

The Art of Selecting Wall Color



Painting a room is one of the easiest and least expensive ways to make a change in the way your home looks. But, the selection process takes time and patience. In fact, it's an art in itself. And, I don't know about you, but I'm getting so tired of hearing Matt tell me to hurry up and just pick a color! He is so anxious to get the job started and then finished, that he doesn't always give me the amount of time I need to really be sure I have the perfect paint color

for the walls. What he doesn't understand is that I don't want him to have to paint the walls over again when I don't like the color I chose!

I will say that he has learned to make a sample board of the colors I select so I can see them in larger swatches than the chip on the paint strip, and this has really helped me. In fact, purchasing a couple quarts of your favorite colors is a great way to make sure the color is right for you before painting the entire room, and then regretting even picking up a brush to make an improvement.

On one occasion, I did have Matt paint one wall in a Master Bedroom we were working on in several different colors to illustrate the impact a certain color choice can have on the furniture and fabrics in a room. We were working with a lovely bedroom suite in dark cherry. The bedspread was a lovely floral on a yellow ground that gave us all the color options we used for the walls. Eventually, it truly became a showcase room, but the painting process was a wonderful learning experience in the selection of color.



As always, I started with the room's inspiration piece to find my colors. I used the lovely floral bedspread and its variety of colors to select three that I thought might be logical choices. The background of the fabric was yellow as were several accessory pillows that I had selected, so it was the first color I chose, and Matt got started painting the wall. Once it was dry, we pushed the furniture in place, and dressed the bed. Then, we started

asking questions and taking notes. When selecting the background color of a print for the wall color, what were the effects? First, we felt it made the bedspread seem to expand even further into the room, as if the walls were also the background of the fabric. This created a certain harmony to the room, and as the walls began to blend into the spread, the beautiful wood furniture began to stand out. As for the lovely greens and rose tones in the fabric, they all seemed equally important as well as very warm and vibrant.



The next color I chose was a rose from the flowers. Knowing that red and yellows are both warm colors, I was sure the rose would be slightly unexpected, but certainly warm and inviting. Once the wall was painted and dry, we again set up the vignette and began to discuss how we felt about the new color. Our first thought was that the bedspread seemed smaller, as did the room. The stronger rose did advance, and close things in a bit. Also, I selected the rose without regard to

the hue of the wood furniture. Once the rose was on the wall, some of the beauty of the wood was lost. I won't say it clashed with the wood tones; the rose just didn't enhance it at all. The last thing we noticed is that the roses

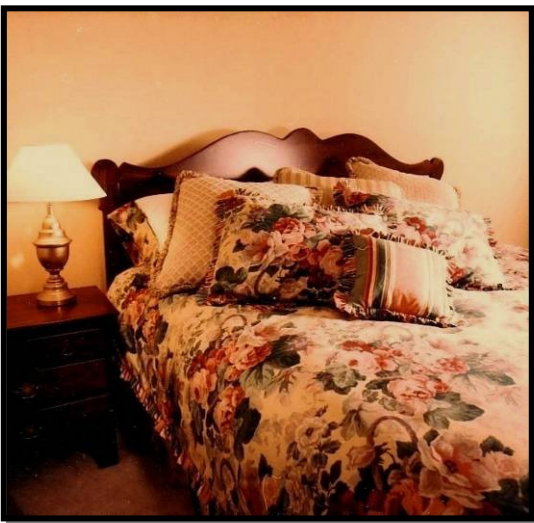
on the bedspread did seem to pop out and be noticed much more on the spread than before, as if the wall color was pulling them off the fabric.



My last color choice was a green from the leaves. The green, being from the cool side of the color wheel, immediately calmed the room down. The depth of the green color made the bedspread seem even smaller. This phenomenon I can't quite figure out, but it could have something to do with the crisp contrast between the green and the yellow bedspread, making the line where they meet most evident.

Another effect of the green, and one that was expected after the results with the rose was that the leaves of the bedspread were now popping out of the pattern. It really was a lovely combination, sophisticated enough for a master bedroom, a bit more masculine to balance the strong floral, and the green was a nice contrast to the warmth of the wood furniture.

Now I know I said I selected three colors, but once we started this whole process, we wanted to adjust the colors we chose to see what difference they might make.



We deepened the yellow walls to a definite gold and found that although we might like the richer color alone, it began to steal the show away from the bedspread. And, with it being our focal point, and inspiration for the entire room, we didn't want the wall color to steal its thunder.



We also tried lightening the green, thinking that the deep accent color might also be a bit too much for the room. We liked the fact that the green was a nice background for the pretty cherry wood while at the same time still picking up the green in the bedspread. The subtleness of the green was calming and made the room feel much more restful than did the deeper accent green.

So, let's recap, always use an inspiration piece that will be a focus for your room to help select a wall color. Then, consider what you want the walls of the room to do for you. If you love the pattern and colors of your inspiration piece, and want them to stand out and envelop the room, paint the walls in the background color of the print. If you want to highlight a particular color from the print, paint the walls to match that color. Just remember, for the best results, keep any wood or metal furniture finishes in mind as you select. Also, if you are at a stalemate between a warm red, orange or yellow and a cool green, blue or violet, remember that cool colors will add sophistication, calm and quiet to a room. Warmer colors tend to liven, warm and brighten a space.

So, that's what I learned on the "art of selecting wall color" so that perhaps you can select the right color the first time, and save yourself the aggravation of hearing, "Just pick a color!" It's worked for me!

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