

# Color 101

Understanding color concepts and painting techniques will help you pick the right hues the first time -- and apply paint in a way that will last. Here are some tips to get you started.

## Stay Focused

One of the first things most interior designers will tell you when it comes to color is to determine the paint for your walls after you've established the color scheme in your house.

The reason for that advice is simple: Paint is one of the least-expensive decorating elements in a room and can be easily altered and changed as needed. Re-covering a sofa, on the other hand, can cost hundreds, even thousands, of dollars, as can the purchase of a rug, carpeting, or flooring.

The best way to establish a color palette for your home is to look for a pattern that appeals to you. Maybe it's a fabric swatch from your sofa or a favorite scarf in your closet.

Use that inspiration piece and break it down in terms of color priority to create your scheme.

## What Color Can Do

Color has the wonderful ability to make things appear larger or smaller. **Cool colors**, such as blues and greens, appear to be farther away or to recede. **Warm colors**, such as red in the kitchen picture, seem to come closer or advance. Likewise, darker colors advance, and lighter colors recede.

Use this knowledge for rooms you want to make larger or smaller. For instance, paint a small half bath blue to make it appear larger than it is. Likewise, paint a kitchen yellow or red for that "cozy" feel.

Color can also create a feeling. For Aristo Development's home in this year's Homearama the designer selected colors that gave the home a warm, comfortable feel. The result was a first place award for both "Best Decorated" and "Best Interior Design."

"We kept everything in earthtones and neutral," Jennifer Haralambides of Aristo Development says of their entry in the annual home show. "We went for a very organic feel with the home. We kept everything very warm and neutral." Haralambides added that they stayed away from colors that were shocking and loud.

## Be Creative

Don't be afraid to integrate your favorite colors into your home. Haralambides reports that the current trend is to be more daring with color. She adds that home owners are getting away from the traditional off-white and beige that has been the safe choice for so many years.

## Use your home's design as a guideline

If your home features a wide open floorplan, coloring each room a completely different color may be too overpowering on the eyes. "If the home is broken up it's easier to do different colors," Haralambides says. That doesn't mean that your home has to be all one color. Selecting a color scheme and using varying colors along that theme work well in wide open houses and broken up houses alike.

Also consider using your home's surroundings when selecting color. For Aristo Development, that means bringing the outside in. For waterfront homes Haralambides says that she utilizes blue and green tones that accent the home's view.

If selecting a color scheme for an entire house or even one room is overwhelming to you, consider hiring the services of an interior designer. Most designers will work with you and your preferences to create rooms that you will be comfortable living in.

For a listing of Rochester area designers, check the directory at [www.rochesterhomebuilders.com](http://www.rochesterhomebuilders.com).