

## Expanding Your Creativity With Faux-Painted Wallpaper

By William Lorimer, CFO, Stoney Brook Wallcoverings

Many faux artisans are discovering a new medium that has opened up new business and new creative possibilities for them. Believe it or not, the medium is not paint, but faux-painted wallpaper. At Stoney Brook Wallcoverings, we produce a hand-painted paper that can be used for torn-paper applications and much, much more.

Stoney Brook Wallcoverings is a member of the Stencil Artisans League Inc. In July, we attended our first SALI convention, held in San Diego, and received a wonderful response from artisans from all over the world. In September, we traveled to Manhattan in New York City for the Faux Expo, where we again received a tremendous response for our hand-painted faux paper.

By hand-painted, we truly mean that no machines are used in the creation of this truly handcrafted paper. We do not produce any stock material, which allows the client to tell us exactly what they want. Some of our papers have accents added to them such as specks, veining and leafing; any accent can be added, deleted or customized to meet the needs of the client. Currently we have approximately 100 colors in our portfolio. We can

also create custom colors and styles if the client cannot find what they are looking for in our standard collection, making our color selection virtually endless.

Many people would think that a wallcovering would be in direct competition to the professional artisan. However, as we found out many professional painters and artisans have either tried or still continue to paint their own paper. When we were in New York City, we meet two ladies from Arizona who have been painting paper themselves for years. They were so excited to see all the colors that we had to offer, and at such a reasonable price. They only had about six to eight different colors that they could offer their clients, and laughed about all the hard work that they had to go through to make the paper.

We always enjoy visiting with individuals who have painted their own paper. They have a true appreciation for the time, labor and room that it takes to make a faux-painted paper. They said that they have lost their garages to the production of paper and are excited about getting it back.

Many artisans, however, are apprehensive about purchasing a hand-painted paper. Artisans are very creative individuals and take great pride in using their creative juices to transform a plain white wall into a beautiful piece of artwork. At Stoney Brook Wallcovering, we try to be very

cognizant of the needs of professional artisans. We offer our paper as a way for them to expand their portfolios with our broad color selection as well as custom papers.

Michael Conroy, the founder of Stoney Brook Wallcoverings, was a professional painter who had been doing decorative painting for over 15 years. When he began making faux-painted paper and bringing it to his clients, he found that he could increase his sales by painting walls and hanging torn paper. He found that many of his clients wanted to have different looks throughout the house, and this was a way for him to pick up more rooms or walls within a house.

As an additional benefit, Mike quickly learned that applying paper was more profitable than painting walls. Faux finishing requires a lot of wall preparation, including masking, and base coating and can be quite messy. Faux finishing also requires many specialty tools and products. Depending on the technique used, decorative painting can be very labor-intensive and time-consuming, taking days to complete an entire room or even a simple wall.

Installers of Stoney Brook paper do not need to attend expensive schools to learn how to install our paper, and the tools required are minimal compared to a decorative painter. Stoney Brook Paper is very user-friendly.

Start and stop times can be dictated by the installer and not by working a wet edge of glaze or other mediums. Many faux paper applications are completed in one to two days.

At Stoney Brook Wallcoverings, we are very excited about working with professional artisans. They are very creative and find so many different uses for the paper. Each time we attend a trade show and get an opportunity to meet and visit with our installers, we hear of the all the different applications that they come up with. Here are just a few of the possibilities:

Torn Application—Applying the paper in torn pieces is the easiest and most common application. However, each artisan can leave his or her own personal touch by applying the torn pieces in a creative manner. Installation of torn pieces can be done in a number of different ways. Some installers may paste and hang the paper in an overlapping fashion, leaving corners protruding into another piece, while others installers may take more time to line up points to flow like fragmented stone. Both applications will look beautiful, but can carry a completely different look depending on the application. Tearing the paper into different sizes can also create a distinctively different look. One installer told us that they tore and hung large pieces below a chair rail, and smaller pieces above the chair rail.

