

Put Some "Va Va Voom" Back Into Your Homes!

Chilli hot red! Burnt orange! Aubergine! Pea green! Sky blue! Its time to put some colour back in our homes. Gone are the 1990s when interior design was all about neutrals and soothing pallets. Dreary safe schemes just don't do it for us any more. So here's a guide to putting some "va va voom" back in your room. First lets understand colour. Colours are primary, secondary and tertiary. The three primary colours are red, yellow and blue. Mix these in equal quantities and you get secondary colours - orange, green and purple. But mix the primaries in unequal quantities and you get a whole range of colours and different hues, for instance lighter or darker purple according to the mix of red and blue. And then tints are created by adding black or white. A colour wheel is a useful tool that shows you the different colours in the visible spectrum. Colours that are next to each other are "family colours" and work well together (for instance blue is next to green). Colours that are opposite each other on the wheel are contrasting and can look very striking together, for example red and green. When choosing colours for a room, whether you are going to use them in small or large quantities, you need to understand the mood and effect they will give. Neutrals include off whites and pastels and can be useful, classic background colours. Although light and bright a completely neutral scheme can be bland and needs to be accented with contrasting or bright colours to give a room depth. Naturals are often stronger colours than neutrals, taken from nature, plant and earth colours and also natural materials such as wood and stone. These colours can be soothing and calming but should be used carefully; too much brown or olive green can look drab. Red is an incredibly diverse colour. It can be deep and dark or bright and bold. Red is meant to be invigorating and many think it stimulates your appetite, so it is often used in dining rooms. It is a great accent colour to use on one wall or for accessories, surrounded by more cooling colours such as neutrals. Blue is cool and calming and is a popular colour for bathrooms and bedrooms. Dark and light shades can be teamed together very effectively to create a harmonious effect. Yellow reminds us of sunshine and happiness. It ranges from acid, citrus tones through to deeper autumnal shades. Yellow can work well in darker, north facing rooms. It partners well with many colours, according to the shade, it can look great with browns, greys, greens and of course black and white. Green is a very popular decorative colour. It is warmer than blue, and is associated with nature, having a calming effect. Some greens are very strong or acidic and should be used carefully, others are passive and relaxing and can easily be used on all walls in a room. So how do you choose which of these colours will work for you? Finding the starting point can be the most difficult part when redecorating. If a room is to have a dominant piece of furniture or painting then that can be a good place to start. Decide what will complement or highlight that item and go from there. Similarly if you travel you may have rugs, pottery or other items that you can use to set the tone. Alternatively you could use the style of your home as inspiration. Many paint manufacturers now offer traditional colours from the Victorian or Georgian eras that can help restore period homes. If you need to touch and feel a scheme then furniture stores have room displays that can help you imagine what a scheme would look like in your own home. Similarly interiors magazines can be a great source of ideas, you can create a scrap book or mood board to capture ideas that appeal. Just be wary of being too radical. If you enjoyed your holiday in Morroco, creating a "souk" in your living room may be tempting but its probably worth paring down, to suit the light and style of your home. Otherwise it could end up looking incongruous. Colour allows you to stamp your individuality on your home and set it apart from the rest. So take time to work out a scheme that reflects the way you want to live and that works well in your home.

About the Author

Expert decorator India Cooper tells consumers how to put colour into their homes with the benefit of her decorator experience. To find out more please visit <http://www.ratedpeople.com/find/decorator>

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