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# Color

*Crisp greens, spa blues, orange hues, brown tones, pops of purple and black/white are the hot colors for the kitchen and bath.*

# Cornucopia

BY BARBARA CAPELLA LOEHR

Since consumers have become increasingly more educated about design, and they now fear color considerably less, color beyond mere accents has been steadily gaining ground in the kitchen and bath. And the future for kitchens and baths is alive with more daring color choices than ever, it seems.

"At the turn of the century, colors and design were going very modern and contemporary. After 9/11 there was a turn back toward the more familiar, warmer, traditional, Tuscan and Old World looks and colors. Now,

we are heading toward modern/contemporary, but mixing it with colors and styles that recall simpler times as we walk the line of technology," observes Belle Smith, CKD, CID and architectural representative for Benjamin Moore & Co. in Montvale, NJ. She's based in Oyster Bay Cove, NY.

This trend is evidenced by the palettes kitchen/bath designers are reporting, the ones the Color Marketing Group (CMG), The Color Association of the U.S. (CAUS), Pantone, Benjamin Moore, Sherwin-Williams and DuPont

Surfaces are all forecasting for 2006-2008, and even at the recent K/BIS, where color was abundant.

Color also reflects other lifestyle trends. For instance, in kitchens and baths, soothing spa blues and more natural greens speak to relaxation and the growing interest in 'green' design. Peach and deep orange hues stir nostalgia and excitement. A host of muted blue-tone, burgundy and berry reds add warmth. Browns are fast becoming the new neutral. And the combination of black and white is making a comeback.

"Color is warmer, clearer and brighter than it was in 2005. Oranges, sophisticated reds and browns dominate the palette, with yellow influencing all colors. In 2006 we're seeing beautiful combinations of browns, aquas and yellow-based greens, as well as reds and browns mixed with whites in patterning," notes Melanie C. Wood, past president of CMG, design consultant and owner of Melanie Wood Designs, Inc. in Knoxville, TN.

"Right now, the overall direction of color continues to be inspired

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Spa blues, true blues and indigo blues are re-emerging, as metallic surfaces such as stainless steel are becoming softer and more brushed in nature. Shown at right is a kitchen illustrating this trend that was designed by Frederick Flock, CKD, CBD of Bella Cucina, Inc. in Southfield, MI.

Citrus greens and glass greens with some subtle shimmer and a lot of clarity and lightness are gaining ground, says designers and color forecasters. As an example, shown at left is CaesarStone's Apple Martini, which is part of the firm's Embellish collection of quartz surfaces. Below is an example of neutral-toned countertops being used as a canvas. This kitchen was designed by Erica S. Westerth, CKD of XTC Design Inc. in Toronto, Ontario, Canada.



Photo: ANIDA

by the natural environment," believes Ginguei Ebnesajjad, director of product styling and development for DuPont Surfaces in Wilmington, DE. "Greens have become a classic in American homes. The novelty is the polarization of the range of greens. The warm greens – i.e., yellowed green – have been popular in fashion and are making their way

into homes, while the cooler greens – or green-blues – are gaining momentum as accents to the warm color scheme most popular in home interiors today."

Christine Chow, director of membership for CAUS in New York, NY, sees a blending of darker colors with very dark colors, providing a contrast that she feels will be a key trend going forward.

She also agrees with Ebnesajjad's assessment of green, noting, "Citrus greens like mint and mojito, and glass greens with some subtle shimmer and a lot of clarity and lightness, are gaining ground after having evolved from the sage greens of the 1990s. There are also more true blues, such as cobalt blue and even indigo blue, and less teal blues."

According to the Sherwin-Williams 2006 Color Trends Forecast, put forth by the Cleveland, OH-based company's director of color marketing and design, Sheri Thompson, this year's color focus is on hues that "unite close-to-home comfort with world-view attitude to create a palette rich with potential." Color families include spa colors, natural hues, a brown palette, a set of opulent shades pulled from Old World tapestries, and shades based on far-off vacation spots.

#### THE NEW NEUTRALS

However, just as consumers have gotten more comfortable with applying color to various rooms in the house, they are still opting for more neutral tones in the kitchen and bath. The new cooler shades of white are holding strong in permanent installations such as cabinetry, plumbing fixtures, flooring, tile and countertops.

