

Colour in Interiors

by Bettina Deda, Founder of Bettina Deda colour design



ABSTRACT

Do you love colours, but are not confident enough to introduce them in your home? Are you struggling to find the right colours for your home?

Colour is one of the most powerful tool when it comes to interior styling. We are specialists in interior styling and colour solutions and believe that only in an inspiring home, where you feel comfortable, can you relax and re-energize. Therefore we strive to help you create a home with heart and personality!

I truly hope that this colour guide is inspiring and will help you becoming more confident in choosing colours for your home.

White – Pure Bliss

In interior design and styling white is a neutral background colour but is also used to highlight stronger hues in a colour scheme. By mixing colours with white (tinting) you can soften them to pale pastel shades. On the other hand white can make strong colours even more prominent.

Trend forecasters in Europe predict the colour white to become the hero of spring and summer 2013. Bright, breezy, light, summer, young and fresh, joyful, lifting the spirits, colour of purity and innocence – feelings associated with the colour white. White is mixture of all colours in the visible spectrum and reflects 100 per cent of light. White aids mental clarity and encourages us to clear away clutter and remove obstacles.

“The first of all single colours is white. We shall set down white for the representative of light, without which no colour can be seen; yellow for the earth, green for water, blue for air, red for fire, and black for total darkness.” Leonardo da Vinci



Styling Bettina Deda, Photography Katie Waddell

Lidewij Edelkoort in her [Trendletter](#): “Forward-thinking editors at Vogue (Germany, Italy) already herald the power of white standing above all others, whether in romantic baptism dresses or in clean business tailoring, they promote white as a more abstract and mental choice. The colour white will absolutely become essential for spring/summer 2013. So do make the right fabric choices and do not get blinded by yet another rainbow of brights; peace of mind is in the making, creating a sense of bliss.” Be inspired by my Pinterest board [Pure Bliss!](#)

Red – How to create a focal point

If you want to draw attention, use red in your interior. Red is the most stimulating colour. The pituitary gland reacts when it sees red. The hormone epinephrine is released and changes the body chemistry. You breathe more rapidly, your blood pressure, pulse rate and heartbeat increase. We have no control over these physiological reactions. As a result, red is associated with high energy, movement and excitement.

"The chief function of colour should be to serve expression."
Henri Matisse



Red as accent colour in a kitchen. Picture: Nolte Kuechen, Germany

Reds can be fiery, passionate, sophisticated and warm. There are many shades of red to play with: blood-red, blush, brick, burgundy, flame, scarlet, rose to name a few. Use red as an accent in interiors. As it stimulates the appetite red is a perfect colour for kitchens and dining rooms. Red accents in playrooms create energy and excitement. Red works well with other warm colours like orange and yellow, the neighbours on the colour wheel. With shades of blue you can create a nautical look. Neutrals or chocolate-brown balance red's energy.

Yellow – Let the Sunshine in!

The colour yellow is associated with optimism, happiness, and the sun. It enhances positive thoughts and creativity and signals power.

"How lovely yellow is! It stands for the sun." - Vincent van Gogh

In interior styling use it in offices or kid's rooms, because yellow can be stimulating. It gives a warm, happy and welcoming feeling to the entrance of a house. Bright yellow works best as accent colour and pairs well with [shades of grey](#) for a very contemporary look. Neon yellow is currently very trendy and looks great as accent colour paired with pastels. In general use yellow in artwork, cushions, decor or an area rug to inject a splash of colour to your interior.



Finish your interior with an original artwork in your colour scheme.
Bettina Deda. Intersections. Acrylic on canvas.

For more inspiration on yellow jump over to my [Pinterest board](#).

Orange happiness

Orange is the only colour named after an object. Orange is a secondary colour mixed out of red and yellow and therefore combines the energy and drama of red with the happiness of yellow.

Temperature wise orange is seen as the hottest of all colours. It induces a feeling of warmth, fun and creativity. Orange encompasses everything from bright, acid shades through to earthy dusty tones and is also known as ochre, terracotta, peach, tangerine, sienna, mandarin, pumpkin, mango, apricot and saffron. Pantone chose Tangerine Tango as their Color of the Year 2012.

"Orange is the happiest colour."
Frank Sinatra



Orange as accent colour in a hall. Styling Bettina Deda, Photography Katie Waddell

Orange in interiors creates a feeling of warmth and protection and provides the confidence to be creative and initiate new projects. Orange is a great colour if you want to create a retro mid-century look in your space. Bright oranges as accents in a room will create a focal point and can be used in playrooms to stimulate creativity. Touches of orange in the kitchen and dining area stimulate the appetite. For a friendly and inviting atmosphere in your entrance hall use orange as wall or accent colour. Contrast orange with a cool turquoise and add warm neutrals to create a vibrant and interesting scheme.

