

# walls, windows & floors

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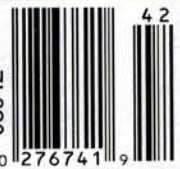
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Volume XIV, Number 2  
U.S. \$4.50  
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Display until  
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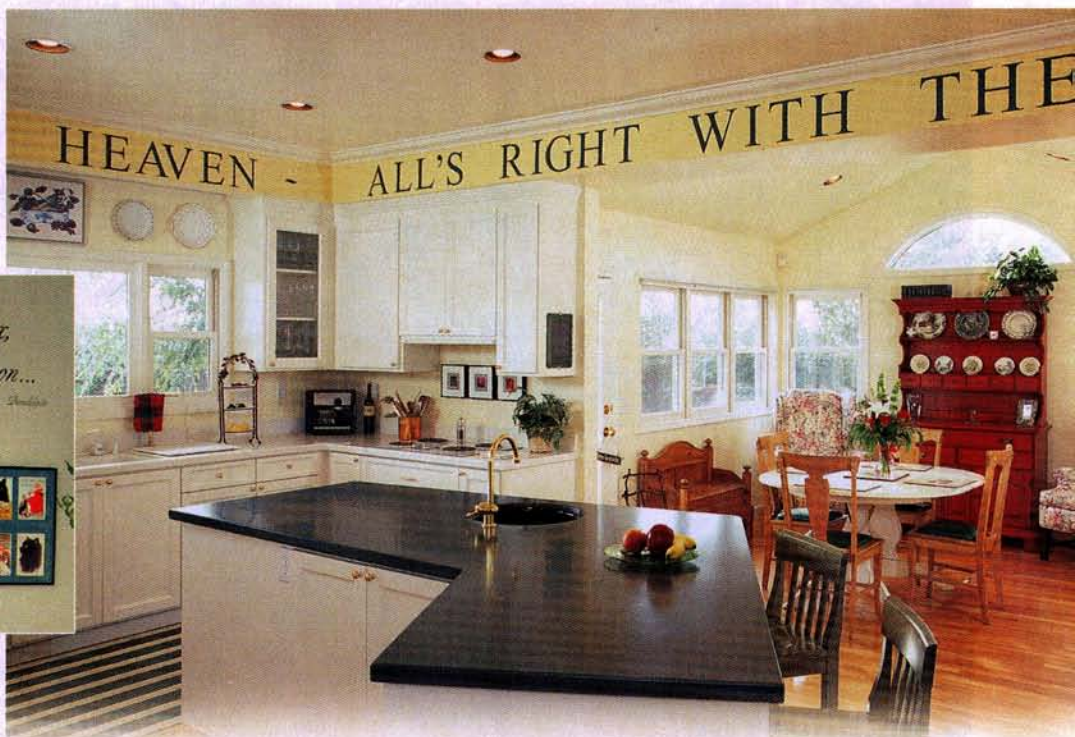


# Stenciling

A sponge-painted surface serves as the base for this 20×20-inch wallpaper pattern by Stencil Ease that automatically positions the palm trees in a random fashion.



**RIGHT and BELOW:** Making a bold statement is easy with techniques that allow you to dramatically decorate a wall with a favorite quote (both stencils shown, by The Mad Stencilist).



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tenciling is a decorative art form that never goes out of style. Decorative painters—and stencil manufacturers—continue to find ways to keep this centuries-old craft fresh with new and innovative techniques.

Take the idea of painting words on a wall. For years, they were stenciled—word by word, even letter by letter—by a painter working free-hand. Now any phrase, no matter the length, can be positioned and painted as a unit. “It can take any shape you want the words to take,” says Hugh Hoeger, co-owner of The Mad Stencilist in Diamond Springs, California, one of several companies that create lettering stencils. Because customers choose the words, type in the text and view it in different fonts, they can see exactly what it looks like and “each stencil is unique,” Hoeger adds.

Though this technique was originally geared to professional painters, Hoeger says 75 percent of his customers now are do-it-yourselfers. The self-adhesive vinyl stencils come with a protective backing and a cover that holds the letters in place.

