

Metal ceiling panels give walls a new look

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Copley News Service

Q. The walls in the kitchen of our kitchen house are in such terrible shape that I don't know what to do with them. They're too rugged for paint, and I'm afraid wallpaper would just look lumpy and awful. Do you know of something new that would look good and cover all that cracked plaster?

A. What's "new" for walls is an idea that's been around since the last century, when it was more likely to show up on the ceiling. Tin panels, stamped to look like carved or textured plaster, were popular decorative coverups for plain ceilings (you know how the Victorians loved red patterns everywhere). In addition, the metal provided a highly effective fireproofing.

Thanks largely to the current craze of nostalgia in decorating, metal ceilings are back in style. Today, they're made of tin-plated steel, and they've come back on the walls, as you see in the kitchen we show here.

In this case, the panels have been left their natural tin color for a protective coat of polyurethane. Other options include brass, copper, chrome and painted panels. Or you can paint any color you want (use a latex-based paint) to create a subtle texture.

Designers at Shanker Industries, the New York manufacturer of these panels, will also custom paint the more elaborate



designs, creating multicolored patterns that would have gladdened many a Victorian heart. Another interesting tidbit about Shanker: The company has been in business since 1896 and still uses its original steel dies to stamp panels on the same 65-ton power press that has been in service since 1928.

So, in effect, you're buying the real old thing, just a generation or so removed.

For more details, contact Shanker Industries at 3435 Lawson Blvd., Oceanside, N.Y. 11572, or call (516) 766-4477.

Q. Even though I am really ready for something new, the idea that my old carpet will just rot in a landfill somewhere for years and years is actually keeping me from redecorating. I am not from this country; at home, we didn't have enough in the first place to be so wasteful.

Why doesn't someone think of something to do with old carpet that is not in such good shape?

A. Somebody has — or is at least working on it. DuPont, the

company that invented nylon, is now trying to invent a way to turn old nylon carpets into new ones through a remarkable recycling program.

If you turn in your used carpet — it has to be nylon — DuPont will collect, shred, chop and pulverize it to obtain material that can be processed into new carpet fiber or other products.

According to an article in *Floor Covering Weekly*, a trade publication, 100 pounds of carpet will yield about 40 pounds of nylon and about 10 pounds of polypropylene.

What happens to the other 50

pounds? Don't ask; it's mostly dirt from the old carpet. That very idea might be enough to send you shopping for something new and clean.

Remember, this program is still under development, and your carpet dealer may not be a participant. Still, ask. It will help soothe your conscience.

Rose Bennett Gilbert is the co-author of "Hampton Style" and associate editor of *Country Decorating Ideas*. Questions may be sent to her at Copley News Service, P.O. Box 190, San Diego, Calif. 92112. Items of general interest might be included in future columns.

