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# In the Mood for a Makeover?

**Make an Emotional Connection with a New Coat of Paint**

*by Douglas Glenn Clark*

Earth tones may very well dominate interior design in 2007, but that doesn't mean homeowners won't also seek the excitement of fiery red or the comfort of soothing blue. And interior designers agree that no matter what hue ultimately wins "most popular" status this year, consumers are growing savvier about creating mood through color.

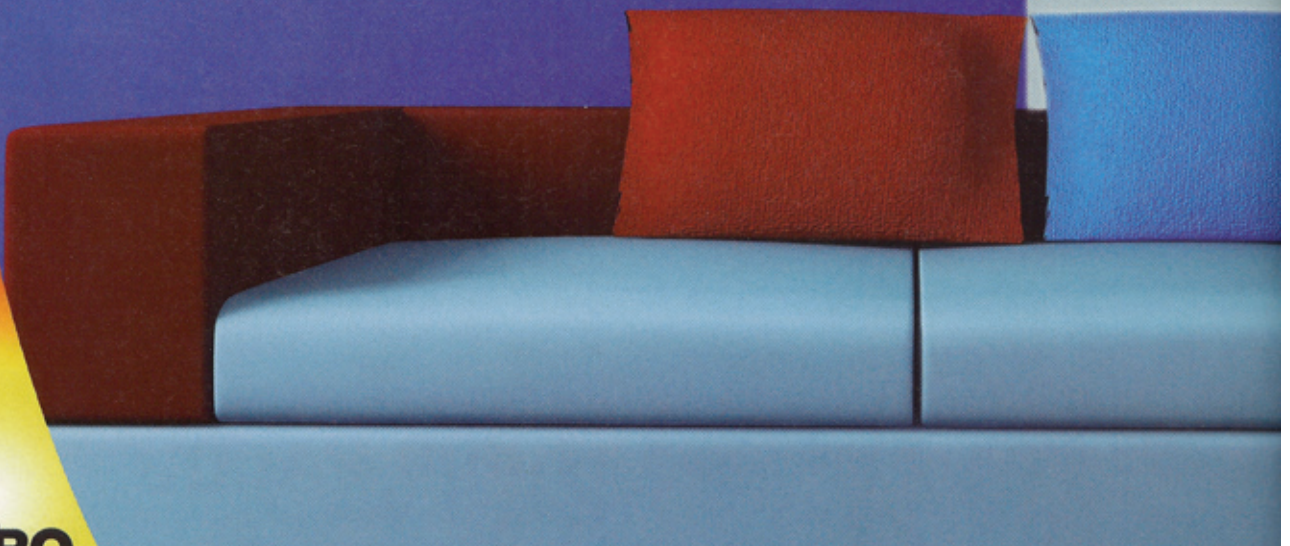
"The client is the boss. You've got to give them what they want," said Peter Davidson, a Santa Monica interior designer.

Yet the connection to color is so emotional that delivering the goods is not always as simple as it might seem. Not even for Davidson, whose 20 years of experience includes set design for film and television. "A person may say, 'I want blue.' But there are a lot of blues. You need to understand what that choice is all about," he said.

Davidson has designed sets for television shows, including the new sitcom *In Case of Emergency*, as well as for film and television dramas, including *Kill Bill*, *Adaptation* and *Bones*. The type of show strongly influences his palette, he said. "If it's a comedy, I might use bolder and flatter colors. You push the characters out in front of it," he said. "With dramatic work, the colors will be more subtle, less flat and more three-dimensional."

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Davidson uses his experience analyzing film and television scripts to better understand the needs of his residential clients.

"In the film industry, I work from the script and make decisions based upon what the script is telling me and what the characters are like," he said. "In real-life situations, I try to find the subtext, the subconscious metaphor that will make them satisfied and make the space work for them."

### ***The Consumer is the Trend***

Although it may seem that the manufacturers of paint and other home décor materials tell consumers each year what's hot and what's not, Denise Turner said the opposite is true. Turner, a color forecaster and interior designer based in Alta Loma, Calif., said manufacturers of everything from home décor products to automobiles want to know what excites consumers. And they count on color experts like Turner to tell them.

