



Living proof

Strong textural contrasts and an adventurous use of pattern are indicative of new design directions that reflect a softer edge to contemporary furnishings

It's true. Just when you thought you had peeled off your last layer of wallpaper, it's back. But it's not the wallcoverings of yesteryear that are making news. Today's new wallpapers are highly textured and patterned, and are most likely used to make a strong visual statement in a particular area of the house.

Interior designer Susan Stratford says the wallpaper renaissance has emerged from the desire for interiors that are a little softer than the hard-edged minimalist designs of recent years. It also complements the trend toward the use of contrasting textures – balancing the rough with the smooth.

The house featured here is a good example. Stratford says the owners didn't want the interior to be hard, stark or sharp-edged. They wanted to move away from beige and taupe tones, opting instead for soft grey, green and blue shades, with some bright contrasts.

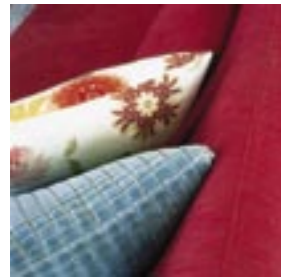
"They wanted distinctive features, but a look that would be non-dating. The interior also had to be suitable for entertaining and the layout needed to maximise the wonderful sea views."

Stratford says texture, colour and materials were the used to soften the hard lines and create an inviting, intimate interior.

Facing page, top: An Aluart patterned aluminium door and glass balustrading are features of the dramatic, light-filled entrance to this new home.

Facing page, above: Open-plan living areas provide an easy flow between rooms.

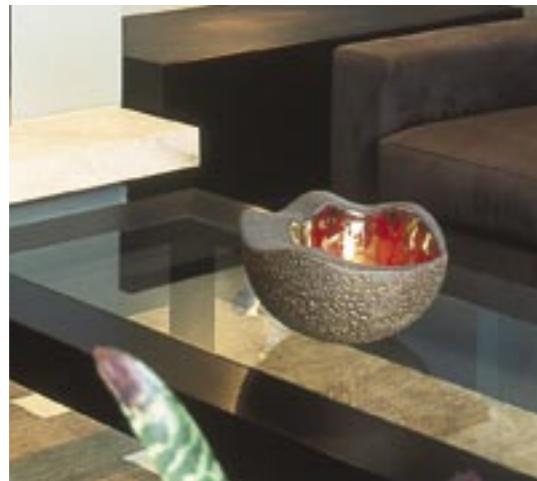
Above: Large floor tiles increase the sense of space. The choice of colours was influenced by the home's waterfront location.



Top: Cushions repeat colours, patterns and textures found elsewhere in the family room.

Middle and right: Although contemporary, the Apartento sofas and chair have rounded edges to soften the overall look.

Above: The chequered, vinyl wallpaper has a sheen that contrasts the slub fabric of the sofas and chair.



Top: Dark oak shelving makes a dramatic contrast to the blue-green walls of the formal living room.

Middle: Silk paisley cushions balance the texture of the Macrosuede sofas.

Above: Accents of red complement the grey and green tones of the interior.

The waterfront setting and the pohutukawa trees on site helped determine the colours for the interior – the changing colour of the sea was a major influence, says Stratford. It helped determine the shade of the kitchen cabinetry as well as the walls.

“Glass cabinetry doors and a glass splashback in the kitchen create a soft, floaty look that is appropriate to the setting, and the quartz stone benchtops are reminiscent of the beach. The grey colour of the quartz and the embedded chips of stone and shell reflect what’s going on outside.”

The bright red of the pohutukawa flower also

makes an entrance – red accents feature throughout the living areas. In the family room, red cotton-linen sofas and a plush, silver-and-pearl tufted rug are contrasted by a commercial-grade vinyl wallpaper.

“We wanted something a little sophisticated for the walls – this paper has a pearlised finish, providing a shiny surface that contrasts the textured furnishings. Textural elements shouldn’t all be at eye-level – the paper takes the look all the way to the ceiling.”

