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Red AND Gray



Your favorite flannel is having an interior design moment—its cozy color palette is a trending decorator favorite and a background costar of the recent film *Downton Abbey: The Grand Finale* (cue the lavish red room and glistening silver accessories). At home, dynamic red brings energy and excitement to a space, while gray feels cool, calm, and soothing. When the two are put together, the synergy is strong. Read on to learn how four designers balance the tone and saturation of each to make a room feel bold and sophisticated or relaxed and comforting.

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Paint colors may appear different on the printed page. Always test actual paint to assess the true color in your space.

by LACEY HOWARD



PHOTOS: (PAINT LIDS) JACOB FOX, STYLING: JESSICA THOMAS; (FAMILY ROOM) LUCAS ALLEN; PRODUCED BY: MONIKA EYERS

MASTER MIDTONES

The mood in this family room is “cozy, slouchy, inviting,” says designer Emma Pocock of Turner Pocock. That feeling begins with walls and furnishings in quiet tones of blue-gray that blend or contrast depending on the light—it reflects differently off the upholstery, wallpaper, and painted surfaces (Paint & Paper Library Squid Ink on wainscoting and trim). Red and pink accessories then “lend depth to the scheme with layers of patterns,” Pocock says, noting that the room’s success lies in balancing the dark backdrop with bursts of vibrancy.

Dark and Moody

A saturated color palette works best when its hues are similar in richness and tone. "Gray is theoretically a neutral color, but it rarely is actually neutral," says designer Ryan Lawson. He suggests asking yourself: "Does the gray lean cool and blue? Or is it warm and brown?" Then, he notes, remember that reds can also have warmer orange or cooler purple undertones.



FIND BALANCE

The key to this rich dining room is keeping colors in the same tonal range, with the dining set and wall color (Paint & Paper Library Paris Rooftops) equally full-bodied. "If the red was any brighter or the gray more of a true black, the scheme would be jarring," says

Shauna Dennison Taylor, creative director at Penny Morrison Ltd.

In the same vein, the sleek lacquer of the table and chairs is offset by the soft matte paint finish and a textured rug.

CREATE A COCOON

For Lawson, the pairing of deep red and gray (walls custom-painted Destin by Ressource) is dynamic yet restorative, making it an ideal environment for a restful night's sleep.

Rounding out the palette: a brown bed cover and wood table ground the space; orange in the artwork and rug activate it while adding warmth. "If you choose a strong paint color or a bold fabric to start, the rest of the parts of the room need to hold their own," he says. A paper lantern adds visual levity.



ADD RUSTIC TOUCHES

A client's favorite fiery red-orange was the starting point for designer Lonika Chande, who used it on the kitchen island and dining chair frames, then softened the hue with rush seats, a fluted wood dining table, and off-white walls. "We focused on warmer earthy tones and included natural finishes and texture to bridge the hues," Chande says. A weathered sideboard and rug with shades of charcoal anchor the space. "This scheme works best when it's not too polished," she says.

KEEP IT SIMPLE

Red is a fitting accent hue for this mountain retreat where Pocock kept to a tight palette inspired by the Swiss flag. "When creating a Scandinavian vibe, you have to stick to your guns and keep everything neutral with just a couple pops of color," she explains. Furnishings in classic suiting gray speak to the mountain locale. "It hangs well with the winter snowy look."



Light and Airy

"We have a mantra that you can never make a dark room light or a light room dark. You have to embrace the vibes and take your decorating lead from it," Pocock says. Luckily, red and gray work just as well in spaces with a brighter air, creating a look that is spirited yet restful and oozing with hygge—the Danish approach to cozy comfort.

Readers Write In Social Cues

We asked BHG followers on social media what they would name this color combo. Here are a few responses we loved: ● **POPPY & PEWTER**—Dianna Garcia, Angier, NC ● **BUCKEYE BLISS**—Susan Buhr, Sewickley, PA ● **LONDON CALLING**—Sandra Bourke, Sydney, Australia ● **LIPSTICK & TWEED**—Matisa Herndon, Casa Grande, AZ ■

PHOTOS: (DINING ROOM) MILO BROWN, (BEDROOM) ALEX JAMES