Green – achieve balance and harmony

Green is such a great colour, it is the colour of nature and surrounds us every day. It is great to relax and re-energize. The Pantone [Colour of the Year 2013](#): PANTONE 17-5641 Emerald, is a lively, radiant, lush green.

“Sometimes our fate resembles a fruit tree in winter. Who would think that those branches would turn green again and blossom, but we hope it, we know it.” Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Bring calmness and relaxation to your interiors by introducing the colour green. It influences the body on a mental and physical level. It helps to cure nervousness and anxiety. And nothing is easier than introducing pot plants or green cushions and accessories to your space, if you would like to try it out before painting a whole room. Plants not only clean the air, they add a splash of colour to your room and they can easily be moved around and changed. They can actually help making a small space appear larger as they optically recede.



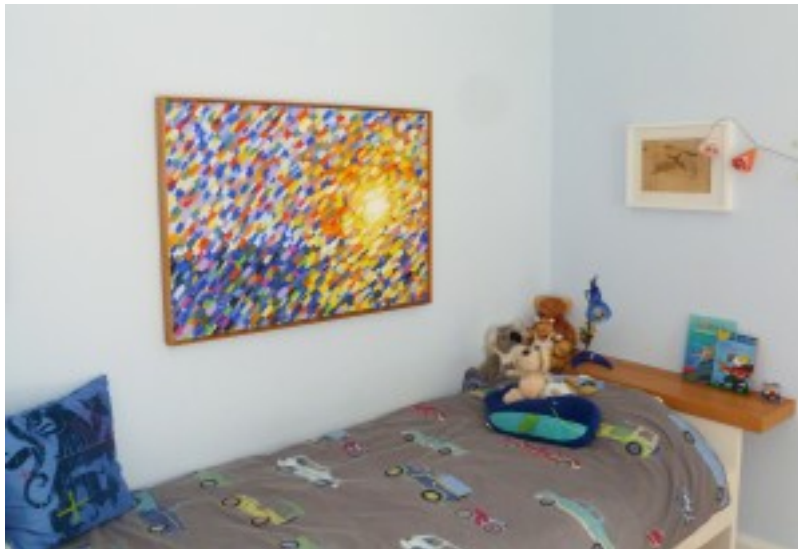
Mix greens and yellows for a fresh and friendly atmosphere. Picture: Schoener Wohnen.de

Green works well in areas of your home where you would like to achieve a calm, serene and fresh atmosphere. Use it in bedrooms, lounge rooms, reading areas or in your bathroom. Mix yellow-greens and blue-greens to create an [exciting colour scheme](#).

Blue - a constant in our lives

"I have often said that I wish that I had invented blue jeans: the most spectacular, the most practical, the most relaxed and nonchalant. They have expression, modesty, sex appeal, simplicity - all I hope for in my clothes." Ives Saint Laurent

As the colour blue is associated with the ocean and the sky, it is seen as a constant factor in our lives. Blue is one of the most popular colours and described as the favourite colour by many people, especially by men. It evokes feelings of calmness and serenity. It is described as peaceful, tranquil, secure and orderly. Dark navy blue is the most serious and powerful blue, whereas lighter tones of aqua can be uplifting and energizing. Turquoise enhances creativity, inspiration and transformation.



Pair shades of blue with warm yellow and orange as accent colours. Styling and photography: Bettina Deda

In interiors the soothing quality of blue makes it a great choice for kid's rooms - use it as paint colour for the walls or in accessories and bedding. If your child is very energetic and agile use a blue room to calm him down and provide the ground for a good night's sleep.

Blue is also used to decorate offices as research has shown that people are more productive in blue rooms.

For more inspiration how to use blue in your space, browse my [Pinterest board](#).

Grey – Depressing or Versatile?

For a lot of people grey is dull and depressing, grey rainy days, grey winter days (especially in the Northern Hemisphere), grey faces. Silver, Oyster, Pearl, Mist, Driftwood, Aluminium, Flannel, Pewter, Elephant, Ebony, Cement, Zinc, Steel, Smoke, Cashmere, Dolphin, Ocean, Donkey or Pebble - only a few names for shades of grey. Grey lives in the middle between black and white and seems to have no own personality.

"Grey is the colour of nuance and dialogue, and a metaphor for a mature and truly democratic lifestyle. The family of greys permits all other colours to lean against them, to underline or overshadow them. Grey is patient and flexible and an appeasing tone in times of change and financial crisis."
Lidewij Edelkoort

In cooler climates or in cold rooms and under cold light it can be difficult to decorate with a cool grey as the closer the grey gets to black, the more light it absorbs and the more it demands from its surroundings.



