

Paper Party

From geometric murals to natural textures, wallpaper has made a big comeback, transforming dens into statement rooms. Designer Iván Meade reflects on how to pick the perfect pattern for the space.



JEFFREY BOSDET/SPRUCE MAGAZINE

Wallpaper has quickly become one of the most sophisticated ways to revolutionize a room, and for niche spaces — like dens — nothing creates as dramatic an effect as a customized pattern.

Iván Meade, principal designer at Meade Design Group, believes selecting the right paper is key to creating a vibe, second in importance only to ensuring it's installed correctly.

“The first thing you have to do is identify the focal point of the room — in a den, it's the credenza,” Meade says. “Wallpaper never starts symmetrically and you don't know where the seams will go, so you don't start at the corners. You start in the centre, at the focal point, and move from there.”

Wallpaper has had a complicated history, from the luxury rice papers of the Qin dynasty to the tea florals

in Great Aunt Min's kitchen. Today's trends emphasize optical illusions that play with light and texture. Meade offers three tips: test the paper vertically (not flat on a table), keep it classy with elegant designs and invest in an experienced installer.

In this Victorian heritage restoration (pictured), Meade turned a sullen room into a rich entertainment space. He utilized an invigorating geometric pattern on the focal wall, then ran the wallpaper up the sloped ceiling, flanking each side with dramatic charcoal paint to tone down the effect.

“This client loves to watch movies, and the den is not meant to be bright. You have to consider how you'll use a room and how the wallpaper will relate to that space,” says Meade, noting he selects materials first and wallpaper after. “The client wanted this room to look like a castle but also be cozy. This is a contemporary, edgier take on that.”