"Color decisions are costly," she said.

"When we say these colors are 'in,' it means we've really done our homework.

And manufacturers will create their palettes accordingly – or they'll lose a lot of money."

Turner is a member of the Color Marketing Group, or CMG, of Alexandria, Va., a nonprofit organization of design professionals. Twice a year Turner and her peers meet to discuss what spectrum of colors they sense consumers want. And every cultural event imaginable – celebrity awards shows, international crises, elections, new product packaging – may provide clues to color trends that may take years to emerge.

The palette for 2007 seems to be more vivid. But '08 looks a little more subdued," she said. Turner said the move to more subdued colors may be an indication that consumers want to feel more grounded and stable. This emotional need can be met with browns and other earth tones.

Deep blues might remain popular because they suggest tranquility.

"Blues came in big this year," she said. "We feel safe with blue.

That's why police often dress in blue. Color does affect us emotionally," she said.





## And the Award Goes To...

Whatever ultimately are seen as the top colors of 2007, it's a safe bet that shades of red and blue will be among them.

For example, the Pantone Color Institute in Carlstadt, New Jersey, has named Chili Pepper the color of the year for 2007.

"Whether expressing danger, celebration, love or passion, red will not be ignored," Leatrice Eiseman, executive director, wrote on the Pantone Web site.

CMG has announced that down-to-earth colors will dominate interior decoration in 2007. Yet at the CMG convention in Denver last April, more than 400 design professionals also noted that red and blue would remain influential colors throughout 2007.

# “...the Pantone Color Institute...has named Chili Pepper the Color of the Year For 2007.”

CMG members said the popularity of red – a color that can both cool and warm – reveals the consumer's need to make an emotional connection with color. It may also reflect the growing cultural influence of the 2008 Beijing Olympics.

The Sherwin-Williams color trends of 2007 provide a little of something for everyone.

Rather than name one or two colors, the 138-year-old company has named five major categories: Balanced Living, Sultry Origins, Understated Elegance, Virtual Re-mix and Kinetic Contrasts.

The Sherwin-Williams trend menu embraces the whole spectrum of colors other experts say will dominate 2007, from muted down-to-earth tones to the sexy influence of flaming red.



## Getting to Know the Inner Hue

The 2007 Screen Actors Guild Awards in January were a walking, talking epitome of this year's range of interior design color trends. Some female celebrities graced the traditional red carpet wearing gowns fashioned in muted flesh, jewel and earth tones, while others went to extremes with crimson, turquoise and emerald green. If men and women watching celebrity shows dream a bit about what they might wear to such an event, that's good. Because experts like Turner and Davidson say getting to know your own tastes and tendencies will help when choosing color for your living space.

If you're unsure of what colors best suit you, consider taking the color personality test provided by Better Homes and Gardens. To find the test, go to [www.bhg.com](http://www.bhg.com) and type "color personality test" in the search area. You'll land on a page that offers a variety of tests that may help you discover the inner hue. There are plenty of other Web sites to consult when learning about color, including [www.sensationalcolor.com](http://www.sensationalcolor.com) or [www.colorexpert.com](http://www.colorexpert.com). And books like Susan Sargeant's *ColorScapes* provide guidance for creating a palette of personal color favorites.

If you decide choosing color is just too difficult and think that just painting everything white is an easy solution, think again, says West Hollywood designer Brad Dunning. "Our biggest challenge is something that sounds simple yet actually is not. Choosing the right white, for example," he said. Dunning said white is difficult to choose, because there are so many shades to compare. You don't want a shade that is too cool, for example. And it has to be coordinated with floor material and cabinets. "I had a client who chose carpet with a hint of rose, "It was a disaster," he said. And combined with the shade of white he chose for the walls, Dunning said his cautionary tale is indicative of how careful homeowners must be when choosing color. "In some cases, the tiniest bit of pink in floor material will ruin the white." And possibly change your mood.