

The Design Craze That's Here to Stay

NewsUSA

(NU) - Shiplap - the wall treatment favored by popular home improvement shows - is filling Pinterest boards and continues to top the to-do lists of today's savvy DIYers. Even high-end homebuilders are incorporating it into their upmarket designs. And when crafting a custom shiplap wall, the pros are choosing cypress because of its practicality and stunning good looks.



Photo by JM Designer Properties, LLC

Shiplap Defined

Shiplap has long been a popular siding pattern for the exterior of homes. Nowadays, design pros are bringing it indoors as paneling to create a rustic, farmhouse vibe, or to highlight contemporary flair.

"Typically, what homeowners refer to as shiplap is simply run-of-the-mill boards nailed on a wall, with a small gap separating them," says Zack Rickman of the Southern Cypress Manufacturers Association, www.CypressInfo.org.

"Actually, shiplap is a board pattern with L-shaped notches on the top and bottom edges. When installed, the boards overlap with a gap, presenting a more authentic, high-end look. And while the size of the gap is adjustable - depending on homeowner preference - nickel gap is arguably the most popular size with a six- or eight-inch shiplap board."

Stylish Solutions

When designing a room, homebuilder John Moleski, JM Designer Properties of Hilton Head Island, South Carolina, says homeowners are drawn to shiplap because of its clean, crisp, modern lines, and the versatility it offers.

"Creative use of shiplap can enhance an entire room," Moleski says.

"Make an accent wall to contrast with surrounding walls. Install it horizontally, and the long lines of the boards will visually stretch a room. Or go vertical with it to add perceived height to the ceiling."

While home improvement stores are stocked with a wide variety of wood paneling products, Moleski prefers working with cypress.

"Solid cypress and shiplap make a perfect match," he explains. "Not only is the wood local to my area and affordable, the wood's intriguing grain pattern makes it remarkably beautiful."

For budget-conscious homeowners, Moleski offers this cost-saving tip: "As an alternative to using select grade cypress, consider rough-sawn no.2 grade and install it with the smooth side facing out," he says. "It'll achieve a similar look with some added character at a lower cost."

Finishing Flexibility

Fred Lewers, Palm West Home Builders in Palm Coast, Florida, says options abound when it comes to selecting a finish for a cypress shiplap wall.

"Cypress can be finished in a variety of ways," Lewers says. "Stain it to highlight its natural grain and texture, or paint it to add a pop of color. You also can use a whitewashing technique for a truly unique appearance. My preference is to leave it natural, and let the wood's beauty shine."

Regardless of your desired look, Rickman offers one piece of important finishing advice. "Look for an oil-based stain, or paint and primer system," he says.

"Water-based products sit on the surface and are prone to cracking and peeling. Oil-based products soak into the wood, providing superior protection and performance, especially in wet zones like bathrooms."

Take it from the professionals: Shiplap is not just a design craze; it's here to stay.

For ideas on building a cypress shiplap wall, visit www.CypressInfo.org.