

Decorating with Color ...

Your Best Design Tool

Here you will learn the basics of color theory, which will give you the understanding you need to feel confident in choosing color for your home. Color is one of the most important tools at your disposal. Use it wisely and color can;

- visually change the proportions of a room
- create a mood
- make a room feel cool or warm
- link areas in your home

With all of these attributes it is easy to see why color is so important in your decorating project. Enjoy this primer on decorating with color, combine this knowledge interior decorating basics and you will be well on your way to being able to decorate rooms that will wow them.

Decorating with color - Basic Definitions

- Hue - this term is often misused. But is it simply another name for color.
- Shade - a color or hue mixed with black or gray.
- Tone - a color mixed with gray.
- Tint - a color or hue mixed with white.
- Value - the relative lightness or darkness of a color or hue. You see examples of this on the paint store chips.

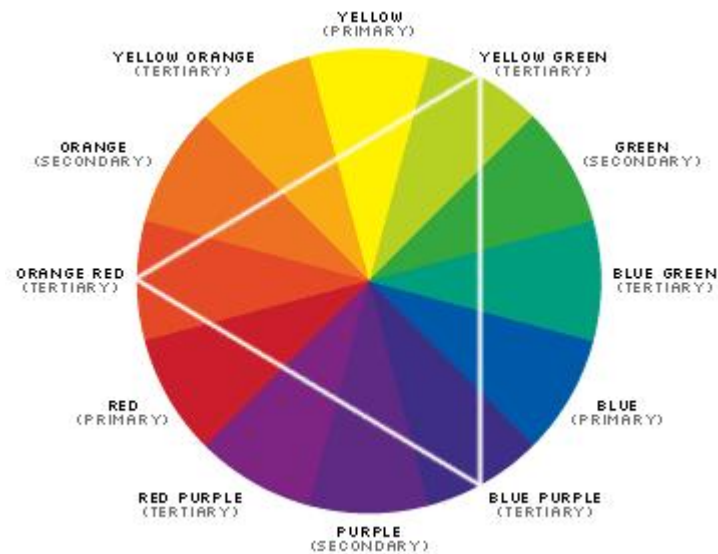
Intensity (chroma) - refers to the brightness or dullness of a hue. Bright red is a high intensity color while brick is a low intensity color. With brick color more

Decorating with Color - The Color Wheel

When decorating with a color a color wheel can be your best friend as it will be your guide as to what goes with what.

A basic color wheel is made up of 12 colors. These colors are broken down further into three categories;

- Primary color - red, yellow, and blue. These are pure colors and cannot be made by any other colors
- Secondary color - green, orange, and violet. Mixing two primary colors creates secondary colors - for instance yellow and blue make green.
- Tertiary color - yellow-orange, red-orange, red-violet, blue violet, blue-green, and yellow-green. Mixing a primary and a secondary color creates these colors.



Decorating with Color - Color Schemes

A color scheme is simply a group of colors that harmonize with each other. The basic color schemes are:

- Complimentary: This color scheme uses two colors that are on the opposite side of the color wheel such as red and green or yellow and violet. Because there is a strong contrast between complimentary colors rooms using this color scheme are bold. Complementary color shades can be broken down further into the following categories;
- Split Complementary – this scheme is used when one color is combined with the two colors on opposite sides of its complementary color.
- Triad – a triad is accomplished when three colors of equal distance to each other on the color wheel are used. Red, yellow and blue combine to make a triad color scheme.
- Tetrad – by combining to pairs of complimentary colors a tetrad color scheme is created.
- Analogous: Using colors that are next to each other on the color wheel.
- Monochromatic: Using the same color with different shades, tints or tones. Textural interest should be added to monochromatic color schemes to keep them from getting boring. In addition, a small bit of color added to accessories will enhance a monochromatic color scheme.

The paint quality institute has a great digital color wheel, which is really interactive. It is a great tool to help you visualize the above concepts.

Decorating with Color - Altering Proportions



Is your bedroom too small? Do you wish your family room felt more intimate? Color has the power to manipulate our sense of space. Using light hues from one color family will create an optical illusion of sorts by visually expanding a room. If a ceiling feels too low, bright white can "raise" your perception of its height. By taking a cue from clothing designers, adventuresome homeowners can paint their walls with vertical stripes also to enhance the sense of height. This technique can be applied with great success in a play space for children.

When the objective is to make a large room feel cozy and intimate, paint color can again do the trick. Choosing darker shades for the walls will reign in a large space and a darker shade on a tall ceiling will "lower" it. If color alone isn't enough use color to create visual breaks. Divide your wall space horizontally with a chair rail and paint the upper and lower portions different colors. Picture moldings are another visual device. Paint the interior portion a different shade from the rest of the wall.



Decorating with Color - Color and Mood

COLOR WARM UP

Colors in the red, orange and yellow families are referred to as "warm" colors since they evoke images associated with heat, like fire or sunshine. As a result they make us feel warm in a psychological sense.



Red

This powerful color increases blood pressure and heart rate. It often produces feelings of intimacy, energy, passion and sexuality. It also stimulates the appetite and is often used in restaurants and is an excellent choice for dining rooms in the home.

Orange

Like red, orange warms a room but in a less dramatic and passionate way. The mood and attitude of orange is friendlier than fiery; more welcoming than seductive. Orange works well in living rooms and family rooms and is also a good choice for children's bedrooms.

Yellow

Yellow grabs attention and catches the eye like no other color, hence the use of yellow highlighters in offices. In poorly lit foyers and hallways, yellow shows the way. In their bedrooms, elderly people report that yellow lifts their mood. But bright yellow can be too strong and may actually cause anxiety in infants, young children and the elderly.

COLOR COOL OUT

Blues, greens, violets and their intermediates are considered cool colors because of their references to pastoral landscapes and ocean vistas. When we look at these colors they elicit feelings of peace, tranquility and relaxation.



Blue

Soothing blue is an ideal bedroom color choice for adults and children. But that same blue that lulls us to sleep also suppresses our appetites, possibly because there are very few naturally blue foods. Put blue to bed, but try and keep it out of the dining room.

Green

As the dominant color in nature, we are at home with green anywhere in the house. Light greens work well in baths and living rooms; mid-range greens are a great accent for kitchens and dining rooms. The calming effect of green makes it popular in hospitals, schools and work environments.

Violet

Despite the favorable response violet elicits in children, many adults dislike purples, with rosier shades of violet being somewhat more appealing. Children's bedrooms and play areas may be good places to experiment with this color family.