



IN THE PINK

Embracing the bold and bright side of the colour wheel

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In an era of Pinterest, design blogs and Instagram, at the onset of a design consultation, homeowners are often armed with a myriad of images and ideas about everything from coffered ceilings to sofa upholstery to colour palettes.

So it was a rare moment when homeowner Freda Hart presented me with only a few parameters for the redesign of her living room and breakfast nook. The primary mandate was COLOUR.

Hart's adoration of bold hues and disdain for beige became apparent as the design process got underway. The only challenge was to narrow down the colour preferences in order to develop one cohesive palette. Hart knows what she likes and what she doesn't and we were both on the same page.

THE LAY OF THE LAND

When someone is drawn to a colourful interior, you need a starting point, something to work from, whether it is a piece of art, an area carpet, or a fabric. It provides the direction to begin the process of choosing a colour palette.

By gathering a variety of patterns, fabrics and colours to show a homeowner, I can elicit an understanding of their likes or dislikes and ensure they are not making hasty decisions just to get the project completed. Because colour is subjective, people usually know instinctively if they like a colour or not.

In this case, Hart wanted to take her time to make final decisions. She put no parameters on a timeline for the room to be completed because it was more important for her that it was a room she



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would love. After several shopping excursions and consultations, a colour scheme emerged.

In the way you wouldn't build an outfit around a pair of socks, instead selecting a beautiful scarf or a great piece of jewellery, the same goes for decor. If you start with something you love, you can build a palette from it and add the corresponding elements to make your home a reflection of your personality.

COLOUR PLUNGE

Hart's home had a beautiful floor plan and great bones but the interior was really a blank slate. Considering her love of colour, impact was important for her, while remaining tasteful at the same time.

Although the recent trend in design has been soft greys with neutrals and light surroundings, it was exciting to work with Hart because her love for colour was reflected in her personality. As a gentle backdrop to the colourful furnishings, artwork and fabrics, I opted to use Benjamin Moore's Chantilly Lace OC-65.

As we approached the end of the project, a pop of paint colour was added by pulling out the teal found in the canvas and the accent cushions on the sofa. Benjamin Moore's Avalon Teal CSP-645 did the trick.

In the breakfast nook, Benjamin Moore's Spa Day CSP-635 gave the all-white kitchen a dramatic uplift, which was exactly what Hart wanted.



FOR THE COLOUR-SHY

Toss pillows (and the occasional throw) are a favourite noncommittal way to add a variety of colours to a space. They're easy to mix and match and rearrange or replace at any time.

Bringing in some playful patterns is another way to add a sense of drama even where very little colour is actually present. Look to bold geometrics (like a chunky chevron or stripe), animal prints and bold wood grains to add visual variety without clashing.

Combining patterned pieces with those in a combination of neutral tones can create a space that suggests colour, but with very little colour at all.

Most clients are afraid of using too much colour because they worry they will tire of the decor, especially with more permanent pieces. In order to get a unique design, sometimes a designer has to help the homeowner to step out of the box.

NOTHING VENTURED, NOTHING GAINED

When I first brought Hart the hot pink chevron fabric for the chairs and suggested having the legs painted white, I thought for sure she would be hesitant to commit to such a bold choice. Although she had to keep the fabric book for several weeks to mull it over, she called me up one day and said, "Go for it, Sarah!" When the chairs arrived she was thrilled.

The designer's job is not only to bring the look together but to keep the project moving along and to manage all aspects so everything is cohesive. I enjoy the process because it also establishes a relationship with the homeowner.

Subsequently, Hart's family room became the next project we're working on together. Dubbed "The Hart Lounge," I know I will enjoy this design experience every step of the way. ♦



SOURCES: LIVING ROOM PAINT: benjaminmoore.com; CHEVRON CHAIRS AND SOFAS: Gresham House (trade only); COFFEE TABLE, LAMPS AND BUFFET CABINET: elte.com; ARTWORK: custom trade only supplier; AREA CARPET: Minster Interiors (trade only); ACCESSORIES: cobistyle.com, Canflooyd; FLOWERS: La Petite Fleur; petitefleur.com; KITCHEN LUCITE CHAIRS: ikea.com; TABLE: custom through Sarah St. Amand Interior Design

Designer Sarah St. Amand, principal/owner of GTA-based Sarah St. Amand Interior Design, specializes in residential and commercial design projects of all sizes and scope. She has made appearances on Citytv's CityLine and has gained national recognition for her design work. For more information, visit stamanddesign.com.

