

finding your perfect match

Despite the profusion of home-renovation programmes on TV, many of us still lack the confidence to mix and match colours in our own houses. Here are some suggestions to help you move away from cream and beige.

The home colours people tend to select are similar to those that they feel comfortable wearing, says colour designer Peta Tearle of Peta Tearle Colour and Design Studio.

“When you’ve spent years wearing certain colour combinations, it stands to reason that you’d feel uncomfortable putting together a home palette that deviates too much from this,” she points out.

While home-decorating shades take their cues directly from the latest fashion runway colours, there’s one important difference, says Peta. They have more staying power, moving in and out of fashion at a slower rate. With a home décor, too, you can’t change the colour of the major components as frequently or easily as you can your wardrobe.

Re-upholstering your lounge suite and installing new curtains and carpet is an expensive way to update the look of a room, but changing the wall colour is not – especially if it’s a feature room you’re repainting. As any designer will tell you, paint is your most versatile medium and can easily be changed when you feel the need for a new look. It only takes a few litres to create a feature area that can be repainted to suit your mood, the season, or a change in decorating plans.

The experts suggest allocating one space as a permanent feature and changing it regularly as your tastes and colour trends develop. This allows you to experiment with colours. You can always repaint if you don’t like the first shade you choose!

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Successful colour schemes have one thing in common, and that’s balance. When selecting shades, try to use no more than two or three principal colours, with touches of other accent colours to lift the scheme. You may prefer to keep to one colour type (a monochromatic scheme) or select from related colours (a harmonious scheme) to ensure balance. Another way to ensure your décor is visually interesting, but works well, is to establish a good balance of light, mid and dark tones.

Resene
Wellywood 



Quick colour tips:

The same colour in different gloss levels will look different. A flat paint will make the colour look darker and murkier than a gloss paint, which will make it look cleaner and brighter.

Sometimes it is better to pick slightly different variations of colours for different surfaces rather than exact colour matches.

Play with colour to accentuate or hide room features. Pick warm and/or bold colours to make an area stand out, or a light or neutral colour to help something blend in.

colour-mixing success

sharing values

All colours have a value, which signifies their depth or light reflectivity. One approach to colour matching is to use two or three choices of the same value or depth. Resene colour charts have a light-reflectance value (expressed as an RV percentage) for each colour sample. Black has a reflectance value of 0%, while white is 100%. By selecting colours with similar RVs, you can create a calm, harmonious mood. See Resene colour charts for RVs.

opposites attract

Another way to combine colours is by mixing contrasting tones. Take two colours on opposite sides of the colour wheel – for example, blue and orange. This works best if one colour is dominant and the other serves as a contrast. You can also use a split complementary scheme by taking a colour either side of the orange, such as a yellow-toned orange and a red orange.

side by side

Alternatively, you could add interest to a room by using a group of related colours – those that sit next to each other on the colour wheel, such as orange, red and brick red, or blue, green and lilac.

“They’re a lot less agitating than contrasting colours,” says Peta.

Varying the value and intensity of colours is recommended.

three times better

Triadic schemes use three colours that are equidistant on the colour wheel, for example: red orange, yellow green and blue violet. Use one as the dominant colour and the other two as accents.

white base

Pastels appeal to a lot of people because they’re easy to use in a colour scheme. These are pure colours with the addition of white. This common element means that you can successfully combine any pastels into a colour scheme. The addition of clean white also makes most pastels appear soft and fresh.

When it comes to using colour, there are no real fool-proof recipes, says Peta.

“The wonderful thing about colour is the opportunity to experiment and incorporate an element of surprise.”



using testpots

Lighting and other room colours will influence the look of a particular shade, so trial your chosen options using a Resene testpot on the area you’re planning to paint. Apply two coats to a large sheet of white paper, leaving a border around it so the colour is not influenced by anything else. When the paint is dry, pin it to the wall in several different areas of the room and view it at different times of the day in natural and artificial light.

Clothing and handbags: Solo Design

Chairs: Design Denmark

Shoes: Stylist’s own

Resene paints used: Belladonna (purple), Wellywood (green) and Hyperactive (orange)

colour cues for 2006

- > Colour influences include a desire for more relaxed living, which sees colours lighten and easy-to-live-with pastels become popular.
- > Brights are being replaced by coral pink and tea-rose pink. While red remains popular, it is being overshadowed by pink and orange.
- > Brown is losing its orange base and becoming cleaner.
- > Greens will become darker and more saturated, edging towards mints and away from acidic hues.
- > Browns are being mixed with persimmons and fern greens for an eco-inspired look, or with vibrant blues and reds for an invigorating edge.
- > Clay orange, cream, soft blue and brown create a feeling of comfort.
- > A botanical, organic feel is reflected in greens infused with new blue teals.
- > Black and white will be seen teamed with pale yellows and amber.
- > A new palette pairing of soft yellow greens with fresh softened aquas, pinks and pale yellows provides a delicate, feminine combination. **H**



colour tips and tricks

- > If you want to use dark colours, use a flat or low-sheen paint, such as Resene Zylone SpaceCote or Resene Zylone Sheen, which will minimise surface imperfections.
- > When planning a colour scheme, consider the adjacent rooms.
- > Matt surfaces absorb the light, and appear darker and deeper than glossy surfaces, which reflect light and make a room appear larger.

When creating mood in a room, consider the following: pale and pastel blues are relaxing, and will make a room appear larger. Yellows, oranges and reds encourage activity and brighten a room. Greens create a soothing, harmonious atmosphere, while red is an appetite stimulator, making it a popular choice for dining rooms.