

colouring by numbers

It brightens and inspires our world, can sway our thinking and influence our moods. It reflects our tastes, personality and style. Where would we be without colour?

So, the question is, what's hot this season? As always, the answer seems to start with what we're going to be wearing. The importance of colour in the fashion industry is huge and flows inevitably through to our interiors, says Vicki Grainger of Auckland's Home Ideas Centre.

"When the latest season's fashions are released, it's interesting to see how the colours filter down into home furnishings and accessories a couple of months down the line," she says. "It's very exciting that colour palettes are influenced by designers from all the creative industries – the possibilities are endless."

While feminine pastels in aqua, greens and pinks were big over the summer, this season sees a colour palette more inspired by nature and lifestyle themes. The focus seems to be falling not so much on colour intensity, but on how we combine hues. It's about bringing together warmth, energy and an expressive contemporary mood to create a welcoming and harmonious environment in the home, says Sarah Mason, designer and colour specialist with carpet manufacturer Feltex.

She groups this season's colours into three themes: Nature Lux, Metro Moderne and Neo Baroque. The first is a palette of colour-saturated neutrals including warm golds and shades inspired by banana, tobacco and raffia, complemented by cooler greys, greens and silvers. The Metro Moderne palette is more industrially inspired,

encompassing black and white, steel silver, neutral grey-greens, and milk chocolate, latte and cappuccino browns. These are lifted by warm red, orange and royal purple. Finally, the Neo Baroque theme is a palette of soft neutrals and pearlescent white, with delicate accents in champagne, ivory and skin tones. These are matched with palest pink, peach, lilac and aqua, showing that the shades of summer are still putting in a presence.

"Colour trends don't change overnight and it's exciting keeping up to date with colour use," says Peta Tearle, artist and designer at the Colour colour and design studio. "I'm always big on people using colour in a fresh way."

The simplest way to play with colour in your home is with paint. It's quick and easy, and it's no problem to change if you're unhappy with the results. And we're also becoming bolder in our use of colour to accessorise our walls, experimenting with textiles, artworks and carpets, and drawing our inspiration from travel, history and even recent events, says Sarah.

"People are definitely being braver with their wall colours and soft furnishings," she says.

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colours for 2006

There are no wrong answers when it comes to choosing colour. Whatever works for you is right for you. When you're working on getting the combinations right, check out the brand new Resene The Range 2006, a collection of 186 classic and contemporary colours, metallics, mineral effects and wood finishes created for tomorrow, today.



And what does The Range 2006 tell us about colour use? It shows us that colour partnerships are not about precisely capturing one hue, but more about combining shades and tones to achieve balance, atmosphere and aesthetic appeal. It's about shades surprising the senses, fresh and luxurious; grabbing attention without aggression; being eye-catching without being loud. It's about playful combinations of seemingly wild choices complementing more sustainable hues and about scattered accents emerging to become more dominant backgrounds.

Our desire for more relaxed living has seen The Range 2006's colours lighten, with many of the shocking brights turning pastel. Reds remain, but are overshadowed by pinks and oranges such as Resene Lip Service, Resene Alter Ego and Resene Whizz Bang.


Rich and classic, the versatility of brown continues to make it a popular decorating choice, albeit one that is likely to be replaced eventually by green. Browns can be mixed with persimmon oranges and fern greens for the eco look, or with vibrant blues and reds for an invigorating effect. For the more tempered tastes, clay orange, cream, soft blue and brown are comfortable partners.

Many greens are now darker and more saturated and edging away from the acidic hues towards mints such as Resene Paradise. However, the popular new palette pairing of soft yellow greens with fresh aquas, pinks and pale yellows offers a sophisticated and delicate colour story.

Blue-infused greens – new teals greener than aqua, such as Resene Beatnik – offer a botanical, organic note. Blue-greens feel distinctively different because of their recent absence from colour trends, and are easy to blend with a wide array of shades.

Natural neutrals also remain a safe choice, with new whites and fresh greys such as Resene Freestyling and Resene Trojan expanding the selection. Contemporary black and white still works well teamed with pale yellows.

The Range 2006 is available from Resene ColorShops nationwide. Call **0800 RESENE** (NZ), **1800 738 383** (AUST), or visit www.resene.co.nz (NZ), www.resene.com.au (AUST) for the Resene ColorShop nearest you. 

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