Brown versus Black—Stoney Brook paper is painted on two different substrates. The majority of our papers are painted on a brown paper, and the rest on a black paper. We can customize, based on client preference. By using different colors of paper, the installer is able to achieve many different looks. Depending on the direction the paper is torn, or by simply pulling the paper apart, different looks can be achieved. By changing up the color of the paper, any of the applications listed can be used to create a completely different look.

Textured Surface—After proper wall preparation, Stoney Brook paper can be applied virtually over any surface including textured or damaged walls. It can also be applied over paneling or even previously wallpapered walls.

Harlequin Pattern—There are a couple of different ways to do a harlequin pattern. The simplest way is to paint the wall in a different color than the diamond pieces. Another way is to do two separate colors of diamonds in faux paper and use both colors to complete the room. The

harlequin pattern can be used over the entire wall or by placing the diamond pieces from edge to edge around the room to create a border.

Geometric Shapes—At Stoney Brook Wallcoverings, we can cut the pieces into geometric shapes to create a more contemporary look. Paper can be cut into diamonds, squares, circles, or triangles. Again each installer can take these pieces and create a look all his own. The pieces can be placed side by side, or they can be overlapped. The paper can also be cut into different sizes and overlapped, this works well with squares and rectangles.

Weaving—The faux paper can also be torn into long pieces and woven onto a wall, or be applied in pieces to create a woven look.

Panel installation—The paper can also be ordered untorn and hung in large panels, similar to traditional wallcoverings.

Pillars and Columns—There is no simpler or faster way to do pillars and columns than to apply torn paper. This will give the look of fragmented stone or marble pillars.

River Rock or Stone Walls—First start by painting the walls with a chosen grout color. Then tear the paper into shapes that resemble rock. Next apply the rock pieces to the wall so they do not touch to create the look of a rock wall. We also had an installer that cut the pieces into large blocks, to resemble a limestone wall. In this particular application, the installer began by taping grout lines for the blocks, then applied a drywall compound with a stipple brush to 1/8 thickness. Once the compound was dry, he then applied Guardz Draw-Tite over the stippled compound. Then he relaxed the paper using wallcovering paste, and applied Vinyl on Vinyl (VOV) to the wall and applied the paper using the stipple brush working the edges to create dimension.

Furniture—Faux-painted paper is so versatile that it can be applied to furniture. It has been applied to entire dressers, tables, and cabinet door faces.

Ceilings and Floors—Faux-painted paper is not only for the walls it can also be applied to ceiling and floors. Begin by pasting the paper to the floor, and then apply a few layers of water-based polyurethane to protect the finish.

Stenciling and Murals—Stencil artisans and muralists love painting on Stoney Brook paper. It makes a great palette for the artist. One of our clients had a muralist paint grapes and vines on the paper, as well as the different names of wines (Merlot, Chardonnay, Chenin Blanc, etc.) around the soffit in the kitchen.

Create your own Designs—The paper can be cut into different shapes and designs, such as flower petals, trees, clouds, sun, mountains or landscape. Or the pieces could be cut into shapes that resemble logs to create the look of a log cabin.

Wrinkled Paper—You can also apply paper in a wrinkle fashion similar to tissue paper application creating texture.

Glazes—While Stoney Brook paper does not need a topcoat; some artisans may want to add their personal flare to the wallcovering by adding a glazed coat to amplify the torn edges.

Home Décor Items—Items such as picture frames, vases, or even vinyl blinds can be covered with Stoney Brook paper, to tie a room together.

Stoney Brook Paper is an extremely versatile decorating product. The professional artisans will continue to come up with different uses for this completely unique product. Testing should be done with any application to assure proper adhesion of any product or to assure lifting of the paper does not occur. Individuals with questions should contact Stoney Brook paper for more information. Visit the Web site at [www.stoneybrookpaper.com](http://www.stoneybrookpaper.com) or call (866) 693-7625.