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Hue Are You?

BY Roberta Frank February 2006

How to choose the right palette for your pad

Color is more than just an aesthetic statement. It's an expression of your personality and lifestyle.

Think of your house as blank canvas, ready for painting.

Capturing the perfect shade can be inspirational. You know when it feels right for a specific space, and the overall design theme just makes sense.

The Interior Design Society, Triangle East Chapter, offers the following advice on choosing and working with color:

Start by selecting three colors and an accent, and then use various shades of those throughout the house.

Paint serves as the backdrop; the other hues are for fabrics, furniture and window treatments.

In the next room, switch it up and use one of the other colors for paint, and the two remaining for furniture, etc.

For example, say you chose gold, green and brick. If you paint the family room gold, go with green and brick for the upholstery and window treatments. Then, in the adjacent room, use brick paint, with green and gold on the furniture and accessories.

Create a general plan for the entire house, even if you can only work on one room at a time.

With the popularity of today's open floor plans and soaring ceilings, one of the most perplexing issues is where color should start and stop.

In an open area, select a neutral shade that will warm the space and complement your other choices.

For an adjoining room, consider a faux finish on top of that same neutral. That will offer variety while maintaining continuity.

Some tried-and-true neutrals include: Sherwin Williams "Kilim Beige," "Believable Buff" and "Ivoire" as well as Benjamin Moore "Monroe Bisque," "Bleeker Beige," and "Shaker Beige."

If you prefer to use greens and blues as your neutrals, consider Sherwin Williams "Grasslands" and "Palladian Blue," or Benjamin Moore "Saybrook Sage."

If you're not even sure what colors you'll like in your home, look to your closet for inspiration.

What colors do you wear? Obviously, those are the shades that speak to your senses and make you feel good.

Or, check out what's going on in the marketplace. Trends often influence what consumers see and buy in the retail stores.

They can help spark your imagination, with a preview of what's to come and how to incorporate a new look into your home.

Visit your local paint store to see the latest color combinations.

The way light enters a room affects your choice of color as well as how the color looks in the room.

Before you decide, walk through your house in the morning, afternoon and evening. Notice how much light is reflected through each room and where the sun rises and sets.

Also, take into account the time of day you use the room. As you collect samples, review them during this time. You want to use the color that pleases you most when you're there most.

Interior Design Society
Triangle East Chapter

Ready-Made Shades

Need even more direction?

Here are some color types and what styles go best:

- Fun and playful, bright and bold-

Spice, green, gold and berry.

Looks best with heavily embellished fabrics, large beads, and other big colors. Try country and contemporary styles mixed with antiques.

- Feminine -

Cosmetic neutrals, mixed with metallics, grays, dusty purples, turquoise and teal.

Looks best with traditional furniture redesigned with sleek lines, luxurious fabrics and glittering throw pillows.

- Soft and Sensual -

Mocha, teals and soft blues.

Looks best with embroidered silks and sheer fabrics and counterbalances heavy, masculine furniture and overstuffed upholstery.