

TIPS for Choosing Exterior Paint Color Palettes

Warm weather signals the time to paint your home's exterior and tend to decks and other outside items needing attention. In our busy world, people want to come home to an inviting, warm, comfortable and safe retreat that reflects their style. As with interiors, a carefully chosen color palette can enrich your quality of life and greatly enhance curb appeal. A few tips can help you avoid being overwhelmed and settling for 'so-so'.

- Homes need to work together to represent the neighborhood as a whole and offer a sense of place. The right color scheme is appropriate in the context of the neighborhood, surrounding environment, yet offers appealing, distinctive qualities.
- Give yourself the time needed to let the color choice process evolve; select the colors you (and your neighbors) want to live with. You'll enjoy it every day.
- Begin by taking local photos, finding images in magazines or online (Houzz, HGTV, House Beautiful are good resources) that resonate. Beware of relying on trends.
- Consider your natural surroundings: colors in the landscape; the rich spectrum of earth colors found in nature- plantings, rocks, soils, sky and water.
- See your house as a whole; take in to account existing architectural elements such as roofing, stone or brick siding; driveways, sidewalks, landscaping.
- Use your color palette to accentuate positive architectural features and subdue negative ones. Avoid painting garage doors accent colors.
- Pay attention to color aspects: value (light/darkness), intensity (brightness, dullness), color 'temperatures' (warm, cool) and undertones. Understand that a color you see on a small paper sample indoors will appear very different outside, in a much larger quantity, in relation to its surroundings.
- Even a very plain home comes alive when trim, shutters and doors have an interesting color plan. A successful color plan creates an overall harmonizing effect.
- Basic minimum: three colors: field/body, trim and door.
Additional colors add interest, such as the Arts and Crafts style.
- Don't miss the opportunity to give your front door a distinctive color of its own that adds an inviting color 'pop', much like a tie balances and completes a man's suit.
- Consider your budget, time and energy.
- As people gain more confidence in color choices, the era of "taupe towns" is happily fading. Consider moving away from very light values and more toward grounding, earthier mid-tones. Bright white trim is leaning toward creamier tones as a result.
- Always test color samples first; paint large areas (at least 2'x2') of double coats either directly on the house surface if painting is imminent, or on poster board, under various lighting conditions. Make any adjustments then. Get it right the first time.
- You only get one chance to make a first impression. If your home is for sale, the right color choices increase perceived value and can make quicker sale more likely.
- Use the best quality paint. It covers better, lasts longer, looks better and represents a small percentage of the cost of paint labor. Get recommendations for painting contractors from friends, local paint companies or your color consultant.
- Streamline the color selection process by hiring a color consultant. Saves time, money and stress in the long run.
- *Go green.* Support your health and the planet by choosing low- or no VOC paints.