

COLOUR

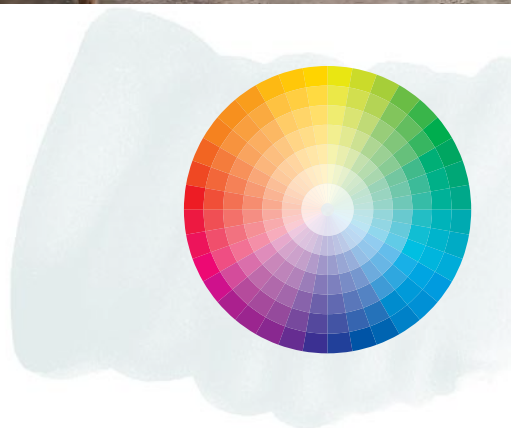
# How to choose a colour scheme

Armed with paint charts but still unclear how to create a palette of colours that will work perfectly together? Follow our guide and all will be revealed

Text by Bibby + Brady Interior Design.



Using analogous colours (such as the green and yellow combo above) creates a welcoming, calm vibe which feels a little richer than a monochromatic scheme (like the blue tones shown opposite top).



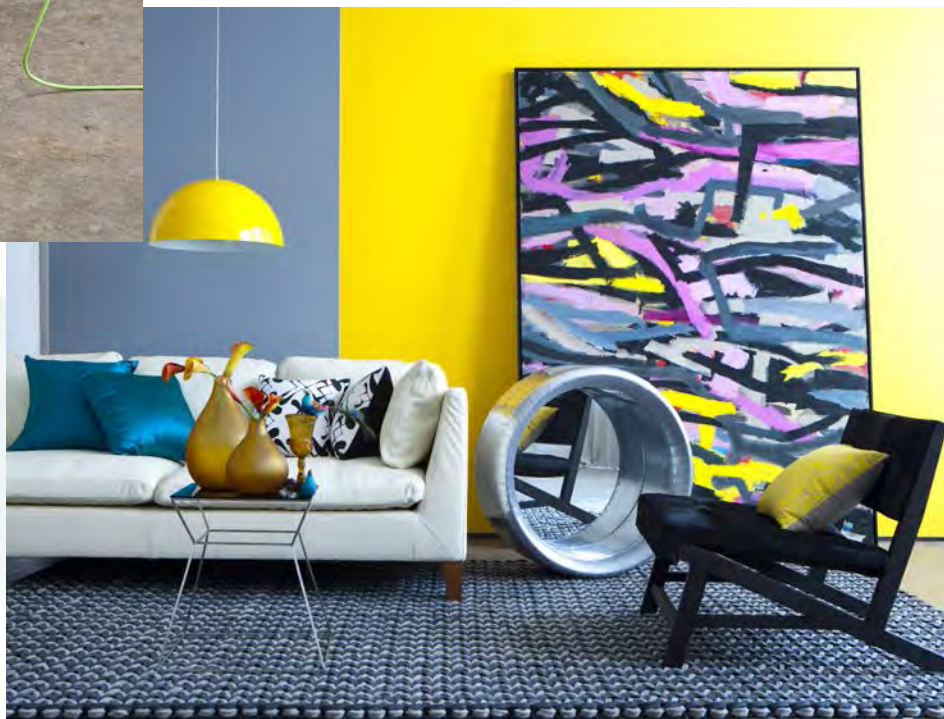
Colour has the ability to transform a space, to set the mood for a room and influence its style and personality. Whether you want to excite, inspire, welcome or soothe, the key is to choose a colour palette which embraces you when you walk through the door. It should make you happy, and to do that the colours need to be well balanced and inviting. To choose your perfect palette you need to have a basic knowledge of colour.

## THE COLOUR WHEEL

Your colour palette should be no more than three or four hues. To understand which colours will work together, start by looking at a colour wheel. The primary colours are red, blue and yellow; they're pure colours and cannot be created by mixing other colours together. Secondary colours are orange, green and purple, made from equal parts of two primary colours. Tertiary colours are a mixture of primary and secondary colours in varying parts.

## TERMINOLOGY

Quite simply, hue is another word for colour. Tints, tones and shades are variations of hues. Tints, sometimes known as pastels, are any colour with white added. A shade is a colour with black added, and tones are created by adding both white and black.



Photography by Tony Amos and Maree Homer [Homer/bauersyndication.com.au](http://bauersyndication.com.au).

There are four different kinds of colour schemes:

### MONOCHROMATIC

This uses tone on tone of the same colour, adding different amounts of black and white to darken or lighten the colour. For example, a cobalt blue used with a pale sky blue and a dark, inky blue. This is a very serene and relaxing scheme.



From left: Resene 'Bunting', Resene 'St Tropaz', Resene 'Optimist', Resene 'Subzero', Resene 'Delta Blue', Resene 'Timeout' and Resene 'Solitude'.



Photography by Tony Amos and Nick Scott [bauersyndication.com.au](http://bauersyndication.com.au).

### ANALOGOUS

For this scheme you use colours which appear next to each other on the colour wheel. For example, team yellow with green or orange, and blue with green or purple, to create a calming, welcoming palette.



Clockwise from top left: Resene 'Moonbeam', Resene 'Romantic', Resene 'Energy Yellow' and Resene 'Mint Tulip'.