Embossed stenciling is another technique gaining favor. By using a thick stencil and applying plaster

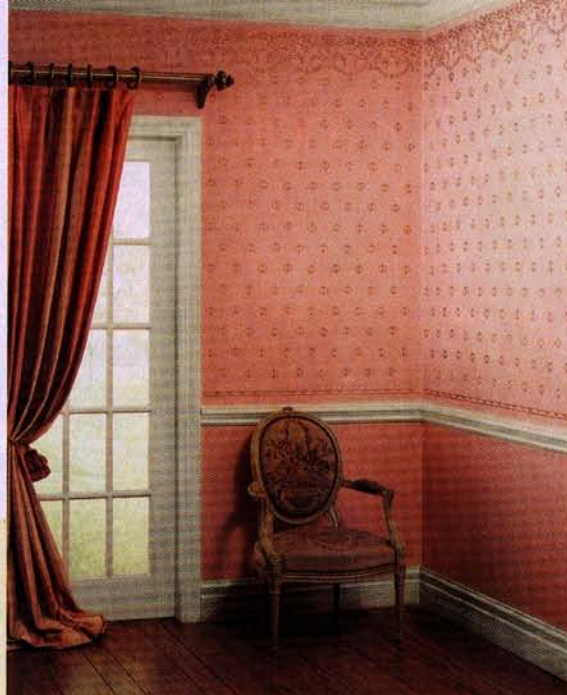
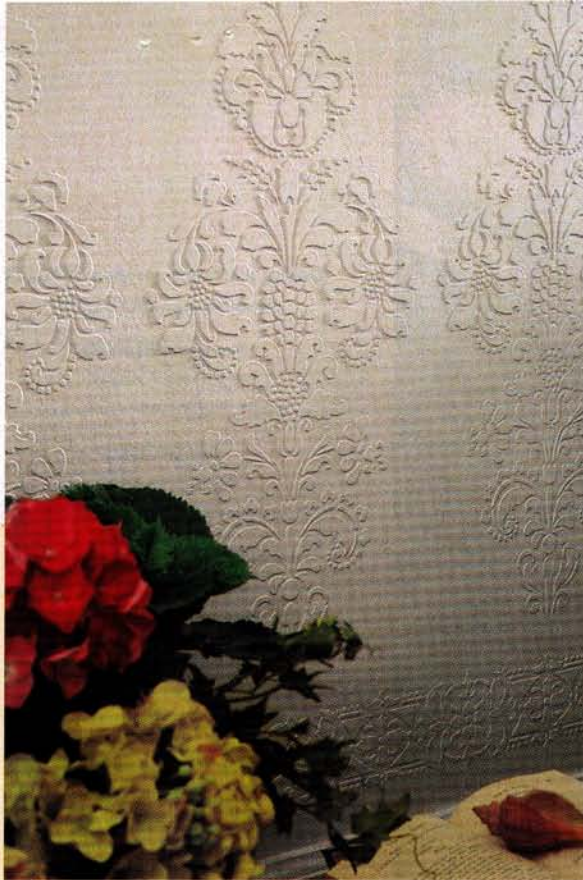
instead of paint, the stenciled design becomes three-dimensional. “Once the embossing is dry, you can refine it with sandpaper and enhance the shadings with paint or a glaze,” says Chris Bjorkeson, owner of Stencil Planet in Berkeley Heights, New Jersey.

The embossed effect can be smooth or textured depending on how the plaster is applied and how much is used. “If you can paint a room and handle a spatula, you can do this,” Bjorkeson says.

Melanie Royal, founder and creative director of Royal Design Studio in National City, California, thinks the emergence of special patterns on large-size stencils are making it easier to produce an all-over stencil pattern. Just be sure to preplan and mark all the registration points. Once that is accomplished, she says, “The rest is easy, mainly because the pattern is usually a single overlay and no special shading is necessary.”

“All-over patterns look best when incorporated with other decorative faux finishes and glazes,” says Royal who advises applying paint to the stencil with varying pressure to create a more “painterly” effect. In fact, adds Royal, stenciling is now so sophisticated that this art form is increasingly popular with interior designers and decorative painters.





**LEFT:** An embossed pattern by Royal Design Studio replicates the classic beauty of elaborate plaster work and adds depth to a flat wall. **ABOVE:** A set of laser-cut stencils, designed by Anna Griffin for Plaid's Stencil Decor line, is ideal for all-over stenciling with a vintage feel.

