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Coloring Our Lives

A brief look at today's hot color trends.

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The colors we encounter throughout the day can have a profound effect on how we feel. Sometimes, without even realizing it, the hues we're exposed to can shape our emotions, well-being, physical abilities and even our health. For centuries, scholars have studied the effects of color on human beings. Ancient Egyptian and Native American cultures even believed that colored light had tremendous healing abilities.

As interior designers, color is a very powerful tool that we can use to help our clients reflect who they are in their homes. For an easygoing, carefree client, we might, for example, suggest cool shades of blue or white. For someone who conveys an air of mystery, we might recommend a powerful shade of black or an energetic red.

Whatever effect you might be going for, the top color trends found in interiors today reflect a range of soft neutrals to sultry shades, with a strong emphasis on natural materials.



Not-so-Boring Neutrals

Today's neutral palette is understated and sophisticated. Anything but bland or boring, neutrals now reflect a mix of warm and cool tones, harmonizing together as they do in nature. They include cool stone grays, warm practical beige tones, honeyed tan shades, and warm coffee hues.



Brilliantly Bold

On the other end of the spectrum, bold, vibrant shades that mimic the colors of haute couture fashion and the Bollywood influence are hotter than ever. These sexy colors are a metaphor for our multicultural style, including influences from the Pacific Rim and the Middle East. Regions that once seemed daring and exotic are now finding their ways into mainstream American interiors. These include spicy ginger, hot chili pepper, lemon curry, fine wine, bohemian black, glowing orange, and romantic orchid.

Going Green

Color trends are now also driven by concern for the environment. With more interest in organic products, yoga, recycling, fuel conservation and fresh water, "green design" is flourishing like a well-tended garden. With the increased awareness of earth's non-renewable resources comes a renewed appreciation for "green" in both the sense of earth-friendly design and the color green. This year's most popular shades of green are softer, more botanical greens like those found in nature. They include shale green and mossy green.

Whatever color stirs emotions in your clients, one thing is certain – there is now more variety than ever. So, use your imagination and see what unexpected color combinations you can create to reflect your client's unique personality. ■

