

In the 1990s

The color palette is ever-expanding

The approach of a new decade always creates excitement — it's a time of change, new promise, new possibilities. Looking toward the 1990s, the way colors are used in home decor is a reflection of this change.

A wonderful kaleidoscope, with splashes of color being moved around, replaced, then showing up again where we least expect them, is part of the change. The color palette has expanded with the addition of warm, more vibrant colors that lend a great deal of visual interest.

There are starker contrasts. Walls are getting lighter, and furniture is being deepened.

Wicker is a prime example. It has been around for a while, having progressed from all white to terrific pastels. But now it's appearing in greens, wines and browns, accented by brightly patterned slipcovers, pillows, seats and backs.

In mood, international influences are very strong and eclecticism remains the byword. The ethnic and Asian notes we have become accustomed to are continuing, but they are being played out with remarkable new twists. One perfect Japanese Imari plate, for example, is placed on a light blond Scandinavian wood table. The blend of these starkly different styles is stunning and dramatic.

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OLD WORLD TRADITION has made a strong comeback, as roses and floral patterns continue to gain favor. These designs blend elegance and comfort for a very warm, inviting and livable atmosphere. They often feature red, which is also used freely as a strong accent color in accessories.

Though the color palette remains basically warm, with emphasis on vibrancy and neutrals, the new beginnings of a new coolness in interior design are apparent this fall.

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White has itself returned in an emphatic way. In both fashion and interior design, white is brilliant. It's a perfect background for all colors, creating a glare from which other colors emanate like a prism.

That's one reason white kitchen appliances are once again popular. And used starkly — almost monochromatically — on both walls and furniture, white is absolutely dazzling.

Living rooms remain quite warm in color, with vibrant accents playing off that warmth. Of course, many people continue to favor neutrals, which are economic because they can be lived with so comfortably for long periods of time.

NEUTRALS ARE ALSO helpful in creating a light, airy feeling and improving the flow from one room to another — two excellent ways to make small living spaces larger.

A marvelous new look comes from tinted glass, which replaces the usual clear glass in tabletops, dinnerware and ceramics. Mexican cobalt blues lend cool, bright accents to the table.

And, perhaps, even more than elsewhere, "eclectic" remains the key word in tabletop.

And there is lots and lots of whimsy. People are willing to be more adventurous and throw caution to the winds. Whoever said all the pieces have to match?

If you are basically comfortable with the decor but have a desire for something fresh and new, a one-room experiment is often satisfying. The bedroom is the perfect location; closed off from the rest of the house, it can be discretely repainted if the experiment goes awry. An alternate possibility is a small out-of-the-way guest bathroom.

FOR A BRIEF of the prominent color families available this fall, begin with the vibrant autumn colors, which are traditional but have been made more vivid now. They include brick red, chili, amber yellow, lilac rose, classic blue, daffodil, mineral red (an orange red) and violet purple.

Next are the clean outdoor colors. Bluegrass, which is more green than blue, is notable, as are posy green, purple heather, sage green, porcelain green and straw.

Then there are the neutrals. And there is a generous selection. Reed yellow, lambswool, cream pearl and angora are all lovely winter whites. They're accompanied by the classic neutrals: toasted almond, fawn (taupe), pebble, moonlight, smoked pearl, atmosphere, desert dust, nugget (a camel color), gray sand and dusted coral.

But the neutrals have been further enriched this year by the expanded neutrals, which have the barest hint of tint. These are soft, lovely colors we can live with for a long time without tiring of them. They have such delicate names as dusty pink, cameo rose, coral blush, antelope (almost a celery green), gray violet, pinkish gray, rose lilac and asparagus green.

Finally, there are what can best be described as the inky deep tones — wonderful classic mixing colors in the Old World style that help make the transition from fall to winter. Promi-

nent among them are plum wine, burgundy, brownstone, desert palm (greenish brown), ebony (blue black), argyle purple and china blue.

Consider some of the myriad ways you can bring all of these together. Using coral blush as a background color, combine it with argyle purple and sage green.

OR YOU MIGHT paint our family room walls a soft, very creamy off-white. Then take a piece of light wicker furniture and paint it desert dust, a warm deep tan. And pick up a print that combines desert dust with moonlight, gunmetal and pale lilac.

In our dining room we could blend straw, coral blush and plum wine for an interesting and unusual decor. We might paint the walls a coral blush, which has appetite appeal. You could bring in the colors with a deep, luxurious Aubusson carpet with a floral print.

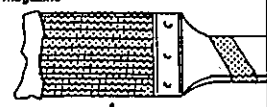
For an elegant Old World bedroom, you could create a cool, restful haven by painting the walls a light version of porcelain green. You would then select a gorgeous comforter with a traditional English Country deep floral print for the bed. The mix of porcelain green, purple and brick red will work beautifully.

HOMEFACTS

■ Best home-improvement projects for recouping the expenditure upon resale.

1. Interior face-lift (paint, carpet, wallpaper) 106%
2. Furnace replacement 90%
3. Fireplace addition 86%
4. Exterior painting 81%
5. Central air conditioning 80%
6. Bathroom (standard) 74%
7. Kitchen face-lift 73%
8. Island kitchen (standard) 72%
9. Basement conversion 71%
10. Minor energy upgrade 71%

SOURCE: Practical Homeowner magazine



Copley News Service

HOMEFACTS

■ Why Americans redecorate their homes.

The 10 most popular reasons why people redecorate their homes.

1. Boredom.
2. Want home to be more fashionable.
3. Moved.
4. Needed more space.
5. Wanted to express their personality.
6. Irresistible urge.
7. Pre-selling spruce-up.
8. Got married.
9. New baby.
10. Wanted change in lifestyle.

■ One-in-five Americans rearranges his or her furniture at least once a month.

SOURCE: Spiegel Inc. survey

Copley News Service