## Technique Tips

### EMBOSSSED STENCILS

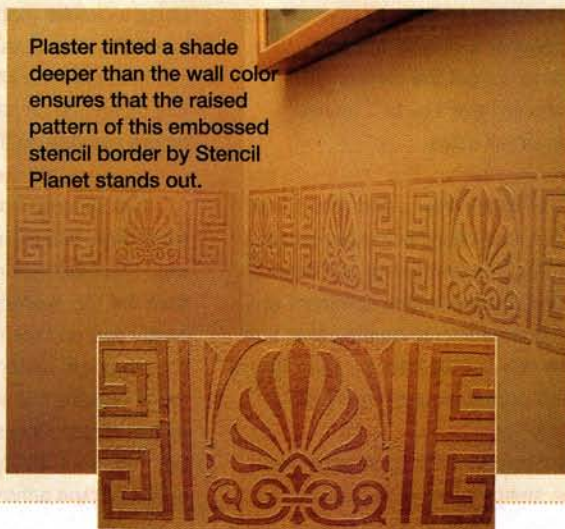
- Plan placement where light will show off the details and definition of the embossing.
- Mark the registration points of the stencil on the wall using a soft-lead pencil. Reposition and mark the stencil placement for the entire area to be embossed. Then plaster every other stencil position in a leap-frog fashion. When the plaster is dry, do the remaining stencils.
- Use both repositionable spray adhesive and painter's masking tape to hold stencils that will be coated with plaster.
- Apply the embossing material with light pressure.
- Hold the trowel or spatula parallel to the surface, and glide over the stencil like icing a cake.

### LETTERING STENCILS

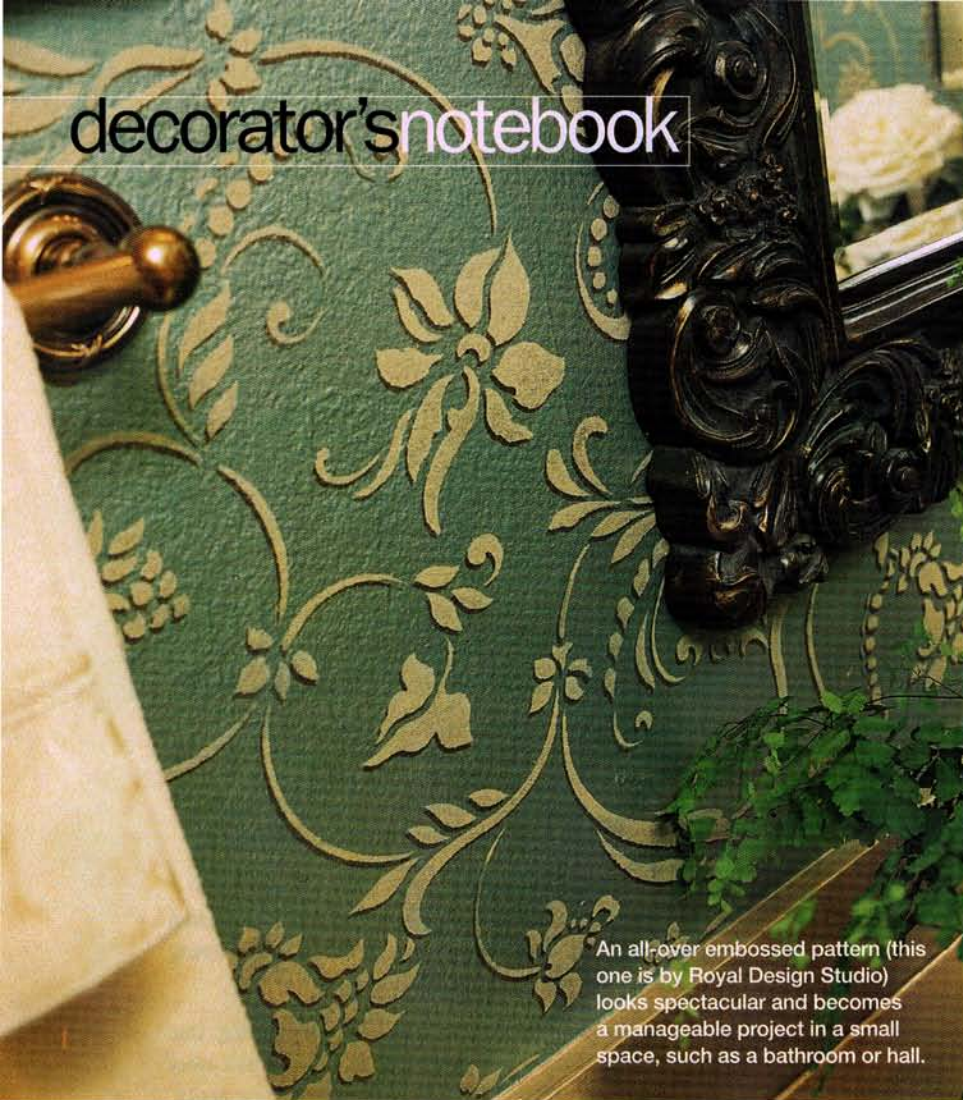
- Test the vinyl lettering adhesive on the surface to be stenciled to ensure easy removal.
- Use painter's masking tape along the top edge of the three-part stencil for initial positioning. The tape acts as a hinge, allowing the stencil to be flipped up so the waxed backing can be removed before pressing the self-adhesive lettering in place.
- Paint from the outside in using a very dry brush. Wet paint may seep under the vinyl lettering.

