

paint MYTHS BUSTED

Show your true colors with no reservations. We asked interior designers to dispel the 10 most common misconceptions about paint color. You might be surprised by what they shared—we were!

↑ *opposites attract*

Walls painted a dark color work best in rooms with lots of natural light. Here, designer Jen Talbot used Benjamin Moore Hale Navy.

↗ *balancing act*

To lighten the room, Talbot topped a pale gray sofa with pillows in brighter shades of blue plus complementary red and pink. Burgundy armchairs match the walls' intensity.

MYTH 1 DARK WALLS MAKE A ROOM LOOK SMALLER.

TRUTH "Painting walls and trim the same deep color can make a space feel bigger because the color itself makes the corners recede," says interior designer Erin Gates. Jen Talbot, who designed this living room, agrees. "But you have to go all in and paint door and window frames, and choose window treatments that blend," she says. Talbot likes a deep, cool gray, green, or navy. "Dark walls create mood but are not oppressive," she says. "They're rich and make you want to spend more time in the room."

PHOTO: DUSTIN HALLECK

MYTH 2 TRIM SHOULD EITHER BE LEFT AS STAINED WOOD OR PAINTED WHITE.

TRUTH “Colorful trim often helps a space feel more thought through and immersive,” says designer Susana Simonpietri of Chango & Co. “For example, painting all trim to work with a wallpaper accent color rather than white. It’s also a great way to mix colors you happen to love and add whimsy to a space, as is the case with this room’s two tones of blue.”



outline
Simonpietri went two shades darker than the wall color for the trim: Benjamin Moore Sheer Romance and Old Blue Jeans.



“Don’t think of painted trim as ruining the bones. It can celebrate a room’s architectural character, playing up details like molding by creating contrast.”

CORTNEY BISHOP, *Cortney Bishop Design*

MYTH 3 Vibrant paint is a good way to brighten a dark room.

TRUTH With little or no natural light to soften it, a bright wall color can look jarring in a room. Instead, choose light colors tinted with white (versus ones toned down with gray, which can look shadowy in a dark room). Add multiple light sources to create vibrancy.

PHOTOS: (BEDROOM) COURTESY OF CHANGO & CO., (DINING ROOM) KATIE CHARLOTTE, (PAINT LIDS) KELSEY HANSEN

myth 4 ALL WHITE PAINTS ARE BASICALLY THE SAME.

TRUTH “Almost all white paints contain some mixture of colored pigments, which give them tone and shading. Unless you go with a pure white paint—which does not work well in all situations. It would be too brilliant in a room that gets direct sun, for example.”

GREG ROTH, *Home Front Build*
Roth’s trusted white paint picks include, *clockwise from top right*: A warm tone with “golden and blush tendencies, ideal for sunny south-facing rooms”; a cool white for its “subtle but distinct blue leanings”; a bright white that’s “a super neutral with cool undertones”; and a soft option with “creamy grayness to it.”



WARM
TIMID WHITE
OC-39
Benjamin Moore

SOFT
MILK MUSTACHE
DE6169
Dunn Edwards

COOL
ICE CUBE
SW 6252
Sherwin-Williams

BRIGHT
BRILLIANT WHITE
OC-150
Benjamin Moore



reflection

In this dining room by Chloe Warner, the ceiling's glossy finish (Farrow & Ball London Stone) bounces light around, making the ceiling seem higher.

MYTH 5
A white ceiling makes a room look larger.

TRUTHS

"Leaving the ceiling white is a missed opportunity. In this dining room [left] we contrasted the lavender walls with a glossy coffee shade. It adds depth and shine and cuts the sweetness of the wall color."

CHLOE WARNER,
Redmond Aldrich Design

"The eye will often ignore a white ceiling. Painting it a complementary shade adds interest and draws the eye up, creating a feeling of a higher ceiling."

GIL WALSH,
Gil Walsh Interiors

"Color on the ceiling can uplift the space, contribute a sense of increased dimension, and add freshness or drama. It also makes the light fixtures pop."

BARRY GORALNICK,
Barry Goralnick
Architecture & Design

PHOTOS: (DINING ROOM) LAURE JOLIET, (LIVING & DINING ROOM) MARTIN SÖLYST/LIVING INSIDE

cohesion

Stylist Eva-Marie Wilken made baby blue walls (similar to Sherwin-Williams Tradewind) seem edgy by using metallic midcentury furniture in every room.



myth
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EVERY ROOM SHOULD BE A DIFFERENT COLOR.

TRUTH "A home needs continuity, and using the same color throughout will make your home flow," says designer Jackie Armour. In this apartment, above, interiors stylist Eva-Marie Wilken painted most rooms chalky blue for a unified feel, then layered in coral and metallic accents. "I often change accessories, and that works best when there is harmony between them," she says.

MYTH 7

EGGSHELL IS THE BEST CHOICE FOR PAINT FINISH.

