

# wallpaper

**W**hen we closed on our house a couple of years ago, our real estate agent presented us with a wallpaper steamer. At the time, I found it an offbeat gift — one of those home products that parks itself in the garage to house spiders and attract dust.

Now I think that electric machine is magic. In addition to leaving us fixtures to replace, hardwood floors to uncover, rooms to be painted and curtains to be disposed of, the former residents of our house really liked wallpaper.

A late 1950s ranch, our house was constructed much more sturdily than the paper-thin rush jobs that you see in modern subdivisions. But the house also carries with it a particular aesthetic that simply doesn't pass the tasteful test — lime-green laminate countertops to match the lime-green linoleum, wickedly ugly paneling, window coverings only a grandma could love, and some soft-pink bathroom tile better suited for Barbie's dreamhouse.

The room for our youngest son, Quinn, took the *Who Chose That?* Award for at least three layers of wallpaper that seemed an unlikely cross between rustic farmhouse and psychedelic vomit. There was floral print in the pink bathroom, tiresome taupe in the hallway and living room, and more floral, which

REMOVING THIS DECORATING ABOMINATION CAN BE BOTH TEDIOUS

AND REWARDING **BY MARK LUCE**



covered a travel sticker motif, in the other bathroom.

The thing about wallpaper is that most folks just paper over the old stuff, which is great for them but not the poor sap who doesn't think electric canary yellow fleur-de-lis will do the trick for a toddler's room. The adhesives used for wallpaper, especially in those mid-century years, seems more powerful than any force in the universe.

I would steam and steam until my hands burned (gloves are for the weak). I scraped with all varieties of putty knives, hopelessly searching for the best techniques, changing up my approach and generally questioning why in God's name we even bought the stupid house.

Wallpaper removal is not for the impatient. It takes touch, perseverance and an arsenal of chemicals, as well as rotating perforation tools, fabric softener and that trusty friend the wallpaper steamer.

The biggest pain remains that all the

adhesives and papers are of different textures and makeups. With wallpaper that carries more of a slickness, using a perforation tool, followed by a hearty sponge bath of DIF, a splash of fabric softener and hot water seems to do the trick. For the initial layer, the steamer is a must. For tight corners or thin strips where the steamer won't reach, it's a spray bottle with scalding water and a narrow putty knife.

No matter which method you choose, the mess you make will be staggering. Clumps of old adhesive on your shirt, in the hairs of your arm, on your hat, shoes, all over the trim and all over the floor if you forget to put down a dropcloth.

All of that pain aside, I can't overstate the sheer joy I feel when finished with a removal job. Imagine angels singing and shafts of light framing a cold beer — and for a moment I forget about all the gouges in the walls that would have to be spackled, the tedium of taping and the painting that was still left to do.

Happy scraping.

*Mark Luce lives in Kansas City, Mo., where he head faked home-improvement projects all summer until the demand for a kitchen floor became deafening.*

**GOLFDOM** (ISSN 1526-4270) is published monthly (12 issues per year) by Questex Media Group, Inc., 306 W Michigan Street, Suite 200, Duluth, MN 55802. Corporate office: 275 Grove St., Suite 2-130, Newton, MA 02466. Accounting, Advertising, Production and Circulation offices: 306 W. Michigan St., Suite 200 Duluth, MN 55802-1610. Subscription rates: One year \$39 (U.S. and possessions), \$59 (Canada and Mexico) and \$89 (all other countries). Air expedited service is available in countries outside the U.S. and Canada for an additional \$75 per year. Current issue single copies (prepaid only) \$5 (U.S. and possessions), \$7 (Canada and Mexico) and \$8 (all other countries). Back issues (if available, prepaid only) \$10 (U.S. and possessions), \$14 (Canada and Mexico) and \$16 (all other countries); add \$6.50 per order shipping and handling for both current and back issue purchases. Periodicals postage paid at Duluth MN 55806 and additional mailing offices.

POSTMASTER: Please send address changes to GOLFDOM, P.O. Box 5057, Brentwood, TN 37024-5057. Canadian G.S.T. Number: 840033278RT0001, Publications Mail Agreement number 40017597. Printed in the U.S.A.

Copyright 2007 by Questex Media Group, Inc. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopy, recording, or any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher. Authorization to photocopy items for internal or personal use, or the internal or personal use of specific clients, is granted by Questex Media for libraries and other users registered with the Copyright Clearance Center, 222 Rosewood Dr., Danvers, MA 01923, phone 978-750-8400, fax 978-750-4470. Call for copying beyond that permitted by Sections 107 or 108 of the U.S. Copyright Law. For those not registered with the CCC, send permission request to questexpermissions@reprintbuyer.com or 800-494-9051, ext 100.