

HOME *by* design™

HOME | GARDEN | STYLE

APRIL | MAY | 2003

5 MAGNIFICENT GARDENS and their inspirational stories

MAKING COLOR WORK
in your home

Comfort Food
with a twist



THE WONDER OF COLOR

Making it work in your home

WRITTEN BY MELISSA GALT | PHOTOGRAPHY BY ROBERT THIEN

Color! It is often the first design element that a homeowner considers in the decorating scheme. It is also the easiest and most cost effective way to make a dramatic change in any interior. It affects our moods, our look, our health, and even our success. We use colors to describe emotions and our state of mind, “feeling blue?,” “seeing red?,” “looking a bit green?” So read on to find out more about how to make the most of your favorite hues and get the scoop on their real meaning.



All colors can run hot or cold depending on their base, yellow or blue. Many of our associations with color are historically and culturally based. Not sure what you really like? Check out your closet, chances are you tend to wear colors you enjoy and they are also good options for your interior, possibly in different hues.

The guidelines for selecting colors include using test boards or wall areas of at least two feet by three feet in two dry coats. You'll need a larger test area if it is a darker color. Not even the pros select from those one inch chips in paint decks! Check the color morning, noon, and night with lamp light, and daylight for a true effect. Selecting the right finish is as

important as choosing the best color. Lighter colors are best in an eggshell finish because it allows for easy maintenance and limited touch up. Darker, richer colors need a satin or semi-gloss finish to really bring out the depth and avoid chalking. Ceilings can be in flat, but do need to be tinted. White is definitely out. White won't show off your architectural trim. Consider a warm neutral like bone, or in children's rooms and sunrooms a robin's egg blue.

Color is dramatically affected by light, and in fact the same color can look completely different on each wall in a room depending on the light and shadow at play. Most can learn



their geographic room orientation without a compass, just pay attention to where the sun rises and sets in relation to each room. Northern and Eastern light is much harsher, brighter and bluer. It exaggerates blues, greens, and purple tones, and balances warmer shades. While Southern and Western light is richer, yellower, and mellower and will literally make a room feel several degrees warmer without any true change in the thermostat. Homes are often oriented to have a kitchen facing east, to catch the morning light, while a dining room may have a Western exposure that would feel hot in the afternoon but at night when used most often is quite comfortable. This is just the tip of the palette, with millions of combinations possible. When looking for a starting point, try working with a rug, starting at the bottom, or a piece of favorite artwork, starting at the top. This will effectively provide parameters to establish a scheme, certainly changeable later. Most of all have fun with color! Next we'll explore the meanings of the most popular used colors in today's interiors. ▶



EXCITEMENT

Ever wonder why so many dining rooms are burgundy?? Burgundy is a derivative of red, which has been proven to stimulate your appetite and raise your heart rate. For the same reasons and more, many restaurants, especially Chinese, Italian, and Mexican and fast food chains know it can make you spend more money, and lose track of time, all while eating more. On a diet? Don't paint your kitchen red. Looking for a good's night's sleep? Keep red out of the bedroom, it doesn't promote rest.

CREATIVITY

Instead consider the purple family, from lavender to aubergine, purple is known to slow the heart rate, and encourage dreaming, certainly an advantage in a bedroom. On the other hand, it is also a teenage favorite for promoting daydreaming, and creativity, if the kids aren't studying enough or sleeping excessively and have a lot of purple in sight, maybe a change is in order.

