

Dressing the home

Color key home to personality

Color is more than a visual enjoyment, color is tied to emotion. Here are a few well-known expressions directly associated with color: a "true blue friend," "purple with rage," "green with envy," and "painting the town red." Psychologists recognize the close relationship between color and mood and point out that one's choice of color is often a clue to personality traits—facts also recognized by those who design for the home. Certain cool colors, like blue and green, appeal to the calm and quiet nature and are best used in rooms needing a tranquil touch. Conversely, a homemaker who favors warm bright colors usually has a cheery, extroverted personality to match those hues.

But what happens if a person doesn't know which color is most appropriate to his/her personality? It could be catastrophic if you pick a strong plaid fabric for a sofa and have a "pink" personality. You'll have an expensive mistake on your hands and a room that makes you feel uncomfortable.

A personality-color quiz was concocted by Debra Ritchie, a designer for Drexel Heritage Furniture and a design team from the same company. To test your knowledge, simply choose the number in the "quiz" (Q) list most reflective of your self-image. Then select that same number in the "answer" (A) list of colors. There are eight personality trait questions and eight color answers.

Part of the quiz:

Q 1. As far as money matters are concerned, you watch every penny. Conscientiousness, conservatism, occasional obstinacy and a sound, substantial outlook on life are all part of your individuality.

A 1. Brown. Regardless of whether the latest word in fashion calls it chocolate, cocoa or coffee, brown is an earthy color and, of course, reflects your earthy personality. Today, it's an easy color to find since earth tones are all part of the popular natural look.

Q 2. Is the tendency to ponder decisions carefully and deliberately one of your distinguishing characteristics? If so, you're probably also patient and persevering with others. You accept all obligations seriously and favor the conservative side.

A 2. Blue. Blondes love it, you love it and it's the number one choice of most Americans. In home decorating, blue is almost as good a tranquilizer as prescribed medication, since it has been known to lower blood pressure and decrease the pulse rate.

Q 3. Chances are you're ambitious, strong-willed and positive. You approach life with a sure and steady tread, sometimes with impulsive, often rash actions. Friends call you a born optimist and you find that unhappiness seems unnatural.

A 3. Red. There's no way anyone can ignore a "red" personality, whether that person's loved or hated. Red belongs to a room teeming with activity and life, especially because its effect is the opposite of blue. Red raises blood pressure and increases the pulse rate.

If you are interested in the whole quiz, write me at the Observer Newspapers, 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia 48150. You will find you can also be more selective in clothing colors, which is even more important because it's the image you present to friends and those whom you associate with daily.

—L. R.

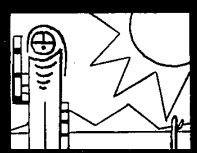
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Cheese is a good
holiday present

Cheese goes with just about everything. It can be a snack, a meal, a base for delicious desserts, or co-star with fruit for a simple finale that is right anytime.

According to Gale Baumgardner, Michigan State University Extension dairy youth specialist, Michigan produces more than \$6 million pounds of cheese each year.

"Cheese is an excellent gift, especially during the holiday season," says Ms. Baumgardner. "Instead of giving holiday foods that are mainly calorie, you can give assorted cheeses that will add protein and enrich a family diet. Cheese is a good buy, and there is no waste."

According to Ms. Baumgardner, hard cheeses (the compressed blocks of cheese) make the best gifts. She suggests purchasing different kinds of cheese such as Swiss gouda, edam, provolone, cheddar and blue for a variety of flavors, shapes and sizes.

"Hard cheeses can be kept for a longer period of time," Ms. Baumgardner adds, "because they do not promote growth of bacteria as quickly as soft cheese."

Cheese is also convenient to mail, and can be sent anywhere in the United States. Make sure the package is labeled "perishable" and "for immediate delivery" to expedite handling by the post office.

Cheese should be stored in the refrigerator as soon as possible. A tight covering preserves the quality and prevents drying. Although cheese can be served hot or cold, it will hit its peak at room temperature. Ms. Baumgardner recommends taking the cheese out of the refrigerator an hour or so before serving.

"Many homemakers do not realize that cheese can also be frozen," she says. "Most hard cheeses can be quite successfully frozen for about six weeks. Freeze cheese in one-half pound portions for quick and even freezing. It is important that the cheese be frozen in airtight containers, or in a moistureproof wrapping to prevent evaporation."

Frozen cheese should be thawed in the refrigerator so it will defrost slowly. Some cheese which has been frozen tends to become crumbly and dry, so Ms. Baumgardner recommends using it as quickly as possible.

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