

THIS & THAT

by
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My wife, Barbara, has a very well developed positive instinct for making the home we live in both visually appealing and very livable. While I really enjoy the results of her talents, I don't have anywhere near her ability to make it happen. She can pick a wall paper I never tire of.

Which brings me to the time I decided to redecorate a bathroom one time while she was out of town on one of her nomadic journeys. Yep, I replaced the wallpaper, the flooring, and the towel rods, etc. in that bathroom. I picked an orange floral pattern for the wallpaper. I was proud of my effort. I did it myself.

When she came home, I told her I had a surprise, and showed her my handy work.

We lived with that ugly mess for about six months. It wasn't but a week after I did it that I found every time I walk into that orange monster it grated on me. Barbara never said a negative thing about what I had done She didn't have to. I could see it myself. She fixed it. I was happy again.

So, I decided to help you fix it if you want to. Oh no, not home decorating problems. I'm talking about computer wallpaper problems. No Sarah Jean, not the kind of wallpaper sold at paint stores. I'm talking about computer monitor background picture wallpaper.

When I first fired up my Windows XP computer, the picture that covered the

background had the Microsoft Windows XP logo showing in the lower right corner of a textured blue field. I reacted to it like I did to my beautiful (not) orange bathroom wallpaper. This, I said, has got to go.

Time for just a little bit of background information before we learn how to change our computer wallpaper.

Background pictures used for that purpose are not unique. They can be any picture you have saved on your computer's hard drive in the JPG (most popular, and the one digital cameras use), or BMP (an older picture format). IMPORTANT You do have know where the one you want to use is stored (which folder it's in), and what its name is.

If that's a problem, as you will see in a minute, Microsoft provides us with a nice selection of backgrounds that are easy to see and use. You can always pick one of those. I like to use a wider range of pictures...most of them I take with my camera or copy from the Internet. Remember, I'm a lousy decorator, so I change my backgrounds often.

Okay then, now we know that any JPG or BMP image works.

By the way, this goes for both XP and VISTA, however, the names and work areas are different between those two systems. Ah, progress. I'll explain both; first XP.

XP Wallpaper

Power up your computer. Locate a spot on the screen that's showing your current wallpaper image (basically anywhere without a shortcut on it). Point your mouse pointer at that spot and click the RIGHT mouse button once. A menu will pop up. Point at the word *Properties* at the bottom of the list, and click your left mouse button once.

You should see a dialogue window with *Display Properties* showing on its title bar. Just below the title bar you should see a set of

five tabs. *Themes* has been picked for you. You want the *Desktop* tab. Mouse point at *Desktop* and click the LEFT mouse button once.

You are now looking at the work screen used to select and change your wallpaper. I'm going to tell you about some, but not all of what you can do with it. I've got to leave something for you to play around with on your own.

First, notice the graphic of the monitor. It's displaying your current background. Below that is an area labeled *Background:*. A list of background names shows there (the one *selected* will have a darker highlight behind the letters). A vertical slide bar shows to the right of the list. That's because there are more backgrounds available than can be shown in the limited space provided. You can use your mouse to scroll up and down through the list.

You can view any of these pictures just by clicking left on its name in the list. Try it. This action in itself will not change your monitor's background immediately. If you like what you pick, You can click left on the *OK* button at the bottom. That will make the change. If you click on *Apply*, the change is made, but the Display Properties window remains too.

If you want to use one of your personal pictures, you select it by using the *Browse* button. The *Browse* button takes you to the standard file open work window. You will have to locate the folder your picture is in, and click on its name when you find it.

VISTA Wallpaper

Power up your computer. Locate a spot on the screen that's showing your current wallpaper image (basically anywhere without a shortcut on it). Point your mouse pointer at that spot and click the RIGHT mouse button once. A menu will pop up. Point at the word

Personalize at the bottom of the list, and click your LEFT mouse button once.

You should see a list of items headed *Personalize appearance and sounds*. Mouse point at and LEFT click once on the *Desktop Background* item name.

You should see a work window showing thumbnail views of several background images. The one you are currently viewing should have a faint highlight frame around it.

There are more choices to pick from than can be shown in the viewing area all at once, so you can use the vertical scroll bar to view them all.

Pick a different background image and LEFT click once on it. You might have to minimize the work window to see how it looks on you monitor. To do this, you must LEFT click once on the minimize button on the title bar. Click on the Display Background button on the Taskbar to recover your view of the work area.

You can select your own picture via the *Browse* button. The *Browse* button takes you to the standard file *Open* work window. You will have to locate the folder your picture is in, and click on its name when you find it.

To make the change complete, LEFT click once on the OK button at the bottom right of the work area.

Now you too are a wallpaper decorator...of the computer type.