

# A page from the past

Decoupage paper creates a unique room



**NO FEAR:** Interior designer David Stone created slithering walls for photographer Joe Aker's bathroom.

By **MARY VUONG**  
HOME WRITER

**D**ON'T grab the insect spray just yet. David Morello's love for gardening has crept into a bathroom of his home, where the walls teem with bugs, from cicadas and beetles to grasshoppers and dragonflies.

It's a room like no other, with walls papered in pages from *Cabinet of Natural Curiosities* (Taschen, \$200, 636 pp.) by Albertus Seba. Morello finds the room "uplifting, inspiring and motivational."

The custom wall treatment is a signature of interior designer David Stone. About 20 years ago, Stone created his first decoupage room by hanging pages of Impressionist art from used books. He was inspired by European print rooms popular in the 18th century, when people would cut and glue engravings to the walls.

In recent years, Stone and a team of two artists have papered bathrooms and even an entry hall in different themes, such as sea life, butterflies or snakes. Though different

in imagery, they all share a sophisticated sensibility – no pictures of puppies or babies, please.

"It's not appropriate everywhere," Stone says. "This works best in small bathrooms and powder rooms ... where you can take the time to look at what's there."

It takes at least 2½ days to complete a bathroom at a cost of \$3,000-\$4,000, including materials. Stone and his team prep the walls as if hanging wallpaper. They attach the pages with wallpaper paste and let them dry for a couple of days before applying a polyurethane coat, preferably in a matte finish.

For Morello's bathroom, Stone pulled pages of insect illustrations from 2½ copies of Seba's heavy, 18th-century

catalog reproduction. Because the honeybee is central to Morello's company logo, Stone gave it prominent placement. Walking sticks, crickets and praying mantises also are featured.

"I get inspired every time I look at them," Morello says.

Other than my garden, where I can find the same colors of nature, it's my favorite space."

Stone filled another client's bathroom with imagery of colorful snakes. It is just as dramatic, if not shocking.

"It's an attention getter," says the owner, photographer Joe Aker. Visitors either love the room or – if they fear snakes – they don't.

Aker is not fond of the slithering reptiles, but he thinks the space is "absolutely fabulous" and complements his contemporary art.

Although such rooms are labor intensive to create, Stone enjoys how

unique each one looks, even when pages repeat.

With a patterned wallpaper, "there'd be a great deal of repetition," Stone notes.

Morello left the image selection to his designer, he says, except for one. "I drew the line at the spider world," he says, because he knew that his mother, who hates spiders, would visit.

[mary.vuong@chron.com](mailto:mary.vuong@chron.com)

**DETAILS:**  
From *Cabinet of Natural Curiosities*.

