

# Luxe up your condo

► Classical decorative finishes are an excellent way to convert your plain condo walls and ceilings into a rich bold new experience



Decorative finishes cover a wide range, from fabrics to paper, paints, foils, aluminum and gold leaf, and organic finishes, and will dramatically transform the look of your dwelling without a great amount of construction and may permanently increase the value of your investment.

Toronto's older homes were built with solid plaster walls and adorned with cast ornamental embellishments.

The trades persons who worked here some 40 to 60 years ago are long gone. Modern day drywall has replaced plastering, which has become a lost art.

Despite this, there are a few highly-skilled special-

ists that do this type of work, such as Toronto's Peter Allerton.

"The plaster trade — all the skills of ornamental plaster, moulding and casting — are mostly lost, so it is something that I think has tremendous opportunities. The fellows I know who do it are doing very well."

Allerton has worked with some of Toronto's top designers, such as Brian Gluckstein and J.F. Brennan.

"A lot of it has to do with direction from a designer and what I'm able to use is my experience and technical skill to help support their view or for something new, something they're not that familiar with," he says.

A true artisan will know the subtle differences be-



► Silver leaf applied to a condo entrance ceiling.

tween a Moroccan and Italian style, for instance.

"In Morocco they just trowel up and down, that's all they do," explains Allerton. "In Italy, they trowel from right-to-left. It's a different way that it looks.

And it's a different type of plaster."

Marble plaster makes for a versatile and luxurious finish in condos, and can be applied over regular drywall.

"Fine marble dust is what they use for Venetian plaster and it can be dull or it can be very shiny," explains Allerton.



► A library with "pickled" white panelling and a black oak table.

Some finishes can be quite effective in modern condos and create a timeless, old-world charm. A strié, for example, is an old French and English traditional finish. It's a dragged glaze application that yields a natural striped texture.

"We just did a 23rd floor condo at the Renaissance on Cumberland. Before there was regular paint, but

with the plaster and the wax, it made a huge difference in terms of the character of the room," says Allerton.

Imagine taking your ordinary fireplace and turning it into marble. "Faux marble is really big. There's a French patina that I did for Gluckstein. It looks like an old wood, what they call faux bois."

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