"There is some concern about the world around us that's



Photo: ANIDA



another introduction of blue.

"Softened, natural tones remain popular as a backdrop, while colors for home furnishings and accessories are becoming cleaner and fresher. As the largest surface area in the kitchen, rich, neutral-toned countertops are being used as a canvas, with fresh splashes of glossy color infused sparingly through complementary appliances," notes Ebnasajjad.

"The general trend is a neutralization of color – lots of tones on tones, browns, grays,

being used right now, and there is no [one] specific 'hot' color palette, creativity is achieved through unique ways of combining color, texture and materials... Together with texture and materiality, color helps define the aesthetic value of any given surface or material," believes Ebnasajjad.

"Patterns are hot now," adds Chow, "as are coral accents, which work well with a lot of honey tones and warm browns that are currently popular for cabinetry."

Texture can also be seen in the

causing some to approach color with some caution, which is why you see big-ticket items in more neutral colors," observes Leatrice Eiseman. She's the Seattle, WA-based director of the Pantone Color Institute for Pantone, Inc., which is headquartered in Carlstadt, NJ. "However, I don't think everyone will be painting their walls white or taupe. We'll simply see more thought go into the brighter hues we choose."

Indeed, the splashes of bolder color being forecast are popping up on walls, window treatments, accessories and soft goods since these items offer a more cost-effective opportunity for color exploration. These choices include muted tones of red, deep shades

While there are some brighter greens, blues, oranges, reds and purples, textured neutrals in different materials are a big story, as well, note experts, as evidenced by the DuPont Zodiac countertop in Copper Sunset above and the Tumbleweed countertop from the DuPont Corian Private Collection.

of brown and darker wood tones like cherry, and intrinsic shades such as citrus green, bright blue, orange, coral and peach that recall the more vibrant shades of the mid-20th century. More specifically, Eiseman further cites orange, hot pink, bright yellows, hot purple and

blacks," believes Doty Horn, director of color and design for Benjamin Moore & Co. In fact, the firm based one of its components of its Color Pulse 2007 on this idea, and used different tones of skin to illustrate it, and inspire new colors.

"[And] because all colors are

rise in brushed, metallic surfaces, such as brushed nickel hardware and faucets, and stainless steel appliances, she adds. Eiseman agrees, also citing more metallics, and brushed and textured surfaces. And, hardware finishes are predominately soft silver, pewter or rustic, but golds



## Color Key: Simple Tips for When and How to Use Color in Kitchen and Bath Design

When designing a space, it is important for kitchen and bath designers to help homeowners identify a color plan. "Color performs a certain role," says Nancy Kobschull, a member of the Color Marketing Group and visuals coordinator for Reico Kitchen & Bath, whose headquarters are located in Annandale, VA. "A bonding neutral can pull elements together such as a gray or beige, and a kitchen can appear larger if bonded appropriately."

Color should always support the theme for a room, continues Kobschull. A good rule of thumb is to choose three colors in a room, she advises. A dominant color would be used for walls, carpeting and fabric backgrounds. A secondary color would be found throughout the room in fabrics and accessories and an accent color would be used sparingly to give energy and excitement to a room.

The mood or feeling of a room is created by a

homeowner's choice of colors, style of furnishings, the amount of texture and pattern chosen and the types of accessories that punctuate a kitchen or bath. For example, "warm wood tones and colors used in the kitchen can give energy to the day. On the other hand, cool, water colors for baths can establish a serene and spa-like atmosphere. Neutrals promote a feeling of tranquility and a desire to relax in [master] bedroom [suites]," notes Kobschull.

Because color can look different at various times of the day, it's important for designers to consider when the room will be used most frequently. Color on the walls can reflect off each other, and may appear too intense on all walls of a room. It's also important to consider furniture, and other elements such as fixtures, appliances, cabinet tones and countertop materials, in a kitchen, bath or other type of living area. The furniture homeowners plan to buy

and currently own can both limit and suggest possible color schemes, notes Kobschull. The size and shape of the furniture should also be considered.