Further contrasts are introduced through the cushions, which include a velvet fabric patterned

in squares that match the wallpaper. Other cushion fabrics are printed with butterflies and dragonflies.

A striped chair, the same design as the sofas, helps to break up the red and grey and make it a little more interesting, says Stratford.

To maintain a streamlined look, audiovisual equipment, including a ceiling projector, screens and speakers, are recessed into the walls and ceilings. A large coffee table was custom designed and built to suit the scale of the room.

In the formal living room, carpet creates a more intimate and sophisticated look.

“Again, we opted to introduce colours from

outside,” says Stratford. “The watercolour shade of the walls has a very calming effect. We also wanted to reinforce the indoor-outdoor connection, hence the curtains feature an allium flower pattern.”

Different colours and textures were introduced with the donkey-brown Macrosuede sofas and silk paisley cushions. These are complemented by reflective glass-topped tables, a textured rug and Travertine stone hearth. As in the other family areas, the dark-stained wood tables help to anchor the room visually.

Upstairs, the master bedroom reflects the owners’ desire for something very different.

Above: A cantilevered Travertine stone hearth and flame-effect gas fire create a cosy ambience in the formal living room. Designer Susan Stratford says the soft colours have a calming effect. They also ensure the interior doesn’t detract from the magnificent view. As with other rooms in the house, the living room incorporates hidden storage.

Architect: Peter Sargisson, Cook Sargisson and Pirie

Interior designer: Susan Stratford, Stratford Interior Design (Auckland)

Main contractor: PW & JA Hari

Louvres: Louvre-Tec

Glass staircase and balustrade: Amalgamated Glass

Kitchen designer: Kira Gray

Kitchen manufacturer: Fyfe Kitchens

Window and door joinery: Anodised aluminium from Fairview Window Solutions

Tiling: Cardoso Stonehenge in kitchen and family areas

Carpet: Feltex from Carpetland

Halogen lights: Halcyon Lighting

Wallpaper in hall, family and dining rooms: Kyoto from Stratford Interior Design

Wallpaper in master bedroom: Osborne & Little from Stratford Interior Design

Paints: Aalto Colour and Resene

Sofas in family room: Edward sofas in Samoa fabric, armchair in Osborne & Little fabric, and coffee table, all from Apartmento

Rugs: Stratford Interior Design

Dining furniture: Bos Design; chairs upholstered in Saros fabric

Formal living room furniture: Essen sofas upholstered in Macrosuede, and coffee and side tables from Bos Design

Lounge fire: Real Fires

Curtain fabrics: Karala in family and dining areas; Osborne & Little in formal living room; from Stratford Interior Design

Bed linen in main bedroom: Harrowset Hall

Child's bed linen: Designers' Guild from Small Acorns

Audiovisual design and installation: Custom Installation Company

Plasma screen: Philips

Benchtops: Abosola, Stone Italia

Oven, cooktop, refrigerator and rangehood: Fisher & Paykel

Bar stools: DeDeCe Design

Plumbing supplies: Westbrooke Plumbing

Photography by
Kallan MacLeod

Top: The guest bedroom features a metallic wallpaper with a mix of smooth silver-leaf and velvet textures.

Middle: Metallic paint creates a feature wall in this child's bedroom.

Above and right: Contrasting textures and colours in the master bedroom are enhanced by the bold Osborne & Little wallpaper.



"The owners wanted this room to have its own identity, but there still needed to be a continuity in terms of texture and colour," says Stratford. "The patterned wallpaper has a sea-green background and features swirls that provide a visual link with the natural environment.

"As the impact is in the walls, the mustard-coloured bed linen has a subtle pattern. Rich chocolate accents are provided by the cushions."

Other bedrooms also make a strong statement: the guest room features a floral, textured wallpaper, and one of the children's rooms has a metallic paint finish for added drama.