### COMPLEMENTARY

Take opposing colours on the colour wheel, such as blue and orange, green and red. This creates a bold and high-energy scheme if you use the colours in equal measure, or you can choose one as an accent colour and use it in smaller doses.

Resene 'Riptide' and Resene 'Geraldine'.



### CONTRAST

For a more dramatic effect, opt for a contrasting colour palette. In this scheme, you choose a trio of colours equidistant from each other on the wheel, for example, green, purple and orange. These tend to be quite vibrant, so balance the colours carefully. Let one colour dominate and use the others as accents, or use tints and tones of your hues.



From top: Resene 'Centre Stage', Resene 'Onahau', and Resene 'Crusta'.





## BRIGHT VS NEUTRAL

Now armed with all that knowledge, you will be much more confident choosing your palette. Are you leaning towards a quiet, relaxing space, or something with more energy? A serene white, grey or beige space, with natural elements such as wood and stone, is undoubtedly soothing. But rooms lacking architectural character can truly benefit from the personality and drama that colour brings to the table. There is no right or wrong answer – it's all about which you prefer. Which one makes you happy?

## NEUTRALS

Beige on beige can be terribly boring, so rather than using colour to grab attention, create interest through texture, contrast and shape. A successful neutral monochromatic scheme combines lots of texture – wood, stone, wool, leather, velvet – then add in some contrast by layering opposing materials. Whether you choose grey, beige or 'greige' (a warm grey), using varying shades of that colour with touches of charcoal and black will give contrast and depth, and keep your space from looking one-dimensional.

Eliminating colour shines a spotlight on beautiful and interesting shapes. Without the distraction of colour, the eye lingers on the curve of a chair, a gorgeous woodgrain or the nuances of an artwork, so try to invest in some stand-out pieces. Add drama with scale: create a focal point with a large brass chandelier or an oversized black and white photograph. Without colour it's even more important to get all other elements just right.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF UNDERTONES

When it comes to putting colours together, one of the most successful techniques is to understand the undertone of each one. This is what lies beneath, what the human eye doesn't immediately see. Take blue, for example. Turquoise has an undertone of green; periwinkle an undertone of violet. If your colours don't harmonise and have different undertones they will seem 'off'. One way to determine the undertone is to place your chosen shade alongside its true colour on the colour wheel. Your yellow paint swatch might magically appear green; in other words, it has a green undertone.

This also applies to white, which is why choosing a white paint isn't as simple as it seems. If you have a very bright, sunny room, choose a white with a green or blue undertone to create a cooler effect. White with a yellow undertone can be used to add a buttery colour to the walls for a warmer feel. Knowing your home, how much natural light it gets, and from where, is the first step in choosing your paint colours. Your perfect colour palette will have harmonious undertones in a colour scheme that reflects the mood you want to create (eg, for a calm vibe: monochromatic or analogous; for vibrancy: complementary or contrast).



Photography by John Paul Urizar and Chris Warnes.



## BRIGHTS

When choosing colours, there are a number of ways to start. You could take your cue from a key piece that you love – an artwork, a rug, a favourite fabric. If you adore the item, you'll probably love those colours reflected elsewhere in the room. Tear pages out of magazines, or start a Pinterest board – you'll be surprised at how quickly a pattern emerges.

The most perfect colour combinations are found in nature. Choose a calming, analogous scheme inspired by the beach – greens, blues and soft yellow tones. Or maybe the complementary hues of red and green with a hint of pink found in a flower.

Once you have made your selection, make sure you work with varying tones of those colours for a richer, more interesting look. Choose an accent colour to introduce in small doses, a vibrant shade which will balance your main colour choice – hot pink warms a blue palette; pops of yellow look great with teal or green. Don't be afraid to embrace the dark side; rather than being depressing, deep colours can be both mysterious and cosy.



A colour palette could spring to life from a treasured object, like the small red print in the bedroom above. There's a lot going on in this inviting outdoor setting (right) but the analogous hues of blue and purple ensure harmony.



Photography by Chris Warnes, Maree Homer and John Paul Urizar.

## AND FINALLY...

Different light will alter a colour's appearance, so test your colours by placing paint swatches and fabric in your home and watching how they change through the day and into the evening. A room's truest colours are found in the daylight; the colours will also be affected as the light changes through the seasons.

Whether you favour neutrals or brights, calm or drama, create a cohesive flow by repeating your chosen colour palette throughout your home, and using colours in adjacent rooms that complement each other. Choosing colours for your home needn't be stressful. Take your time, listen to your instincts, and if all else fails, call in the professionals.

## COLOUR PALETTES WE'RE LOVING

### Complementary colour scheme

From top: Resene 'Coriander' and Resene 'Quarter Merino' (white with a green undertone) with Resene 'Glorious' as an accent colour.



### Analogous colour scheme

Clockwise from middle: Resene 'Jungle Mist', Resene 'Free Spirit' and Resene 'Bounce'. Take it one step further by adding Resene 'Dust Storm' and 'Resene Smitten'.



### Monochromatic colour scheme

From top: Resene 'Midnight Oil', Resene 'Celestial Blue' and Resene 'Half Duck Egg Blue'.