Grey bathroom with feature tiles. Picture: Villeroy&Boch, V&B Fliesen GmbH, Germany

In interior styling, grey in all its shades is a versatile and flexible colour. It is a fantastic background for brighter hues as yellow, red, pink or purple and it can round any interior. For inspiration on how to decorate with grey, [click here](#).

Black is a force

Black is definitely a force. As black absorbs all light and colour it is literally speaking the absence of all colour.

Whereas in Western societies black is the colour of death, grief and penitence, in China

and Japan black is associated with honour. Black clothes are often worn by those who reject society and the norm within society. It is also the colour of authority and power and popular in fashion as it makes people appear thinner. Priests wear black to show their submission to God.

"Before, when I didn't know what colour to put down, I put down black. Black is a force: I depend on black to simplify the construction. Now I've given up blacks." Henri Matisse



A black chalkboard wall encourages your kid's creativity. Picture: Inter IKEA Systems B.V.

In interior decorating use black and white to create interest with a contrasting colour scheme. Black adds drama and elegance to a space. Paint a wall in black, combine it with white and inject a bright accent colour to create an elegant interior. I have been in a hair dressing salon in black and white, with bold black and white square stripes on the ceiling and pink and coral feature walls. Chandeliers give this commercial space a glamorous atmosphere.

Use the same idea to create a wow factor in a small bedroom by picking up a bold black and white stripe on a feature, a bedhead or bedspread. Use the power of black in high gloss kitchen cabinetry and offset it with timber veneer. A black chalkboard wall is not only useful for jotting down notes and shopping lists but also a creative space for the whole family. Black chalkboard paint applied to a wall or door is also a great option for a kid's rooms. See what you can create with black [here](#).

Connect with the earth

Brown is a comforting colour and connects us with the earth. It gives us a feeling of home, stability and substance. Brown plays an important role in the health food industry: brown bread, brown rice, brown cereals are ultimately associated with healthy and organic food. Brown is therefore a popular colour for coffee shops and restaurants. Besides green, brown is a colour of nature and earth. In Western societies brown is associated with stability, reliability, comfort, warmth and simplicity.

"People feel secure in a brown interior, an imprinted reaction that goes back to the days of cave dwellings - the only environment where there was absolute safety from predators."
Leatrice Eiseman



Mountain cottage. Photography by Sharon Newman, SNphotography.com.au

In interiors brown is a versatile colour to decorate with. It is not as dark as black, but a rich hue that provides a backdrop for lots of other colours. Contrast a warm chocolate-brown with a light tone of blue and white to create a rich contrast and a sense of ease and space. Brown works well with other earthy colours like orange, yellow or red in lounge rooms, kitchens or bedrooms. Use brown for focal pieces of furniture like dining tables, sofa tables, lounges or sideboards and decorate with brighter accent colours in cushions, art and decor.

Connect with the earth and be inspired by my Pinterest board [Earthy Sophistication](#).

Purple – Get inspired and creative

Purple – one of my favourite colours – is mixed of the primary colours blue and red and combines the power of red and the

„He wrapped himself in quotations – as a beggar would enfold himself in the purple of Emperors” Rudyard Kipling

calmness of blue. Have you ever wandered through a field of lavender and bathed in its colour and scent? In colour therapy purple enhances artistic talent and creativity and helps people to find spiritual strengths, creativity and inspiration. The German composer Richard Wagner worked in a violet room to compose his operas. Purple is also the hue of royalty and is associated with luxury, wealth and sophistication.



Purple furniture contrasts the light floorboards. Picture: Ikea

For your interior styling projects you can choose many shades of purple. A soft Lavender for example works well in bedrooms as it creates a feeling of calmness and is not too overwhelming. It is also a suitable colour for children’s rooms and an alternative to blue and pink.

For rooms with a lot of natural light reduce the intensity of the hue and deepen the tone. Also check the Light Reflectance Value of your chosen paint colour. For an elegant and sophisticated look pair violet with white and subtle tones of beige. Deeper tones of purple are great accent colours in cushions, rugs, throws or decor. Think about a vase of fresh purple flowers on your coffee table.

What comes next?

I truly hope that this colour guide has inspired you and helped you to become more confident in interior styling. I would like to encourage you to be courageous, different and unique in creating a home with heart and personality!

If it all seems to hard, breathe deeply, relax and do one thing at a time. If you would like more help or professional advice, [visit my website](#) or contact me directly to find out how I can help you to achieve your desired outcome.

If you would like to stay connected, subscribe to my weekly styling tips delivered straight into your inbox. Jump over to my website and fill out your name and email address in the [web form](#) to get started.

Finally, I would love to learn more about your biggest decorating challenges and hear how you are progressing with your interior design project! Email me to Bettina@bdcolourdesign.net.au

Happy Decorating!