### ALL-OVER REPEAT STENCILS

- Mark registration points with a soft-lead pencil and use a bubble level to ensure a straight line. Continue repositioning until stencil placement for the entire area is marked.
- Start in the center of the dominant wall at the ceiling. Use repositionable spray adhesive to hold the stencil. Paint every other stencil placement; when dry, fill in remaining areas.
- Make a circular motion with a giant stipple brush to create a soft, painterly effect. Dip the tips of the brush in latex paint that has been mixed with a water-based glazing liquid. Dab the brush on terry toweling to off-load most of the paint and ensure painting with a very dry brush. Swirl the paint from the outside in.







An all-over embossed pattern (this one is by Royal Design Studio) looks spectacular and becomes a manageable project in a small space, such as a bathroom or hall.

## Make Your Own Wallpaper Pattern

**1 Find a simple circular rosette or daisy pattern** and enlarge it to 4 to 5 inches in diameter using a photocopier. Lay a sheet of acetate on top of the pattern and trace the outline with a fine-tip permanent marker. Place the acetate on several layers of newspaper or a cutting mat and use a craft knife to cut out the pattern. The pattern should have 1½ to 2 inches of acetate on all sides.

**2 Use a measuring tape and bubble level** to lightly draw a grid on the wall using a soft-lead pencil or gray watercolor pencil. Center the first line of grid squares at the vertical center of the dominant wall. The grid squares should be the same size as the diameter of the pattern. Start at the ceiling and extend around the corners.

**3 Lightly spray the back of the stencil** with repositionable spray adhesive. Place the stencil in the top square in the

center of the dominant wall, wrapping it at the ceiling. Dip just the tips of a good quality stencil brush into a dab of acrylic or stencil cream paint and swirl the brush on paper toweling to remove all excess paint. Using a circular motion, lightly rub the "dry" brush from the outside of the stencil to the inside to create a shaded effect. Practice this technique on paper first and test colors before painting on the wall.

**4 Remove the stencil and reposition it** two squares down. Continue in this every-other-one fashion to the bottom of the wall. Start the next row one square down from the top, working first to the right of the center line and then to the left, to create a checkerboard pattern. Continue around the room, bending the acetate into the corners as necessary. Occasionally wipe the paint from the front and back of the stencil and spray with the adhesive. ■

## Stenciling Sources

Online you'll find an abundance of designs and information:

### Designer Stencils

800-822-7836

[www.designerstencils.com](http://www.designerstencils.com)

### Jan Dressler

888-656-4515

[www.dresslerstencils.com](http://www.dresslerstencils.com)

### Heart of the Home Stencils

888-675-1695

[www.stencils4u.com](http://www.stencils4u.com)

### L.A. Stencilworks

877-989-0262

[www.lastencilworks.com](http://www.lastencilworks.com)

### The Mad Stencilist

888-882-6232

[www.madstencilist.com](http://www.madstencilist.com)

### Plaid

678-291-8100

[www.plaidonline.com](http://www.plaidonline.com)

### Royal Design Studio

800-747-9767

[www.royaldesignstudio.com](http://www.royaldesignstudio.com)

### Stencil Artisans League Incorporated (SALI)

505-865-9119

[www.sali.org](http://www.sali.org)

### Stencil Ease

800-334-1776

[www.stencil ease.com](http://www.stencil ease.com)

### Stenciled Interiors

302-234-2024

[www.stenciledinteriors.com](http://www.stenciledinteriors.com)

### Stencil Planet

877-836-2457

[www.stencilplanet.com](http://www.stencilplanet.com)

### Stencils Online

877-863-5227

[www.stencilsonline.com](http://www.stencilsonline.com)

### Victoria Larsen Home Decor

425-258-6812

[www.victorialarsen.com](http://www.victorialarsen.com)

### Wall to Wall Stencils

317-598-0029

[www.walltowallstencils.com](http://www.walltowallstencils.com)