



well-dressed
walls

New fabrics help revive
a traditional treatment.



Upholstered walls hit their peak in aristocratic homes of 18th- and 19th-century France and England, but with the variety of fabrics available today and a multitude of aesthetic and practical applications, the wall treatment is making a comeback. In the 1897 classic *The Decoration of Houses*, authors Edith Wharton and Ogden Codman, Jr., concluded that “nothing can be more beautiful than tapestry properly used.” The authors conceded that sometimes wallpaper can be a convenient alternative. “But a papered room can never, decoratively or otherwise, be as satisfactory as one in which the walls are treated in some other manner.” Still today, a wall covered in fabric creates a certain elevated elegance.

As interest in creating intimate spaces at home continues to grow, so does interest in specialty woven textiles for wall upholstery, says Stephen Elrod, creative director of Lee Jofa. And there are more fabric styles and materials available than ever. “Designers such as David Easton and Diamond and Baratta are commissioning us to weave large quantities



INSTALLATION

Vicky Gorelik, owner of Windows, Walls and More, shares her secrets.

Knit-backed flat: For a flat, smooth look, the fabric is either backed with paper or “knit-backed,” where it’s sewn to a knit fabric to increase the depth. The fabric is then glued to the walls and can be trimmed around the edges or left plain.

Traditional: Polyester fiber is glued to the wall, and the fabric is stretched across it. The fabric is then either stapled and the edges covered with trim or gimp, or it’s attached to rails and pulled tight for a clean, tailored look.

Gorelik also suggests, for a less permanent installation, upholstering lightweight panels hung on special brackets at the top of the wall. The panels can be removed for a light, summer look or moved and installed in a new home.



TOP LEFT: Fortuny panels and blue silk knit-backed walls create an elegant dining room.

THIS PHOTO: A striped velvet chair contrasts nicely with the silk walls.

OPPOSITE: A Georgian crystal chandelier plays to the elegance of the room.

