



Choosing Colour

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Tips, tricks and great advice for choosing colour for your home from Renovate magazine's very own interior design expert.

Could you ever imagine laying bright pink carpet in your home? I couldn't do it, but I certainly admired the Melbourne home owner who did. I met her, and she wore a bright orange coat, black trousers, shiny green beads and red glasses. Her choice of carpet colour was an extension of her personality.

Our homes are also an expression of our person. While our clothes reflect the time of the year, so too can the interiors of our homes. Making small seasonal changes alters the whole feel of a room and provides the opportunity to display long-lost treasures and make them the centre of attention for a while.

In Europe, decor changes with the season and it is common to have a set of autumn/winter drapes and furniture slip covers, and another set for spring/summer. It's a lovely idea however the cost can be prohibitive. Another option is to simply rearrange the furniture to change the focus of a room, then add new or different accessories to add warmth. Cushions, throws, rugs, linen and flowers are all relatively affordable, and if you use warm colours – reds, oranges and yellows – most rooms can be made to feel cosy. For a deeper feeling of comfort add in autumn's rich reds, shades of burnt citrus and luxuriant browns. These strong earthy tones will mix well with creamy whites, mellow yellows and pale golds.

However, when it comes to choosing the interior wall colour for your home, your choice will stem from your personal likes and dislikes. There are no right or wrong answers. However, by painting your interior walls in a

neutral palette, you will have greater freedom to inject colour through your choice of art, upholstery fabric, cushions, rugs and other accessories. The neutral background of the walls will act rather like foundation on a face, before makeup is applied. To use colour successfully within a room, it is important to understand how different colours work together. Purchase a Colour Wheel from a painting and decorating store.

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A Colour Wheel arranges colour schemes into families, and is a useful tool to help you put your colour scheme together. Firstly, select the main colour you want to work with. Next, choose the type of colour scheme you want to create: monochromatic, harmonious or complementary.

If you are nervous about using colour, it's best to stick to monochromatic and harmonious colour schemes. The monochromatic colour scheme uses any shade, tint, or tone of one colour and is the easiest to put together. The key to success in using it is to have a mixture of textures, for example, shiny and matt, in the proportion of two-thirds and one-third. Harmonious colours sit side by side on the colour wheel, and rest comfortably together.

Those who are visually stimulated

by colour will enjoy using a complementary colour scheme. As complementary colours oppose each other, they are lively and exciting. Classic examples include yellow and violet, and green and red. The key to success when using complementary colours is to use two-thirds of the key colour, and one-third of its complement.

Nature has many examples of the complementary colour scheme; flowers like irises and pansies are a good example as they display an excellent balance and proportion of complementary colours. Interestingly, nature has also conditioned us to expect the darkest colour at our feet, medium shades at eye level, and lighter colours above our heads, and it's a safe rule to apply to our homes.

Once your colour selection is narrowed down, paint your options onto a piece of A3 card. Move the card around your home to see how it looks in different areas and lights throughout the day. Also test it out to see what it looks like under artificial light and in different types of weather. While you're at it, it's well worth checking out your choice of curtain fabric and carpet too.

Ultimately it's important to trust your instinct and express your individuality. You may decide to choose bright wall colours. Just take your time and don't be afraid to mix and match colours until you get them right. All the best rooms I know say something about the owners' personality. They may not be the latest style, but if they are put together with love and care, they are completely refreshing. www.donnawhite.co.nz 