

Medallions are Forever!

Or that's what they say about diamonds...

These jewels of the ceiling have been around for a long time and are the focal point of interior design. In the early homes of distinction, they were hand crafted in plaster then painted or foiled with gold in only the palaces of the elite. As an applied delicate ceiling motif, it took artisans hundreds of hours to create and install these gems by hand.



Finally, a less complicated idea allowed the medallion to be cast from plaster as a whole piece and actually be plastered into place on the ceiling as one unit. This allowed for the mass production of this magnificent art form making it available to the average home at a fraction of the original cost of the hand crafted masterpieces.

Technical progress and urbanization resulted in more people having medallions in their own homes. Ceiling heights were lower than that of the larger palaces of royalty, thus the chandeliers were hung closer to the ceiling. This became a problem particularly with the proximity of the candle flame to the ceiling above. The whole piece plaster medallion became an excellent, economical way to create a non-combustible fire barrier between the ceiling and the open flames. It even allowed for wall paper to adorn a ceiling with less fear of fire. The introduction of gas lamps, although safer, still required a heat and fire barrier just as the candles did in earlier times.

As the electric age dawned, medallions became less of a functional entity and more of an anchor for ceiling decoration. Now available to all, through mass production, these gems of ceiling decor were economical and easy to install. Plaster requires professional installation, so producers have made them from lite weight ArchPolymer™. This synthetic wood installs with glue and looks like detailed plaster at a fraction of the cost.

The myriad of new material even allows the medallions to be made from synthetic stone, ie StoneMold™, a stone composite material as seen here.



As a major element of interior design, medallions have evolved from delicate rococo spider lines, to the heavier acanthus leaves, to the elegant lines of the Federal period, to the modern waves of Art Deco. Today they are the focal point of interest in a room, create an illusion of height, and are a major element setting the style of the room.

At Martin RichardsDesign™ we try to incorporate the various traditional elements in a more modern context. The medallion above, IPMRD8002, combines the traditional egg and dart molding with acanthus leaves in a symmetrical layout. The four baguettes enhance the three dimensional effect. This wonderful design distributed by Imperial Productions has three similar matching sizes. For those that are looking for the modernism that was

expressed in the Art Deco period, we created IPMRD8012 or IPMRD8014 oval. The graduated ovals are smooth and can appeal to many modern collections.



The ceiling medallion is a truly brilliant gem that has evolved from pure decoration, to fire protector, to the epicenter of a room's style. There is a collection of over 300 medallions on-line for you to review at www.imperialproduction.com

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