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The wallpaper revival

For years the last word in naff, damask and flock are subtly being rehabilitated into stylish homes, says VICTORIA O'BRIEN

Wallpaper used to be a dirty word in the interiors lexicon. Sure, some smooth-talking design aficionados used it as an ironic magazine title (as in, *Wallpaper** — the stuff that surrounds you), but whichever way you cut it, wallpaper still bore the old connotations of seaside landladies' front rooms. It certainly wasn't cool, directional or cutting edge.

The wallpaper revival has happened as a direct riposte to bland minimalism and its clinical interior landscapes, which camouflaged everything against pure, arctic-white walls. "Feature walls" are the current buzz words, allowing you to get away with wild pattern, hedonistic colour and even riveting textures.

Flock wallpaper (once the very antithesis of good taste, and only ever seen in late-night curry houses), has made a comeback as the most luxurious and decadent of wall coverings. It's velvety to touch, and

delivery time of six to eight weeks. George Spencer Designs also makes flock wallpaper, using real wool, with prices from £230 per roll, and a minimum order of eight rolls.

However, much cheaper wallpapers can look just as glamorous, even if they are smooth to the touch. B&Q has bought out a brilliant range of boldly patterned wallpapers called the Tate range, with traditional floral, acanthus and damask motifs in eye-catching combinations of hot pink and gold, powder blue and gold, or silvery graphite and blackboard black. At just £20 per roll, the price gives you freedom to experiment. Use the pink as a background for your headboard in the bedroom, the blue to modernise a dining room, and the black in a hallway — but only, ever, on a single wall.

Traditional manufacturers such as Farrow & Ball are still producing hand-blocked wallpapers, with floral patterns that, when seen in a clean combination of delft blue and bright white, bring freshness and modernity.



at £35 per roll. Watts of Westminster, famous for selling fabrics and wallpapers to the clergy and MPs, has wonderful historical papers, such as the Venetian Bottle Green damask, at £102 per roll.

Roof: Cole & Son, Rajapur, £35 per roll. Side: Farrow & Ball, Silvergate, £54.99 per roll. Front: Jocelyn Warner, Kew, £59 per roll

David Giles/Stylist: Chantel van den Eishout

is best seen against a contrasting plain-coloured background) are big, bold and beautiful.

The fact is that unless you chance upon some leftover rolls in the bargain basement of your local DIY store, flock wallpaper is now only made to order, by a handful of companies in the UK. Cole & Son sells it, but prices start at £490 for a 52cm-wide, 10m-long roll (the standard size for wallpaper), with a minimum order of five rolls and a

white, bright freshness and modernity. At £54.99 per roll they're not cheap, but for something that is essentially an original to hang on your wall, used in isolation and moderation, they can be considered a bargain.

Zoffany has rich-looking wallpapers, including a Knole Drawing Room pattern in dark, fig brown and gold, from its National Trust Range, at £45 a roll. Cole & Son has a range of quirky prints, from flamingos in dusty pink, to a Rajapur paisley and palm leaves, all

Modern designers have now begun to create equally grandiose statements. Timorous Beasties provides a new spin on the traditional all-over pattern, from £70 a roll. Otilie Stevenson sells op art-style dog's-tooth check alongside multicoloured stripes, from £25 per roll, while Neisha Crosland's designs include a delicate Birdtree paper in parrot blue, from £45. So now there's no excuse for eschewing wallpaper — just don't cover the house in it.

ROLL UP

- B&Q, 0845 222 1000, www.diy.com
- Cole & Son, 020 7376 4628, www.cole-and-son.com
- Farrow & Ball, 020 7351 0273, www.farrow-ball.com
- George Spencer Designs, 020 7235 1501, www.georgespcncer.co.uk
- Jocelyn Warner, 020 7613 4773,

- www.jocelynwarner.com
- Neisha Crosland, 020 7584 7988
- Otilie Stevenson, 01322 441 181
- Timorous Beasties, 0141 959 3331, www.timorousbeasties.com
- Watts of Westminster, 01873 860 354, www.wattsofwestminster.com
- Zoffany, 0870 830 0350, www.zoffany.com



Roof: Cole & Son, Palm Leaves, £35 per roll. Side: Farrow & Ball, St Antoine, £54.99 per roll. Front: Cole & Son, Flamingos, £35 per roll



Roof: Zoffany, Knole Drawing Room, £45 per roll. Side: Jocelyn Warner, Kew, £59 per roll. Front: B&Q, Exhibition from the Tate range, £20 per roll



Roof: Zoffany, Rhododendrons and Lilies from the Regents Park range, £45 per roll. Side: B&Q, Chancery from the Tate range, £20 per roll. Front: Neisha Crosland, Dotted Ovals, £45 per roll