

From Blue to Rosy!

By Sheila R. Selby

Many people are overwhelmed by the thought of putting color on their walls, but are green with envy of those who do. I hope this article will help relieve some of your anxiety in making paint color choices. It's amazing how color can change the feel of a space and change your mood from blue to rosy!

The colors in your home should be an expression of your individuality. Paint is the most economical way of changing the look and feel of a room. Because walls are the largest surface in a room, you get a big bang for your buck with paint color. And, if you don't like the color after it's been applied, you can easily paint over it.

If you're skittish about painting a whole room one color, try painting one wall with that color. This accent wall approach works well if you select a wall that you want to focus on, like a wall with a fireplace or the wall behind your bed.

"Where do I start?" you may ask. Below, I discuss how to develop a color scheme for a room, including choosing a paint color. To reduce common color mistakes, I provide a couple of tips to try before painting.

Developing a Scheme

A color scheme considers all the elements in a space, including walls, furniture, flooring, window treatments, and accessories. Maybe you have an existing sofa that is going to stay in the room you're painting, and you want to create a color scheme around that piece. For demonstration purposes, let's say this sofa is blue.

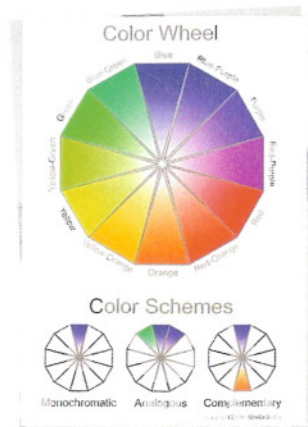
By using the color wheel, as shown in the illustration above, you can create different color schemes that reflect the feel you're trying to achieve. This is just one of many ways to use color to create an environment.

If you want a relaxing feel to a room, you don't want your blue

sofa to visually stand out from the walls. By using a monochromatic color scheme – various shades of blue and neutrals – you can create a relaxing feel.

An analogous color scheme – colors that are adjacent on the color wheel – will also feel relaxing. So, with a blue sofa, you could use a blue-green paint or a blue-purple paint to achieve an analogous scheme.

Maybe you love the shape of your sofa and want it to make an impact. In that case, you could paint your walls a shade of orange – blue's complementary color – to make the sofa pop.



Choosing Colors

If you're starting from scratch, here are a couple of suggestions for where to begin:

A great way to choose a paint color is by opening your bedroom closet door and looking at your wardrobe. Most people wear colors they like and look good in. The same holds true for rooms painted in one of those colors. If you look great in turquoise clothing, then you'll look great in a turquoise room!

Do you have a favorite piece of art? How about a rug that you love? The colors in a favorite piece can be a good jumping-off point when deciding on a paint color.

This next statement will have many designers cringing. Don't select a color because it's trendy. There are international organizations that meet regularly to decide the future color trends. These decisions are made to please the masses, not you personally. You'll see these colors in fashion, fabrics, cars, and appliances.

Remember harvest gold and avocado green of the 1970s? That said, there's nothing wrong in choosing a trendy color scheme, providing that you love it. Do what makes you feel good.

Before You Paint

Buy small sample jars of the paint colors you're thinking of using. Apply these colors to at least two walls in the room. You can also apply the paint to poster board or foam core so you can move the color around. Live with these samples for a few days and look at them at different times of the day, since lighting is one of the major factors in determining how a color will look on your walls. After a day or two, the colors will speak to you.

Paint usually appears darker on the walls than it does on a small paint chip. So select a shade slightly lighter than what you like on the small chip. You can do this by having the paint "cut" with white – for instance, add 20% white to lighten the color slightly.

Rosy Times Ahead

Selecting colors to paint your walls should be fun. By following these suggestions, you'll be feeling rosy in no time!

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PHOTO BY CINDY HAGGERTY



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