

**THE PRO TIP**

Before installing new wallpaper, lightly sand any surface covered with oil paint. This helps the new paper grip the surface.



**RIGHT** Wallpaper professional Shannon Russell installs the new paper over walls that have been stripped, cleaned, double primed, and lined to create a smooth, trouble-free surface.

**OPPOSITE** (top left) Bo Sullivan tries out the chosen paper in a corner of the dining room. (top right) A peeled section of old wallpaper reveals the original deep-blue calcimine coating underneath. (btm. left) A "virtual room" mock-up previews a William Shand Kydd English frieze from about 1910. (btm. right) The new paper was rescaled from an original pattern in a 1915 wallpaper sample book.

→ **CUSTOMIZING FOR THE ROOM**

Lavished with original stained woodwork and built-ins, the dining room in a 1912 Arts & Crafts home was near pristine. The scenic wallpaper hanging above the plate rail, however, had seen better days. Dating to the 1950s or '60s, it was cracked, peeling, and discolored from water damage.

To replace it, the owners asked Bo Sullivan and Gwen Jones of Bolling & Co. to create a custom paper based on a period original. After looking through the studio's collection of vintage wallpapers and sample books, they decided to do trial runs of several options from around 1910 to 1915. Rather than reproduce new papers based on each design, Bolling & Co. created digital mock-ups of each pattern, shown in the context of the room, to be

previewed on a computer screen.

After considering an English paper with a peacock motif, a subtle "leather" embossed paper, and a hawthorn-berry frieze, the winner turned up: an Arts & Crafts pendant frieze with a coordinating border paper. Machine-printed on a buff oatmeal paper with soft colors and gold metallic accents, the ca. 1915 paper had a nice balance of detail and simplicity, with warm colors in a subtle yet rich palette.

There was enough of the full design repeat in the sample that it was possible to scan and re-create the paper without losing any distinctive details. Digital printing allowed Sullivan and Jones to tweak the size, scale, and layout to make the frieze easier to apply, especially around corners

and doorways. Bolling & Co. also tested the design in different colorways to get just the right blend to coordinate with other furnishings in the room.

Since the height of the wall area was only about 36", it made sense to print the new paper in a horizontal orientation rather than the more typical vertical strips. That eliminated most vertical seams and allowed the decorative pendant and border patterns to be integrated directly into the plain oatmeal fill paper in a single printing.

The overall design was adjusted for size so that it perfectly fit the wall space, with a bit of blank space at the edges to accommodate changes in wall height and trim lines. Additionally, to minimize waste, the pendant pattern for areas over the tops of doors, windows, and cabinets was printed separately in multiple side-by-side strips.



Original paper (right), and the rescaled version.



This frieze was one of several "virtual room" digital mock-ups.

**Beast Before Beauty** After stripping two layers of existing wallpaper and an original liner paper from the walls, wallpaper pro Shannon Russell made an interesting discovery. The original plaster had been painted with a cold-water or distemper paint in an intense deep blue. (Other common colors of the time included deep red and deep green.) This original paint was made by mixing ground pigments with cold water, the usual formula for calcimine. ● As everyone quickly realized, the old cold-water paint posed a problem for the new installation. Calcimine paints are notoriously unstable and tend to cause delamination of successive applications of paint or wallpaper (see "What Lies Beneath," p. 39). Once all surrounding surfaces were protected with plastic and drop cloths, Russell moistened the layers of wall covering with a diluted solution of Dif, an enzyme-based wallpaper stripper. Once the solution had soaked through the layers, Russell carefully removed the mess, using a scraper and broad knife. ● Once stripped, the next task was to remove the original wallpaper paste. The moisture from the stripper had freshly dissolved the pigments underneath, and the deep matte color spread everywhere. To stabilize any remaining colorants, Russell primed the walls with Draw-Tite, a penetrating sealer designed for chalky surfaces. Once the walls were fully dry, plaster cracks were repaired using mesh tape secured with screws. All the walls were then smoothed, sanded, and primed with a Gardz, a paintable wall sealer intended for use over chalky surfaces with adhesive residues. Russell finished the preparation by adding a white, acid-free wall liner to help achieve strong cohesion and a smooth installation. Finally, the new paper was ready to hang, using a premixed clear paste, Pro-880 from Roman Adhesives.

Subtle and geometric, the custom paper designed by Bolling & Co. brings out the rich tones of the original woodwork and built-ins in a 1912 Arts & Crafts dining room.

FOR RESOURCES, SEE PAGE 103.

