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HOMES FROM LONDON
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INTERIOR DESIGNERS AND LEADING COLOURISTS SHARE THEIR INSIGHTS ON HOW TO FIND THE PERFECT COLOUR COMBINATIONS FOR DIFFERENT EFFECTS



Interior designer Lucy Barlow mixed bottle green with a candy pink for a joyful look

saturation point

Our signature colour combination is pink and green, we love the vibrancy and boldness that it brings. You can do it in a chic, muted way as they might have done in the Georgian era or you can turn up the saturation and suddenly it looks young and fun and almost tropical. I think this works particularly well in a bathroom where you can be braver with colour and inject bright pure glossiness with tiles. If you surround yourself with colours that make you feel happy your home will be your sanctuary. This bathroom (above) in Notting Hill is one of my favourites; it is bright, joyful and uplifting. **Lucy Barlow, interior designer, Barlow & Barlow**

a relative approach

I was taught using the Josef Albers method from his famous tome *Interaction of Color* (originally published in 1963); it introduced his principles of colour relativity, intensity and temperature. The theory is also that shades will react differently against others and everyone sees colour differently, which is always useful to bear in mind in interiors when you are layering different shades and tones. We work to the clients' preferences (usually they are either a beige or a grey person) and then bring in complementary colours (or slightly-off complementary colours) of the famous colour wheel. **Eleanora Cunietti, Carden Cunietti**

decorating

in harmony

There are no hard and fast rules about what colours sit together but we can learn a huge amount from nature where colours harmonise and work naturally. Colours never need to match; they just need to sit happily together. Look at how colours react with each other as some colours will recede while others demand your attention. When using different colours in adjoining rooms, they should both have the same tonal weight. For example, rich India Yellow in one room sits harmoniously alongside leaden Down Pipe in the next space because neither feels more important than the other.

Joa Studholme, colour curator, Farrow & Ball

maximum effect

I wanted to push boundaries when it came to the colour combinations I used at [the Parisian hotel] Les Deux Gares and challenge the idea that guests always want to stay in bland boxes. However, I don't believe in throwing a rainbow of different colours at a room; there needs to be balance and control. So, we have an olive-green bedroom with orange woodwork, and a violet one with emerald woodwork. The ceilings, however, are painted a caramel tan colour, and the carpets feature a geometric black and beige pattern. The tension between the black and the warm neutrals and the punchy tones is what makes the rooms exciting, and, I hope, elegant instead of overly sugary.

Luke Edward Hall, designer and artist

changing the wheel

When working up an interior scheme, the most reliable way to combine colours in harmony is to use the colour wheel. It's a time-honoured trick, seen in a historic Robert Adam interior as well as contemporary fashion – think of Gucci's red and green. But while it's a very useful rule for colour pairing, it does not mean that discordant notes are a no-no. As with cooking, so with colour making, I believe: a little off-beat spice can be a real benefit, but the important work is to season the dish and for this I rely on earth

“ Colours never need to match; they just need to sit happily together ”

Farrow & Ball's India Yellow sits happily against Down Pipe as they have the same tonal weight



To balance these strong colours, Luke Edward Hall introduced subtle hints of black

Daghy Thurmman-Moe teamed restful Belgian Wilderness and Steel Blue by Pure & Original

pigments in the same way that a chef relies on salt and pepper.
Edward Bulmer, owner, Edward Bulmer Natural Paint

warming notes

Focus on choosing specific colours for the atmosphere you wish to create in a room, rather than current trends. For example, the kitchen is often the hub of the home and exudes energy and activity, so it's easy to opt for bolder pairings such as Harley Green and Tea with Florence – these look great alongside natural wooden furniture and gold hardware. We are seeing a real shift away from the cold-toned greys that have been so popular recently, moving to neutral shades that have an inherent warmth to them, such as Mushroom, Joanna or Rolling Fog.
Ruth Mottershead, creative director, Little Greene

compare and contrast

Colour pairing is essential when creating a tranquil and serene environment. Usually we tend to paint the skirting and doors in a different colour from the wall to create definition and to add interest to the room. For me, there are no rules, it is more about how the colour combinations make you feel – I've seen combinations that I would never have dreamt of pairing but that look brilliant. The only thing I won't do is pair brilliant white with other colours; I find it is too harsh and cold, especially in the UK where the light is grey. If I use white, I always add some of my favourite pigments like raw and burnt umber or yellow ochre to achieve warmth and depth and, ultimately, to add more visual interest.
Francesca Wezel, founder, Francesca's Paints

natural tones

The colours that we concentrate best in are the 'base colours' of nature but adapted to indoor lighting. So paler nuances of blue and green increase focus and help concentration so they are ideal for working environments such as home offices – this is particularly effective when using paint made from natural pigments. Other elements that create a good area to work in, and also introduce harmonious colours into a space, are green plants (which increase your ability to focus and also boost the immune system) and an abundance of natural materials, which has the power to lower both stress levels and blood pressure when you touch them.
Daghy Thurmman-Moe, creative director, KOI Colour Studio



Decorator Libby Lord used Francesca's Paints' Rudranath Temple with Giacomo's Cement for a serene yet bright scheme