

TIPS FOR CHOOSING A COMFORTABLE COLOR PALETTE FOR YOUR HOME

Expert Answers To Common Paint Decorating And Color Questions

Cleveland, Ohio— February 2005—Choosing paint color can be one of the most challenging aspects of decorating your home. There are so many beautiful choices available these days, you may end up feeling like you don't know where to start!

The following tips from Pratt & Lambert Color Specialist, Peggy Van Allen, are designed to help ease the worry and confusion about selecting an appropriate color palette for your needs:

What is the best way to choose a paint color?

According to Van Allen, “The best place to start is the room itself. Look at the existing furniture, window treatments, and accessories, then visit your local paint dealer or hardware store and choose an assortment of color chips you think will go well with them. Take the chips home and tape them to the wall to get an idea of how they will look. Also, be sure to look at them at different times of the day to see how they are affected by light.”

If you're still uncertain about the color, you may want to seek out some advice. To assist in your project planning, consider utilizing available color tools. For example, Pratt & Lambert's new Never Compromise™ Color System offers 16 unique Inspiration Cards. Each of these cards features beautiful room photography that showcases how professionals combine colors on walls, trim and accent areas. They also contain the exact color chips used to create the room design, along with tips to help you easily achieve the same look in your own home.

How does color affect a room's size?

Generally, strong, warm colors like reds, oranges and yellows tend to draw walls in and make a room feel cozier. These colors are known as advancing colors because they jump out and meet the eye. Conversely, receding colors like blue, green and violet tend to make a room look larger because they “stand back” visually. These are not hard and fast rules however, strong colors such as royal blue and hunter green will make the walls more dominant and thus closer. Small rooms are best made to appear larger by painting them white or a light neutral color. Additionally, monochromatic color schemes will open up a room, while contrasting colors can make the room dynamic but smaller.

How do I choose colors for in-between areas like hallways?

“A hallway is an area that you pass through quickly, so you can be adventurous and make a statement with your paint color,” says Van Allen. “However, if you want to tie the hallway with other rooms, use varying shades of color that are prominent in rooms adjacent to the hallway.”

What color should I paint my ceiling?

Most ceilings are painted in a white or off-white shade. This creates the illusion of higher ceilings and a more open space. Darker colors will create the illusion of lowering the ceiling — which can create a more intimate space. To unify the room, choose a color for the ceiling that is a tint of the wall color.

Should trim work or moldings be painted the same color as the walls, or should they be printed lighter or darker than the wall color?

To disguise ordinary or unattractive trim work, or to create a monochromatic look, use a trim color that is the same color as the walls. If you want to accentuate trim work, use a different color (lighter or darker) than the walls.

Will the paint I chose look lighter or darker on the wall?

Over a larger surface area, most colors appear darker. It's a good idea to choose colors a shade or two lighter than what you want. Clean, bright colors can appear either lighter or darker depending on the surrounding colors and lighting in the room.

I've painted my room, and the color is much bolder than I expected. Is there anything I can do to soften the color?

You can apply a lighter or more muted color over the original base coat using a technique such as sponging, rag rolling, or color washing. This will visually “break up” the bolder color and soften the look of your room.

Finally, Van Allen says, “Decorating should be fun, so try to relax and enjoy the process. And if for some reason you're still unhappy with a paint color after it's been applied, remember, it can easily be changed--just grab a brush and a new color!”