CALMNESS

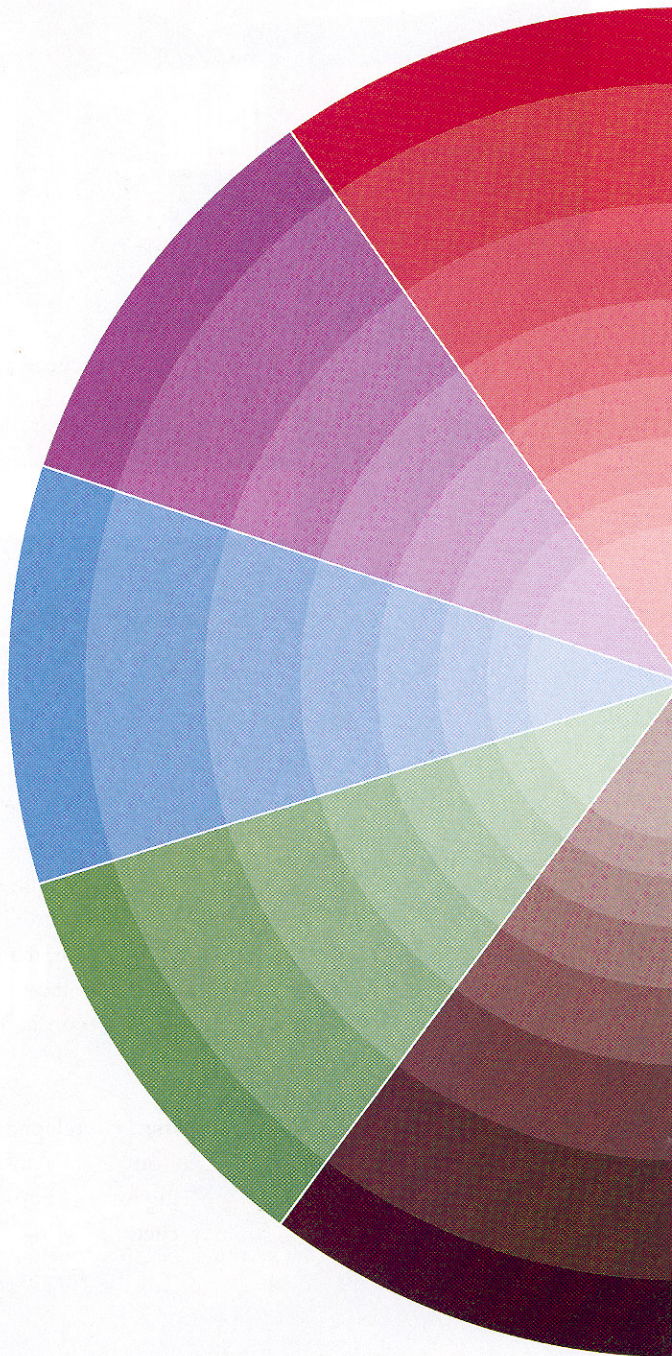
Blue and green are the most universally accepted colors, because they are found in nature. Blue is one of the most challenging colors to select for an interior, but can be used to great effect on ceilings, for a sky appearance, or even in indigo for a night time feeling. It promotes calmness and trust. Remember the expression "true blue?"

