

Bricks & Mortar



Househunting season

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INTERIORS

The future is aubergine, but grey power remains

Redecorating this weekend? The next big thing in paint is a warm and natural shade, reports Claire Carponen

If you're a fan of monochrome and industrial chic, brace yourself. The colour grey, a trend that has dominated this decade, is no longer cool. At least, that's what some interior designers and design fans are saying — but it will probably take a while before it filters down to the high street and the rest of us follow suit.

The great thing about grey is that it is easy to use and it goes with most other colours. So, what's going to replace it? The colour that's tipped to be big next year is similar to taupe — a colour not dissimilar to grey, it must be noted — but is warmer, darker and can be used as a neutral: it's a kind of pinky aubergine. Mhairi Coyle, the interior designer, explains: "It does the same thing as grey, it creates a heavy background, but it is warmer. You can use it with any colour and they can be quite punchy. It goes



Francesca's Paints offer two examples of this season's most fashionable shade: Bossington Pebble and Sedgemoor — the latter is featured above, in a contemporary kitchen

with green, navy blue, purple, red, gold and cream." Coyle adds: "The finish is also very important. It has to be a flat oil paint which has a chalky plaster finish, rather than egg shell or anything with a slight sheen." Francesca's Paints, an eco paint company which has 194 hand-mixed

colours, has two examples of this shade: Bossington Pebble and Sedgemoor. Farrow & Ball has Pelt and Mahogany while Dulux has Spicy Sandalwood, which features in its autumn/winter 2014/2015 trend palette. The shift from cool to warm colours has been happening for a while. Greys



Fresh outlook: bright and bold colours can give new life to shades of grey

and silvers are gradually being replaced by richer shades and warm metallics, such as bronze, gold and rose gold and brass. Dulux's colour of 2015 is a copper-orange shade called Copper Blush and the company's autumn/winter range, called Big Nature + Small Me, is inspired by sun-scorched desert landscapes. Rebecca Williamson, senior colour design and content manager at Dulux, says: "The colour palette captures

the sun-scorched feel of the Arizona desert; vast and intimidating yet strikingly beautiful."

If you are looking for design inspiration, look at the refurbished, hipster-chic Georgian town houses in east London. The aesthetic is gritty, urban minimalism meets heritage style, so you might get a room with elegant wood panelling decorated with vintage furniture and objects from flea markets. You could also take cues from Australian skincare brand Aesop: the tinted brown bottles look like something you would find in an old pharmacy yet the prescription-style labels are printed with contemporary writing.

Marianne Shillingford, the creative director at Dulux, says: "Mineral colours, from the complex neutrals to robust glowing hues, have been developing as strong trends in colour over the past few years. In 2014 we saw a rich teal with the characteristics of oxidised copper and for 2015 that layer of oxidation is removed to reveal the beautiful glowing metal beneath. On the horizon of gutsy colour we see rich smoky teal giving way to warmer tones of copper and the sultry colours of a parched natural landscape."



Pair grey with vibrant colours as in this Barcelona flat designed by David Kohn and Mosaics Martí, above. Farrow & Ball's Mahogany shade, on the table below, is its version of aubergine

However, most people are still wedded to neutrals. Farrow & Ball say that crisp, white tones such as Pointing, Wimbourne White and All White are some of its most popular paints, although there has been a shift towards grey-based neutrals like Cornforth White. If you can't stay away from grey, but you are looking for new ideas, take hints from Abigail Ahern, an interior designer, on how to use a darker shade of grey to dramatic effect. Or check out Arkitecture.com, a newly-launched design website. Its features an image of an elegant Barcelona apartment with pale grey walls and cement tiles — created by the UK architect David Kohn and Mosaics Martí — that fade from

green to red. If you are bored with neutrals, you could try pastels.

Dulux's highest-selling pastel green is called Willow Tree. Williamson says: "Recently we've also begun to see a movement towards pastel greens. Nature-inspired colours are a popular alternative to neutrals, creams and whites as they offer a tranquil quality and are easy to co-ordinate and create a colour scheme." Last year it launched a shade called Mint Macaroon as a response to the trend for mint greens. It has proved to be a popular contemporary pastel shade.

If you don't like following trends but are looking for something new, observe Coyle's golden rule: never go with primary colours or plain white. "They generally look cheap," she says. "More unusual colours, colours that you can't find very easily, will give your room a bespoke look," she says.