



SIX OF THE BEST COLOUR COMBINATIONS

Take a shortcut to winning the style stakes with failsafe shades, writes **Polly Simons**

It might seem one of the easiest parts of the building process but choosing the right colours for your interior can be one of the most demanding.

As if selecting a colour that you're not going to hate in six weeks isn't hard enough, there are still dozens of shades, strengths and paint finishes to decide on before you leave the paint shop.

"For many people, it's not that

they don't know what colour they like, it's that they can't visualise how it will look on their walls," Wendy Rennie, colour and concept manager at Haymes Paints, says.

But is there such a thing as a failsafe colour combination? We asked Wendy and a few other experts to share the colours they return to time and again.

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More Haymes Paint, haymespaint.com.au

WHITE ON WHITE

Not surprisingly, white came up as a failsafe colour option with nearly every expert.

"It's one of those things that is perceived as a lazy choice, but when you see rooms in magazines and they look great, it's usually because they have chosen the right white," says curator and author Karen McCartney, with whom photographer David Harrison wrote the book *White Rooms*.

Part of white's timeless appeal, Karen says, is what real estate agents have known forever — that a coat of white paint is the perfect way to disguise the less-than-perfect elements of a room.

"It's a quick fix," she says. "If you're in a rental and there's an ugly brick fireplace for example, a coat of white can make it disappear. It doesn't draw attention to features, because your eye glides over them."

At the same time a white backdrop ensures anything else in the room — whether that's a colourful artwork, a piece of modernist furniture or a leafy view — has twice the impact it would otherwise.

Whites are also amongst the popular colours sold by Dulux, with Natural White, Antique White USA, Lexicon Quarter and Whisper White (pictured below) all bestsellers.

"People love these whites as they are so flexible and adaptable in all spaces and scheme easily with most accessories," colour expert Andrea Lucena-Orr says.

White can easily look bland, so consider using one shade for walls and another for trim.

"The key is to do it with conviction. Like anything, if you give white the attention it deserves, it gives back," Karen says.

More Dulux, dulux.com.au



GOING GREY

Greys, particularly paired with white, have long been a design favourite for their ability to make traditional spaces feel more modern and soften spaces that can feel too stark painted white.

"We try to look at what the industry is doing, and there's been a move away from heritage colours to more modern greys and whites that work in contemporary homes and traditional spaces," says Fiona King, brand manager for Taubmans, who recommends Centurion and Augustus.

"Centurion is a blue-based grey that pairs well with Snow Ballet," she says. Add white architraves and skirting boards, or create interest with an unexpected shade — pink doors with grey are a favourite, says Fiona, who recommends pairing Tahitian Sunset with Casino or Pink Dust with Stormy Shadow (pictured).

More Taubmans, taubmans.com.au

NEUTRAL TERRITORY

At Milan Design Week there was a shift from Scandinavian cooler greys towards warmer tones, says Wendy Rennie of Haymes Paints, who selected Saltbush Plains as a future classic tone.

"It's light ochre grey and it's the perfect backdrop for soft furnishings," she says. For older homes, think beyond beige.

"Dusty pinks and peaches from Haymes (pictured below) are great for layering."

If all else fails, add black. "Throwing it at anything instantly adds contrast."



MONOCHROME MIX

Interior designer Greg Natale believes in the power of black, particularly when paired with white, as the ultimate classic combination.

"Black never dates. It goes with everything," he says.

Greg usually starts any project with a neutral base of white, grey and black before adding layers of bold colours or

pattern to balance the look.

"I work a lot with navy, mustard and green, they tend to be very clean colours," he says.

A recent project in Haberfield (pictured) used a base of grey and white with pops of green and caramel.

"It's a very layered, tailored and finished look," he says.

More Greg Natale, gregnatale.com

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NATURAL INSPIRATION

Looking outside might be all the colour inspiration you need, Stewart Horton of Horton & Co says.

The Newcastle-based interior designer recently used the colours of a mature frangipani tree that stood outside a house to create an exterior and interiors scheme that was suffused with sunny hits of yellow — much to the owners' delight.

He says the same principle can be used by others looking for colour inspiration, whether it is the blues and greens of the beach or by the soft greens and natural colours of a bush setting, such as in this room he designed for a Sydney family (pictured).

"If you live near the ocean, a red door will really stand out and that's fine, but it makes sense to use what's already there," he says.

More Horton & Co, hortonandco.com.au

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COLOUR SPLASH

Want to incorporate colour but not go overboard? Bold colour used strategically with white can help bring a house together, says Mardi Doherty, director of Melbourne-based Doherty Design Studio (whose work is pictured above), who recently used shades of aqua and deep purple to complement an angular 1980s home in Melbourne's Hawthorn. Another recent project featured a door drip-painted in bright blue.

Homes that receive a lot of natural light and date from the 1950s to 1990s and "have a bit of quirk" are particularly suited to colour, Mardi says. Function matters too: bedrooms are often more suited to colour than other areas, such as hallways.

Stacey Kouras of Stacey Kouras Design agrees that colour is an often-underrated element of a home.

"I hear a lot of people who are scared that colour will make a space look smaller, but colour can actually open up a space and add another dimension to a room," she says.

More Doherty Design Studio, dohertydesignstudio.com.au

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