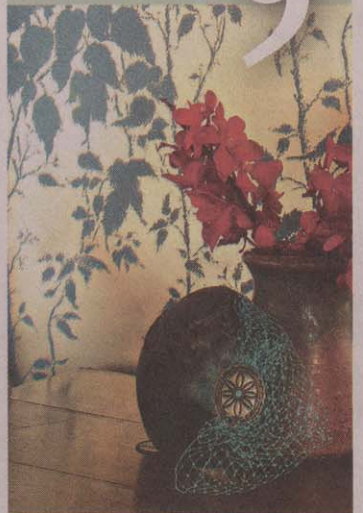
I love the wallpaper revival because it's a reaction against minimalism. I draw inspiration from lavish interiors like Buckingham Palace, the White House when Jackie Onassis redecorated it and the Palace of Versailles.

Create a sense of flow by using the same wallpaper print on soft-furnishing fabrics to create curtains, blinds, bedspreads and cushions. It can be a great unifying effect.

My favourite designers at the moment are Florence Broadhurst and another library at Signature Prints called "Bloom". The English company, Cole & Son (available through Domayne), has really sexy paisleys, beautiful organics and some geometrics from the late British designer David Hicks.

My prediction is that wallpaper is moving into a new age. Each design cycle is about 20 or 25 years and this is the beginning of a new cycle for wallcoverings. There are so many prints - from the opulence of the 17th and 18th centuries, to the mod designs of the 1980s. Of course, the period and dimensions of the space will also determine your choice of stripes, florals, geometrics, organics or traditional prints.

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