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a lively place to gather Charlie and Chris Eaton often entertain around the new island in their renovated kitchen. Painting the cabinetry in this area a rich blue gives it the look of freestanding furniture and creates a vivid contrast with the pale, yellowish khaki-green walls and golden olive trim.



PHOTOS: (PAINT DABS) BRIAN HENRY/TIME INC. DIGITAL STUDIO



personalize

your

home

with

paint

*Strategies for choosing colors
you'll want to live with*

By Jill Connors + Photographs by Alex Hayden
Produced by Colette Scanlon + Styling by Michelle Cristalli

When it comes to putting paint on the walls, homeowners fall into one of two camps: those who embrace color and those who fear it. Seattle designer Kim Clements, co-owner of JAS Design-Build, has worked with both kinds of clients. She compares color confidence to having perfect pitch: "Some people have it, others need to hum along," she says. But even people who love to surround themselves with color can require a little guidance in pulling together room after room. Take Charlie and Chris Eaton, whose renovated 1913 Craftsman home is shown here and on the following pages. "We knew we wanted a lot of color for this house," says



Castilian
Gold
Pratt &
Lambert

sunny spot To ensure the kitchen didn't become overwhelmed by blue, the cooking area was painted a vibrant greenish gold. The panel above the stove and one at the end of the run of cabinets were given a stylized flourish inspired by the Craftsman details of the house.



Indigo
Pratt &
Lambert

bright path The back stairs were painted a rich blue to give the area visual interest and draw the eye up to the kitchen, where the color is repeated on the fridge cabinet and island.

your instincts. If you see a photo in a magazine and your instant reaction is ‘I love it,’ you might take that photo to the paint store and match it to a handful of colors,” she says. She based the palette in her own home on a photo in a magazine story about Peruvian knitwear; it showed colorfully patterned handmade socks all lined up. She keeps the photo as a touchstone for guiding other choices for her rooms as well, from footstools to sofas.

Identify unifying colors

As Clements worked with the Eatons to choose the paint colors in the palette, the trio established the unifying neutrals for the trim and the ceilings, as well as a “flow color” that could repeat in different parts of the house. Although white trim is a traditional choice, Clements knew the Eatons wanted more color in their house, so she suggested a golden olive trim color that

Charlie. “But we definitely needed help with the exact palette.” To develop a vivid color scheme that felt both personal and comfortable for the couple, Clements took them through her own step-by-step process.

Find an inspiration

With the Eatons, Clements used her favorite method for establishing a palette. “I have clients come to my office and look through art prints,” says the designer, who then digs through a huge candy jar she keeps filled with paint chips. Although the Eatons initially didn’t see anything they liked in Clements’ prints, they went home and realized that a print they owned of “Street in Tahiti,” a 19th-century oil painting by Paul Gauguin, held their favorite colors. “All the colors in the print were really intense and saturated,” recalls Clements, so she pulled paint chips that were toned-down versions. “When you’re doing bold colors, you need to make sure they’re livable, too,” she says.

The Eatons’ whole-house palette is primarily a four-color scheme of yellow, orange, blue, and green, although 13 individual hues were used throughout the two-story, three-bedroom house. Yellow, for example, takes on various shades: In the kitchen, it’s a greenish gold on cabinetry and a yellowish khaki-green pastel on the walls; in the guest bedroom, it’s a saffron yellow-orange.

If artwork fails to inspire, Clements says any object will do. “It’s all about limiting your options so that you aren’t standing in the paint aisle faced with 1,000 colors,” she says. Clements has had clients find palettes in everything from a pair of 1950s kids’ cowboy-print pajamas to a seashell. Even a retro bicycle will do. “Think orange frame, black tires, caramel-leather seat, chrome fenders—there’s a palette,” she says. “Above all, trust

boldstroke The powder room holds the Gauguin print that inspired the whole-house palette. As a small room used for only short periods of time, this space’s walls were a prime spot for one of the boldest shades in the home’s palette: a flame orange. The golden olive trim ties it into the other rooms on the first floor.

Bonanza
C2

Cheetah
C2



↑
A print of
Gauguin’s painting
“Street in Tahiti”
inspired the
home’s color
palette.



Castilian
Gold
Pratt &
Lambert

Indigo
Pratt &
Lambert

Lioness
C2

enhancing woodwork The dining room cabinetry around the corner from the kitchen, ABOVE, is painted the same greenish gold as the range wall to emphasize the open connection between the spaces. The orange tones in the fir moldings and casings in the living room, RIGHT, are enhanced by apricot-gold walls.

complements all the colors in their palette—as well as the orangey-brown fir moldings in the main living areas, which they planned to keep. To make sure the house didn't become oversaturated, an off-white was chosen for all the ceilings—except in the master bath, where it became the trim color with a cleaner white overhead.

