

DECORATION

January 2008

Mondanité

Maya
Modern Mexican

Louis Vuitton
101 Champs Elysées

Farra Design
in the City

*Eclectic
Comfort*
An Emirates Hills Villa

UAE - Dhs 15



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To Paint or to Paper; That is the question



Fast

ast the structural hurdles, or to revamp an interior relatively painlessly, the question inevitably arises: what to do to the walls?

As much as panelling, upholstering and otherwise treating walls with that extra special touch are all fantastic options with unmistakably elegant results, they are not suited to all properties, tastes or budgets. We are therefore left with two straightforward options: paint or wallpaper.

The past few years have seen a rebirth of cool for wallpaper. The previously scorned wall covering has gained pride of place in special issues of glam style magazines and the flocked bamboo print on metallic paper that adorned my parents' living room walls would be all the furore now. The amazing choices available range from textured 3-D papers featuring crystals or pebbles by designers such as Maya Romanoff, Ulf Moritz, to paper-backed fabrics. Silks in all colours such as Fromental's über-elegant hand-stitched stripe, revisited classic Chinoiserie in stylish versions or de Gournay's more traditional landscapes vie for pole position next to linens and suedes, from Arte or Philip Jeffries, to name but a few. Luxurious materials such as leather, real or faux, also find themselves featured on animal printed or less literal applications



by companies such as Area and offer sensuous options to line our interior jewellery box dwellings. Bold patterns have also made a dramatic comeback, with swirls, twirls, paisleys and damasks in flock, faux-suede, metallics, you name it, by companies such as Onself and Muraspec. The references above are but a few selected from the numerous head spinning variety available to us.

Paint may seem tamer, perhaps even predictable. Until we redefine 'paint', that is. Of course, there is nothing like a clean paint job on all four walls of a room. With a warm cream, veering towards the café au lait perhaps, a room is instantly given serene allure and will lend itself to a very versatile décor. Bolder, a deep red, a rich chocolate brown, a mysterious prune, will set the tone for a moody scene and the backdrop for what can then be a more eclectic setting. Paint effects are as basic as dragged fabric or sponge, as detailed as picturesque murals and as elaborate as stucco veneziano and other versions of polished plaster, going as far as lacquer, but only if the

walls in question are impeccably prepared prior to application!

The first thing to take into consideration when choosing any wall covering, is the natural light in the room. The second is the size of the room. The third is its function. An already dark room will rarely need to further close in on itself but working with its dark side can enhance a certain atmosphere by choosing a bold colour paint or dramatic wallpaper. To open up that room, a bright, light colour paint or wallpaper with a more subtle pattern or texture will provide interest without being overbearing. We can also direct attention onto one or two walls, using a wallpaper with great personality and painting the remaining walls with a matching flat paint colour.

Wall coverings need to complement the room they dress, and become part of its language. They can almost be foreground to subtly chosen pieces as they can become backdrop to a fantastic set of furnishings and accessories. ■

Marie-Noëlle – widerski has been a design professional since 1993, when she graduated from the International Academy of Design in Montreal and headed for an internship at Écart in Paris, Andrée Putman's design studio at the time. After a brief contract in an interior design office catering to the very high end residential market back in Montreal, Marie-Noëlle seized a unique opportunity to travel the world for the French Canadian national television directing documentaries and later producing the news for the French and Canadian foreign news desks in London. Weary of bad news, she returned to design in 2001 'to comfort her soul with beauty' and became a senior designer in the Blanchard team in London. After managing many diverse projects, from apartment redecoration to full refurbishment of listed Georgian conversions among others, Dubai beckoned. Marie-Noëlle set up the Blanchard interior design studio in Design House in September 2006. More than one very full year on, the Blanchard team in Dubai has grown exponentially, the projects from one 10,000 sq. ft colonial style-inspired residence in DubaiLand before the studio even had a desk, to several properties in the Marina, Palm Jumeira, Emirates Hills and two formidable 30- and 50,000 sq. ft residences in Al Khawaneej.