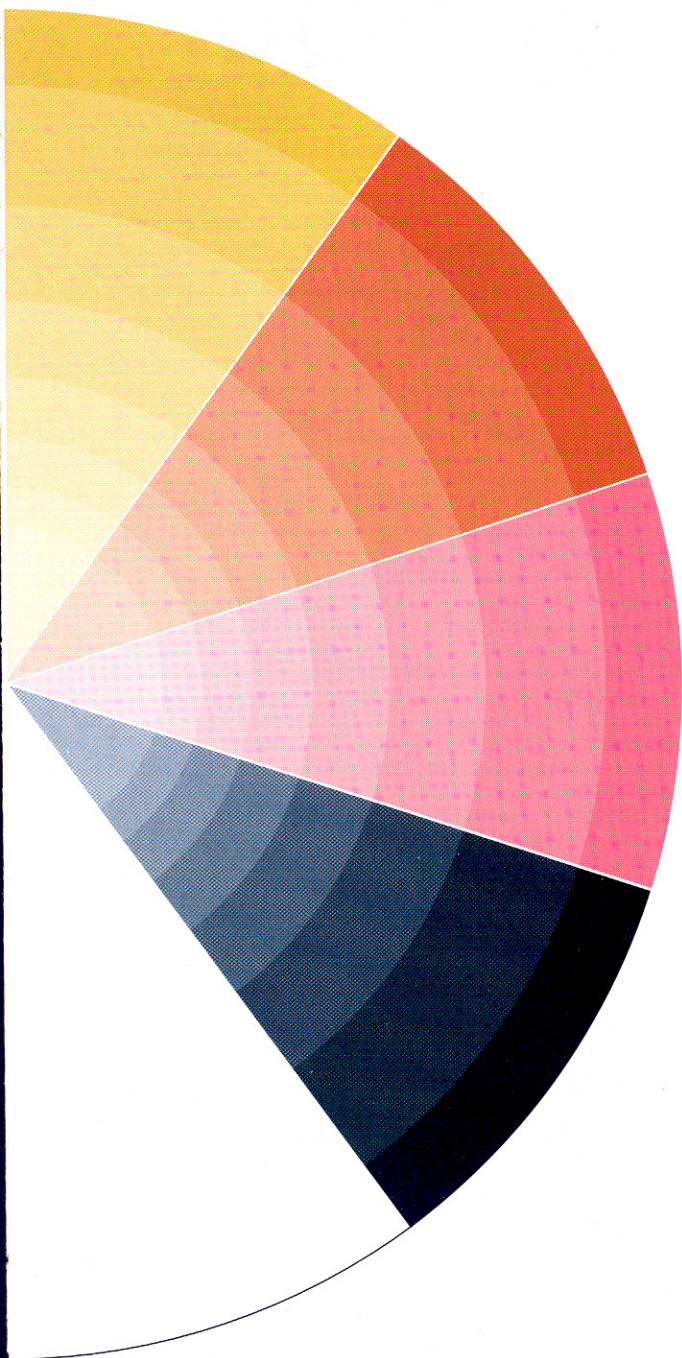
RENEWAL

Green is truly the new neutral, especially in moss, sage, and khaki. It gives the illusion of bringing the great outdoors, in, and is highly livable over long periods of time. It also complements every other color well, and is said to generate a feeling of re-growth, renewal, and rejuvenation. Green is also a great example of it's all in a name! Many will remember the days of avocado and harvest gold. We have seen a real resurgence of these colors in the last five years.

WARM

When you want to use a brown, the choice is chocolate or mud. Food monikers make it all delicious. Brown, in fact, has been enjoying tremendous popularity in recent years. It is more interesting than beige, and it is warm and reliable. (Yes, UPS did know what they were doing!) Brown is a wonderful accent to green, purple, orange, and even pink. Mocha, espresso, latte and more are all showing up in homes as often as Starbucks.





Yellow gives the illusion of sun and is a wonderful option for dark spaces, back hallways or any windowless room. It can get too bright if not balanced with a bit of black in the mix. Studies have shown babies to cry more in a yellow room, than any other color, (full strength of course). Butter cream is always easy on the eyes, but often electric yellow will prove irritating over long periods of time, much as we associate yellow with caution and slowing down in daily life. Yellow visually, is also known to promote memory skills. Yes, legal pads are yellow for a reason!!

SUNSHINE

Orange is indicative of affordability and is said to make us laugh. It also is considered to encourage learning and can be used in classrooms. Peach is still passé, but orange is enjoying a resurgence as tangerine, coral, Hermes orange, Cimarron and paprika in conjunction with browns or pinks most often.

LAUGH

Pink, isn't just for little girl's rooms anymore, but can be found in bedrooms, baths, and living rooms leaning toward inviting and romantic rose, quiet cameo blush, orange-tinged salmon and more. Pink is often considered a soothing color, once used regularly in beauty salons. Many can recall when baked goods came in pink boxes, stimulating our desire for sugar. Think of Baskin Robbins, and Dunkin Donuts! Need to give yourself and your interior a boost?? Try pink light bulbs, they soften the glow subtly, and you may find yourself getting more complements on your appearance!

ROMANCE

Black with its inherent associations with elegance, and money is often best in small doses. A gleamy black lacquer tray, a sleek black leather bench, perhaps a cozy black chenille throw, all can add that touch of drama to the right interior. A black dining table, with brass or nickel wheel accents, and upholstered chairs establishes an air of formality.

ELEGANCE

White indicates independence and a free spiritedness. It is best used when an interior enjoys an exception quality of natural light, such as the desert, or island living. Otherwise it tends to look like primer and you are waiting for color! White doesn't have to be boring, but it needs texture to make it work, and a willingness to keep it clean. White can be beautiful but grungy is not!

FREE SPIRIT