To unify a whole-house palette, Clements also likes to pick a flow color that can be used in as much as 65 to 70 percent of the house. It can be a neutral, but it doesn't have to be. For the Eatons' palette, she suggested the yellowish khaki-green pastel used on the kitchen walls as the flow color, and carried it into the dining room, down the back staircase, and up into the second-floor hallway. "It looks different in different lights, so





Palomino
C2

Cheetah
C2

staying fresh Orange-gold walls in the home office warm up the room's diffused northern light, making it an invigorating area to work in. The closely related golden olive trim makes for a not-so-jarring contrast.

it's a great flow color because it's kind of alive."

With the three basic colors—trim, ceiling, and flow—chosen, the next step is to test any other colors you are considering against them. "Maybe you decide to stick to just those three colors," says Clements. "Some people want a really calm scheme." For the public spaces in your house, she suggests a limit of five colors—the three basics plus one or two more, perhaps to highlight kitchen cabinetry or a powder room. In private spaces, you can add more. "In kids' rooms or master bedrooms, the choices become much more personal and expressive."

Color map your choices

To make final decisions on the location of specific paint colors, Clements uses a process called color mapping. "I draw interior elevations and color them with markers that are as close as possible to the paint colors," she says. This tactic enabled the Eatons to see the changes in color from one wall to the next, which was particularly important in the open layout of the first floor.

Clements says that homeowners can do their own color mapping with digital photos, tracing paper, and markers. Take a digital photo of a room and print it out as an 8-by-10 photo (or larger). Tape the photo to a

window, place a piece of tracing paper over the photo, and outline the room's structural elements and architectural features only—walls, ceiling, floor, cabinetry. Next, take the paint chips of the palette you are considering and go to an art-supply store and match markers or pencils to the chips as closely as possible. Fill in the colors and see what you think. She also suggests investing \$5 per chip for the oversize 18-by-24-inch paint chips offered by some paint manufacturers. "Tape the big chips to the wall, bend them around corners, and you'll get a sense of how the color looks in various light conditions," says Clements.

See how your rooms relate

For the Eatons, establishing the colors for the kitchen—the main gathering spot, now opened up to the dining room—became the key to choosing colors for the first floor. Wanting to create a sense of welcome, the Eatons chose warm colors: three different hues in the yellow family for the walls, trim, and cooking-area cabinetry. Then they added a bold blue for the island base, refrigerator cabinet, and sink-area base cabinets. "The blue makes the cabinetry feel more like freestanding furniture," says Clements. "And the two



Amontillado
C2

Cheetah
C2

guest-room glow A saffron yellow-orange covers the walls of the guest bedroom, where the built-in bed is finished in the golden olive trim color; both enhance the orange tones of the wood floor. Off-white covers the ceiling.



Russian Olive
C2

Sisal
C2

serene spot Pale, dusty blue-green walls give the master bedroom an ethereal look. The trim is the yellowish khaki-green pastel used elsewhere on walls; the ceiling is the same off-white as most of the other rooms.



Puck
C2

Hot Tamale
C2

Noodle
C2

revved up with red For the full bath off the upstairs hall, which functions as the master, using the off-white for the trim provides a subtle contrast with the cleaner white used overhead. The blue-green walls get added personality via a deep-red vanity.

color families define different areas.” She meshed the kitchen with the adjacent dining room by repeating colors. “We emphasized the open connections by blurring the lines between dining room and kitchen,” she says. An apricot-gold covers the walls of the living room, giving the room a distinctive look but one that is also in keeping with the adjacent dining room. “We wanted that glow to carry out from the kitchen area to the other social areas of the house.”

Orange and yellow hues also cover two of the most vivid rooms in the house, the powder room and upstairs guest bedroom—so vivid, in fact, that they gave Charlie Eaton pause. “I remember peeking under the plastic sheet that was blocking off the rooms being painted, and thinking, *Wow, we’ve gone too far,*” he says. But hesitation turned to infatuation as the whole-house palette emerged. Upstairs, that also includes an orange-gold home office and calming blue-greens for the master bedroom and bathroom walls.

“Each room seems more alive,” says Chris of the finished results. “Downstairs, the colors are warm and welcoming. Upstairs, we now have an inviting place for overnight guests and a soothing but still colorful look for the master bedroom and bath.”

“This was a wonderful old house before,” adds Charlie, “and it’s a great house today.” ■