

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

Can Wallpaper Borders Escape Their Dated '80s Reputation?

Some designers call the bold new iterations a fresh addition to their wallcovering tool kit. Others say they still have a hangover from the twee Laura Ashley era. Here, we hear from both sides.



PARTY LINE At home in Hampshire, England, designer Susie Atkinson uses borders to ape architectural details.
PHOTO: SUSIE ATKINSON

By Allison Duncan

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Yes, today's wallpaper borders are all grown up and worth a second look.

Some décor zealots insist that wallpaper borders deserve to be more than just a design punchline. For starters, they say, while the 1980s was a big moment for borders, their history doesn't begin and end there. Used for centuries, borders originally concealed the pins and nails that held up wallpaper panels, explained Nina Tarnowski, founder of U.K. wallpaper brand Woodchip & Magnolia.



Fans call today's wallpaper borders a chic addition to their design tool kit. Skeptics say the look is still hopelessly stuck in the '80s.

PHOTO: HYGGE AND WEST

Fueling the trend's resurgence are young people who aren't saddled with "preconceived notions of borders being old fashioned and cheesy," said Aimee Lagos, co-founder of the Minneapolis wallcovering company Hygge & West. To these fledgling fans, edgings are "an affordable, incremental way to dip their toes into the wallpaper look."

Also, thanks to designs that lean more geometric than their countrified predecessors, today's borders are being used in ways more architectural than merely decorative. New York City designer Ashley Manfred, who's been eyeing a collection of borders from London designer Susie Atkinson, said she could see using one to create the illusion of "a chair rail or molding to an otherwise flat wall," or to add dimension around doors.

Ms. Atkinson did just that in her Hampshire, England, country home, pasting up a candy-

cane-striped border from her debut line around a turquoise door's trim and a checkered version at rail height. To modernize and elevate once-folksy borders, she contrasts them with adamantly bold paint.

On a recent project, London designer Lonika Chande used a border to frame the wall behind a decorative headboard. The effect, she said, creates importance, and makes the space "cozier and more inviting."

Edgy Looks

Seven contemporary borders that are all grown up



Clockwise from left: Rou Border in Cobalt Blue, Cole & Son, \$147 per 11-yard roll, DecoratorsBest.com; Edith Wallpaper Border, about \$84 per 10-meter roll, SusieAtkinson.com; City Border, \$20 per 15-foot roll, Tempaper.com; Lune Border, \$65 per 15-foot roll, HyggeandWest.com; Wisteria Botanical Green Border, about \$120 per 10-meter roll, WoodchipandMagnolia.co.uk; Ivy Chaplet Border, \$75 per 32-foot roll, CommonRoom.co; Harlequin Border, about \$83 per 10-meter roll, Ottoline.co.uk

PHOTO: F. MARTIN RAMIN/THE WALL STREET JOURNAL (COLE & SON, SUSIE ATKINSON, TEMPAPER, HYGGE & WEST, WOODCHIP & MAGNOLIA)