



Bringing Trends Home

How to incorporate trendy colour palletes into your home without replacing everything!

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If you're looking for what's hot and what's not, just head to trendy clothing and home decor stores or even Walmart. The latest trend colour pallettes are everywhere. Retailers make it fairly easy for us to refresh our décor by offering coordinating fabrics, accessories, wallpaper and paint that reinforces hot new colour trends each year.

Shown here, some of this year's trends include fresh, bright blues and greens mixed with darker influences of chocolate brown. Magenta, fuchia, indigo and turquoise are emerging in 2008 as hot, trendy colours. There's something for every one!

No matter your colour palette, don't forget to vary the texture and sheen of the objects and surfaces in your space to maximize visual appeal. Items like high pile shag area rugs and woven wood blinds add texture to your home while combining glass and stone, silk with chenille, or wood with metal vary the sheen.

If you're inspired by one of this year's trendy colour pallettes, jump in and enjoy. For most of us, replacing all our furniture and accessories is unrealistic every 3-5 years. So how do we stay hip to the trend while using what we already have? In my experience, it's as easy as 1-2-3: paint, pillows and accessories.

Adding Colour to Neutrals...

The sky is the limit if you are lucky or wise enough to have a neutral beige or chocolate brown couch with neutral flooring. A fresh coat of the latest trendy paint colour reinforced with coordinating printed pillows, funky area rugs and accessories (like vases and artwork, sculptures or bowls) will completely transform your space. For around \$1000-\$1500 you can update a room every 3-5 years without having to replace your major furniture pieces and flooring.

Balancing Neutrals with Colour....

If your furniture or flooring is a strong colour, you may need to blend neutral wall colours with your furniture and accent with a trendy punch of colour. For example, if you have a 1980's hunter green or burgundy leather couch, a warm colour palette of caramels and browns work well with a splash of trendy teal to top it off. If you are feeling "stuck" with your old furniture, take heart - the colour forecast for 2008 calls for forest green and russet in combination! You may just waited long enough to be trendy the second time 'round!

Practical Recommendations for Buying New Furniture...

If you are looking to buy furniture now, consider purchasing your main pieces in a neutral tone that will accept a variety of colour combined with it. Choose a solid colour or a small scale print to minimize pattern clashing in years to come. Then, select fabulous



pillows in whatever colour, style and pattern suit your taste. Select your wall colour from the fabric used for cushions. Then, accentuate with artwork and accessories (area rugs, vases, etc) in the colours seen in the fabric. It's a full proof way to get that pulled together, "designer" look in your own home.

Developing the Perfect Palette...

Research tells us that we are very affected by colour. Colour actually impacts your perception of the temperature in a room. It's no wonder why we obsess, fret, and stew about finding the exact, perfect colour combination. Studies show that it takes the average person 6 months to choose a paint colour. How do you get it right?

Colour Secrets Revealed...

First, start with some colour inspiration like a fabric you're using for drapery or accent cushions. You'll achieve success if you match the colours in the fabric to wall colour. If this is difficult for you to do, ask for assistance in the paint store and the staff will be happy to help you there. Try to avoid selecting a paint colour first and trying to match it up to a coordinating fabric after the fact. It's so much easier to match paint to fabric rather than the reverse.


The second secret is to choose colours with the same undertone. If your main neutral colour is warm it's important to choose an accent colour with a warm undertone. Warm colours generally have a yellow undertone to them and advance toward you while cool colours have a grey based undertone and recede into the distance.

Every colour (blue, green, red, brown, etc) has a range of warm and cool undertones that can be associated with it. I once visited a panicked client who was mid way through painting her entire house "taupe". "When I picked the colour I thought it was a warm taupe. Now, when it's up on the wall it's actually purple!" she said. This was because the cool based, purple/grey undertone of the taupe colour was shining through loud and clear. If you keep know the undertone of the colours you've selected and they all coordinate you'll enjoy success every time!

Thirdly, consider the amount of natural and artificial light in the room. If you have a room with a north exposure and you select a cool blue it is likely that room will always feel cold. You may need to give that blue a warm "boost" by adding a hint of yellow to give it some warmth. Likewise, if you want to use yellow in a room with a south exposure, consider cooling off your yellow to a lighter, cooler tone because the sunlight will naturally warm the colour anyway. Also consider the type of artificial lighting used in the room. Wall sconces and lamps with incandescent bulbs tend to warm up the paint colour while bright, clear halogen pot lights tend to cool it off.

Lastly, don't forget to buy (or paint) a large sample of the colour. Review the sample board in the morning, afternoon and nighttime to ensure you're totally comfortable with how the colour appears under all lighting conditions. The old saying "the difference between night and day" definitely applies to paint! Many paint retailers provide small samples or "testers" of paint that can be purchased for around \$5 which allow you to try to colour out on a sample board in advance. Benjamin Moore has gone one step further, providing huge 18"x18" paint chips in their most popular colour line. Simply buy the huge swatch in store, take it home and tack it up on the wall. No mess, no brushes! (large swatches seen in photo)

Advice from the heart...

Trends come and go but your personal taste, sense of style and unique personality are all your own. Go with your gut and follow your instinct when selecting your palette. Don't let your neighbour or best friend make your colour choices for you. If you are in love with the colours your personality will shine through! Happy Decorating! 

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