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# HOME

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Contributing Editor

BUILDING A  
BETTER HOME



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## SHIPLAP: TREND OR HERE TO STAY?

*Believe it or not, shiplap was not  
invented by HGTV's JoAnna Gaines.*

But, for the attention and acclaim the designer's uber-popular home remodeling show has given this distinctive paneling, it might as well have been! JoAnna loves shiplap and her frequent use of it has perhaps single-handedly launched a national love and desire for the ubiquitous pine boards. It has also launched a thousand questions from my clients. They want to know: Is shiplap just another new trend? Isn't it only for farmhouse designs? Will it be too busy in my space? And, my personal favorite: It's just some painted boards – how expensive could it be? My answer to all these questions is usually not what homeowners expect.

First of all, shiplap might be newly popular, but it is not in any way new. Up until







recently, it was not an aesthetic choice, but rather a practical one. Historically, shiplap offered a simple, relatively cost effective, weather-resistant design making it a go-to for structures like cabins, farmhouses and coastal cottages. While shiplap is widely assumed to be a more rustic style choice, it actually crosses many different architectural genres, from the most casual to the most refined aesthetic.

You can find it on everything from a restored farmhouse to an extremely polished Ralph Lauren or Sir Edwin Lutyens inspired design. In more upscale designs, it adds a welcome touch of warmth and texture.

Shiplap's durability makes it a practical choice for today's homes. I love using it in mudrooms, hallways, bathrooms, kid's rooms, and stairwells – pretty much any place in a home that's likely to take a beating. Drywall just doesn't stand up to grimy kid hands, dog drool, toothpaste globs, or indoor baseballs! Shiplap wipes clean in an instant and is pretty tough to put a hole in.

There are a ton of different shiplap choices from different types of wood or MDF to varying sizes in width and length and just as many assorted applications. Longer boards with straight runs tend to look a bit more streamlined and refined, while

narrower, pieced together boards provide that sought-after rustic farmhouse look. Poplar and MDF varieties have a flawless, upscale look, whereas pine gives you those traditional knotholes and checking.

Alas, shiplap is not cheap. Specialty ceiling treatments aside, I have found shiplap to be the most expensive kind of trim work. It requires a lot of work to get it right – there's the sanding, and the prepping and the time-consuming installation. You're buying a lot of wood, and that wood is almost always custom-milled to order. And you need high-quality (read, expensive) paint for good coverage. There are ways to bring the price down, but it is still not a cheap option.

I personally have a longtime love for shiplap, and I believe that its beauty, durability and timelessness make it worth every penny of added cost. So, thank you, JoAnna, for starting the shiplap craze, and may it long continue!◆

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