

# HomeLifeStyle

## Designing a Colorful World

Local interior design experts offer suggestions for choosing paint colors for one's home.

By MARILYN CAMPBELL  
THE CONNECTION

Choosing paint for one's home can be a daunting task. Colors often look different on paint chips and fan decks than they do on interior walls. What are some of the secrets to making the right choices? Local interior designers offer suggestions.

Jean P. Freeman, professor of interior design at Marymount University, says considering a room's lighting is a good starting point. "What is the lighting in the room, sunlight from the exterior [and] overhead lighting?" she asks. "The amount of light would assist in determining how dark or light the walls could be. To brighten the room obviously lighter colors are preferred; but to add excitement bright colors with enough light would be a great choice."

Before painting an entire room, look at the paint samples in a variety of lighting conditions, advises Hope Hassell, specialty designer at Sun Design in Burke. "Natural light has a tendency to wash out colors that otherwise look good in artificial light," she said. "Always look at the paint sample throughout the day so you can see what it looks like in morning sun versus afternoon sun versus at night when there is no natural light in the space."

Artificial light also impacts the way paint looks in a room. "Fluorescent light can make a cream or beige paint take on a yellow hue," said Hassell. "Other colors that are in the space are also a huge factor when selecting a paint. Colors can often enhance and affect the paint around them. Make sure to apply small areas of paint near the different colors in the room, whether it is the trim around the door or the wood stain of the floor or cabinetry."

Marika Meyer of Marika Meyer Interiors in Bethesda encourages homeowners to consider the mood that they'd like to create in a room when selecting paint. "It's important to figure out the overall feel of the space, such as warm or cool," she said. "What kind of energy do you want to get out of a space? For example, family rooms often have a lot of energy and therefore, people tend to use brighter colors. In the living room, consider a softer palette for a retreat-type setting. Deciding on a room's energy and tone are good starting points."

Susan Hergenrather, assistant professor of interior design at Marymount University agrees that paint colors help create a room's mood. "Think about the different mood of a red room versus a blue room," she said. "Most people have a palette that they are instinctively drawn to, for example violet and yellow green. Look at the colors you already have in your home and build your palettes around the things that you love whether it is your favorite sofa or your mother's antique carpet."

Hergenrather also suggests simplicity. "Always use a color scheme. For example, complimentary colors work well for almost everyone," she said. "Pick up a color wheel and use it. Too many colors make an in-



PHOTO BY ANGIE SECHINGER

Interior designer Marika Meyer believes homeowners should decide on the energy and tone they want to create in a room before choosing a paint color. Meyer selected soft hues to create a warm feel in this McLean library.

terior too complex. Keep it simple. Also remember there are many colors in a space, not just the paint colors. Don't forget to consider the color of the floor as one of the colors in the room."

Test before buying is another suggestion that Hergenrather offers. "Always site test colors. Manufacturers have sample pots for this purpose," she said. "Put the colors on your walls in several different places and live with them for a few days before making the final decision."

**WHAT ARE THE CURRENT TRENDS** in paint colors? "For interiors, I'm using a lot of grays," said Meyer. "Previously, for more than a decade, beiges were popular, but now gray tones are in. Taupes are also popular right now in terms of paint colors."

Hassel said, "We are experiencing that people are starting to be more adventurous with bright colors that make a statement. Whether it is painting one wall a peacock green for an accent in a living room or painting the front door a flame orange, bright, saturated colors are being used on the inside and outside of homes."

Freeman said that intensity in color is popular now. "Bright colors with flare or pastels that seem to represent ice cream colors are all part of the current trends," she said. "Neither should be dull, but both should be more intense. Pick up the colors of your favorite piece of upholstery and see the types being played, one against the other. Opposites do attract in colors and everyday life."

For those with historic homes who want to recreate the hues of a forgone era, designers say that many manufacturers now have palettes that replicate historic colors. "I particularly like Farrow and Ball but they are expensive," said Hergenrather. "However, with paint, as with anything, you get what you pay for. If red is a favorite of yours use a high quality paint such as Benjamin Moore Aura ... great stuff that really covers."

Even pitches for the baseball team. Even will Anselm's next fall to in II baseball.



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