Nature inspires the most creative combination of color, notes Kobschull. She suggests looking in flower gardens or other natural surroundings to choose hues that work the best in the kitchen, bath or entire house. Accessories such as pictures or vases also can spark an idea for color combinations.

In conclusion, Kobschull offers some basic guidelines that can help designers put colors together effectively for their clients. They include:

- Limit the number of colors from two to four.
- Use colors in distinctly different quantities.
- Repeat colors more than once in a room.
- Balance color in a room by repeating the colors throughout the space itself.

— Courtesy of Reico Kitchen & Bath

and coppers are on the rise.

At the same time, cabinets seem to be in two general categories: very dark browns or very light tones of taupe and butter. There's also the rise in exotic woods such as wenge, says Horn, who saw this last year at the Cologne Furniture Fair.

"In all colorations, however, letting the grain show through seems increasingly important," says Wood.

Richard J. Rizzi, CKD, NKBA member, and president/owner of North Country Kitchen & Bath, Inc. in St. James, NY, agrees: "Cabinets are moving away from painted and glazed to darker wood stains that show cherry and mahogany. There is also a contrast between countertops and cabinets



— either darker cabinets and lighter countertops, or vice versa."

Countertops and vanities remain neutral, as natural stones and granites continue to dominate. "Lately, I've been selling granites that have more veining and have a wild quality to them, and vary from brown neutrals to burgundy," notes Rizzi.

#### FUTURE FORWARD

Brown will continue to be the new neutral, green will take on greater meaning as consumers become more eco-savvy, blue will become richer, more aquatic in tone, and colors drawn from different cultures around

the world will become more predominant, designers and color forecasters agree.

In 2007 and 2008, Wood sees greens moving to a blue-based orientation, as the yellow-influenced greens recede. The spa blues and blue-based greens will be used in combination. Reds will continue to play an important part as they diverge in two different directions: the warm, yellow-based reds, as influenced from India and central America, as well as the blue-based, cooler reds that are more sophisticated.

"We will also see complex neutrals move to the forefront as

The spa blues and blue-based greens will be used in combination, say experts. And, they add, reds will continue to play a key part as they diverge in two different directions: the warm, yellow-based reds, as influenced from India and Central America, as well as the blue-based, cooler reds that are more sophisticated. Shown above is a kitchen from Reico Kitchen & Bath. At left is a colorful bath courtesy of Merilat.

the naturals take an important, environmental position in our lives. These are soft, environmental colors that help us find tranquility in a hectic world," notes Wood.

"People will continue to want more natural-looking colors, colors that resemble colors found in nature, more vegetable-dyed colors. Why? I think it's because people are so overloaded with technology and other stress, they will want to get back to basics. They will want a palette that's earthy, something akin to the colors that evolved from the Arts and Crafts movement of a century ago," believes Denise Turner, ASID, CID, member of CMG. She runs The Room Turners in Alta Loma CA.

In addition, white, black and white, and sophisticated purple hues such as those in the lilac

family seem to be the hot picks going forward.

"[Overall] kitchen colors seem to be moving in two directions: a warm grey with brown, black and white, accented with oranges for the more urban, contemporary looks, and warm butter yellows, softened greens and blues for a more traditional approach," believes Wood, adding, "Natural colors dominate the fixtures for 2006, but white seems to be [emerging] to complement the freshness of the spa colors for 2007 and 2008."

"A pure, clean white is my choice for a color that will continue to gain ground," states Ebnesajjad.

"There will be purification of the color palette, so white will not be seen as a 'cop-out,' but rather as a symbol of health in the kitchen and bath," says Eiseman. "And, as evidenced by the Salone Internazionale del Mobile [Milan Furniture Fair] last month, there will be a lot more black and white in the kitchen, and more color in the bath."

"There is also a purple story, one that features a bluer hue, such as a periwinkle, berry or blacker purple, and one that's brighter, hotter," notes Horn.

"I'm also seeing eggplant, or 'aubergine,' which is a deeper, richer purple color in my market," concludes Heather Moe, the lead designer with La Jolla, CA-based South Pacific Kitchen and Construction, Inc. **KBDN**