TRUTHS “Clients think eggshell is the most durable finish. These days, with all of the new paint formulas [like Benjamin Moore’s washable Aura product or the washable finishes of Farrow & Ball], this is no longer true.” CARLA WEISBERG, *interior designer*

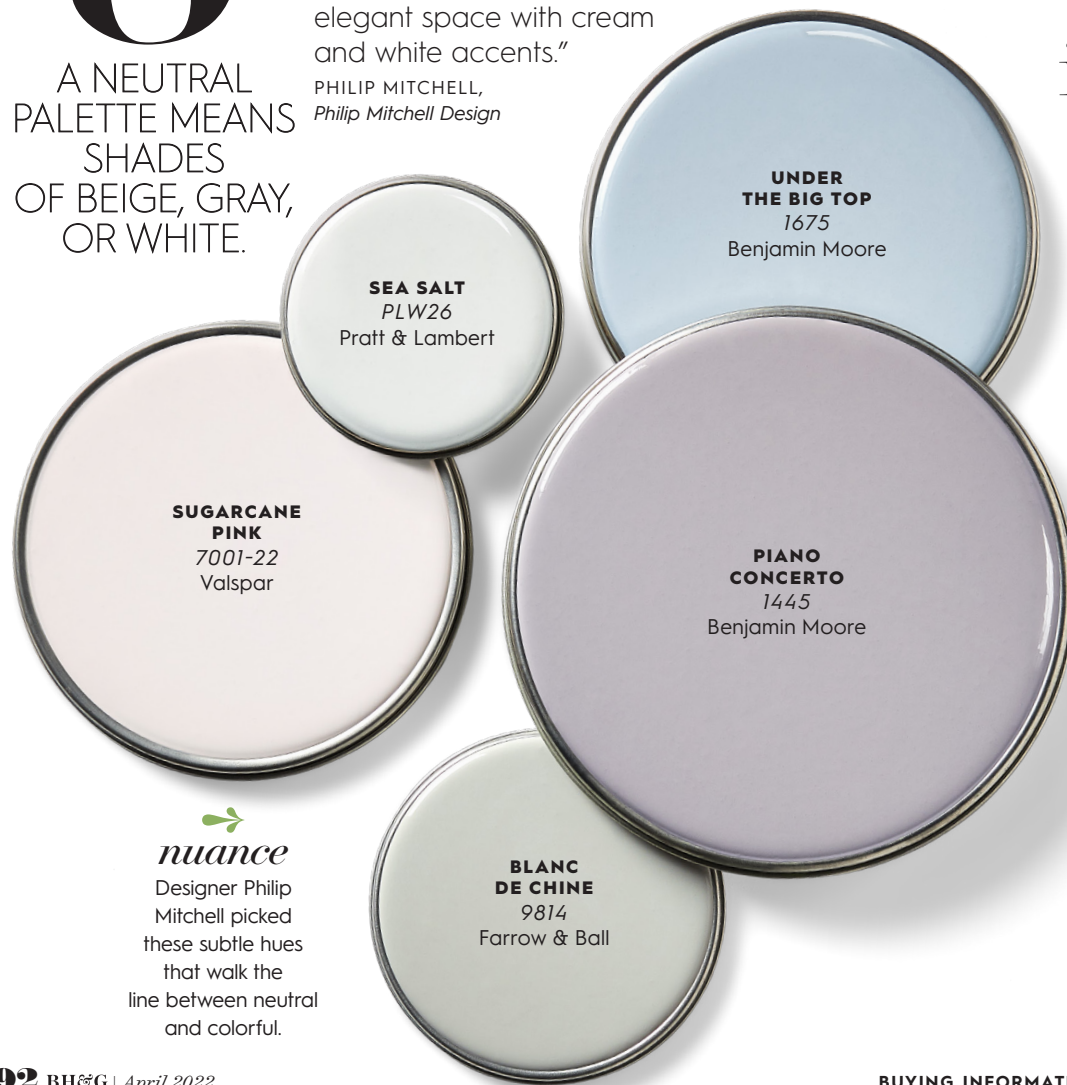
“Sheen is the secret sauce that interior designers often rely on. You can add depth and glow to a space using high gloss.” PHILLIP THOMAS, *interior designer*

myth 8

A NEUTRAL PALETTE MEANS SHADES OF BEIGE, GRAY, OR WHITE.

TRUTH “Neutral’ is another way to define softer and calming nuances of color. Neutrals can be used in interior design in two ways—either as a quiet overall look or as background colors for dramatic accents. Using ‘near neutrals’ creates a low enough intensity to not be considered a real color. Using lavender with a grayer undertone in a bedroom, for example, creates a calming, elegant space with cream and white accents.”

PHILIP MITCHELL,
Philip Mitchell Design



nuance
Designer Philip Mitchell picked these subtle hues that walk the line between neutral and colorful.

MYTH 9

There’s no need to prime walls if you’re using a dark color.

TRUTH Regardless of how light or dark the hues are, your existing wall color can affect how the new paint looks, so the final effect might not be true to the color you picked. “Think about painting a room dark green when the wall color was lavender. Essentially, the shade of green will be tainted by the lavender. We recommend two coats of primer and two coats of paint to achieve the true color.”
JEAN LIU,
Jean Liu Design

myth 10

ALL THE WALLS IN A ROOM SHOULD BE THE SAME COLOR.

TRUTH “As well as capturing attention, another wall color helps define a separate zone in a room without a divider,” says designer Rebecca Haskins. “It can also be used to add contrast and highlight an architectural feature like a fireplace or special room shape.” That’s just what designer Lauren Li of Sisällä did in this living room, where a dramatic blue-black accent wall showcases the converted barn’s architecture. ■



intensify
Designer Lauren Li chose an inky black (similar to PPG Witchcraft) for a deeper take on the home’s slate flagstone facade.

PHOTOS: (PAINT LIDS) KELSEY HANSEN, (LIVING ROOM) AMORFO