

# HOMES

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## Ask Jeffrey: Teal this look



**JEFFREY FISHER** | 18/11/13 8:00 AM ET  
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It is possible to copy this sexy lacquered wall without using a pro painter (but start those arm workouts now).

Eric Piasecki

*Hi Jeffrey,*

*My family and I moved into a new four-bedroom house last year. Because of the initial costs, we haven't done anything since moving in. We've been saving and I'm ready to get started. I'd like to start with my dining room. We love to entertain and I want a transformation. I've noticed a lot of high-gloss walls in decor magazines lately and think this is a look I'd like. What do you think of them and is this something you would recommend?*

*Thank you, Emily*

Hi Emily,

I love, love, love the shiny wall treatments you are drawn to. These walls — shiny enough for you to apply your makeup by — are referred to as lacquered. They bring drama and glamour to any room but work especially well in dining rooms where candlelight and glistening chandeliers reflect on the liquid-like surfaces.

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True lacquered walls are composed of resin and solvents and must be spray applied. As a fresh coat is applied over a dry one, the resin in the dry coat dissolves, creating a flawless surface with a smooth gleam. However, the setup for spraying, the multiple coats

required and the extremely high solvent odour make actual lacquering difficult to commit to.

The dining room wall in the photo above is not a true lacquer finish. New York designer Gideon Mendelson ([mendelsongroupinc.com](http://mendelsongroupinc.com)) achieved this reflective finish with the application of three coats of Benjamin Moore's Advance product in a high-gloss finish.

Oil-based paints are no longer available for purchase because of the hazardous fumes and limited means of disposal. Mr. Mendelson says Advance has the application and performance of traditional oil paint but in a water-borne formula, and that an authentic lacquer finish is much more difficult to achieve and requires a lot more between-coats sanding to reach a perfect finish. So, Emily, I would stick with a lacquered appearance rather than the real thing.

Doing all the prep work required for a glimmering surface is the key to its success. Your walls need to be in pristine condition to achieve the look you see in magazines. With a flashlight held parallel to the wall, comb every inch of your walls looking for dents or nail holes that need to be filled. If the walls are in really rough shape clean it up with a skim coat of drywall mud (then sand well!) to create a smooth painting surface.

From your email, I assume your house is a new-build; if so, it's wise to wait for it to settle before attempting lacquer-like walls. In the first year after a new build, hairline cracks appear in the drywall as the house settles through seasonal fluctuations in humidity and temperature, and you do not want this happening to your beautiful new walls. As you bought your house last year, I'm hoping any imperfections have already appeared and can be repaired.

## **To obtain the smoothest finish possible, you will ideally spray the paint on because even the finest sponge rollers will leave a slightly dimpled appearance**

To obtain the smoothest finish possible, you will ideally spray the paint on because even the finest sponge rollers will leave a slightly dimpled appearance. Lightly sand between each coat of paint (expect to do at least three coats) to smoothe out any bumps. If you're doing this project yourself, you may choose to use a roller and up the sanding component. And if you want even more shine, you can finish with a coat of high-gloss water-based clear varnish.

Lacquered walls look the most dramatic in dark or bold colours. I've seen great success with navy, red and green. Benjamin Moore's Bella Blue is the colour used in the photo above; I'm drawn to it because it reminds me of the Caribbean ocean. I wouldn't go to the trouble of lacquering unless you're prepared to make a statement with colour — in my opinion, there's no sense giving a beige wall that treatment.

I hope I haven't scared you away from lacquering your dining room walls. Even though it's a lot more work than basic painting, the decorative payoff is so much greater. I think this could be the perfect starting point for you decorating your new home.

Good luck, Emily.

Jeffrey

*Send your design question to [askjeffreyyfisher@gmail.com](mailto:askjeffreyyfisher@gmail.com).*