

HOME FURNISHINGS

## Color balance, personalization crucial in modern home design

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*Color can be a major influence in home-buying decisions. Image credit: Luxury Portfolio International*

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By KATIE TAMOLA

With homeowners spending more time in their living spaces than ever, many are looking for residences that reflect both their design desires and personalities.

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Whether one is a real estate expert staging a home or someone looking to make their work from home space bearable, living spaces thrive when they are both intentional and balanced. During the Luxury Hour webinar hosted by [Luxury Portfolio International](#) on Aug. 11, interior designers and experts discussed the role of color in a home, color and lighting influences and home as an expression of self.

"You don't want so many walls to have different colors on them, as I think that's distracting, and it tends to minimize the contrast with art and accessories," said Julia Buckingham, founder/principal of [Julia Buckingham Interiors](#), Chicago. "I think that we need to make sure that the space is emotive of the person that's going to be inhabiting the most, and that's a careful balance between too much color and too many emotions walking through a home."

### Color complexities

The role of color in home design has long been a thoughtful process. COVID-19 accelerated color consideration within the home, however, as affluents found themselves spending more time than ever inside their living spaces due to restrictions, closures and mandatory work from home policies.

For both buyers and sellers, it is imperative to remember that different clients have different tastes. There is no set blueprint for everyone, as people will want disparate themes and color palettes reflected in their spaces.



*Some of Ms. Vroom's work for The Residency Bureau. Image credit: The Residency Bureau*

"First of all I would probably say that there are no rules," said Amy Vroom, interior designer at [The Residency Bureau](#), Seattle. "I think the biggest issue I see with people is that they're trying to make a whole house strategy for color versus how they want the room to feel."

"Brokers, you need to know your audience and have an understanding of how they use the space, how they want it to feel, you know and how it connects to other parts of the home," she said. "Those are all questions that as interior designers we're asking our clients, and that would be something useful for them to know as well in terms of giving advice or leading him in the right direction."

Wallpaper can be an underrated and useful tool in home dcor, since it is an easy, dynamic element that can be easily switched out of a space.

Agents and designers should keep in mind the 60-30-10 rule, which suggests a room should be 60 percent dominant color, 30 percent secondary colors or furniture items and 10 percent accent color or pieces.

"It's okay to have wallpaper, it's okay to have color," Ms. Vroom said. "If you have a sea of sameness and everything is neutral and white, that green kitchen is going to stand out, that room has some fun wallpaper that's not neon, don't go so crazy, be tasteful about it that's really going to help people see the soul and the personality [of the home]."

Lighting and layering are also crucial elements to be considered, and like most elements of home design, rely on what best suits the owner's desires for their space.

*Ms. Buckingham, one of the panelists, is known for her modern and sophisticated style.*

As always, different owners will have different tastes, but there is typically a potential benefit in a pop of color.

Real estate agents, stagers and affluents will have to work together in striking the right balance of color in home design, to make a home feel like a balanced reflection of self.

"The risk of the all-white, or all neutral everything is that it kind of lacks some soul and personality for me, so infusing those bits of color really help inspire people and make them want to live there," Ms. Vroom said. "Again, it's the balance of that magic in the middle of like not scaring people [with too much color] but also inspiring them."

Personality in the home

Whether a home is drenched in color, patterned wallpaper or calming shades of white, most people want a space that reflects who they are and what they like.

This can be extended to any room in a house.

According to findings from appliance maker JennAir, consumers are increasingly seeking statement pieces and designs that represent their individuality. The desire for custom kitchens is steadily increasing with consumers now viewing their kitchens as extensions of their personalities, according to a new report.

As the COVID-19 pandemic caused people to spend more time in their homes than ever before, many consumers began to look at their kitchens as not just additional workspaces, but expansions of their personalities ([see story](#)).

In March, online vintage furniture service Chairish launched a series with a beloved designer, offering consumers exclusive content and pieces.

The Follow This Tastemaker series debuted on March 23 by spotlighting designer and author Celerie Kemble.

Through the partnership, consumers were able to "follow" Ms. Kemble, and have access to specific offerings from the designer, exclusively through Chairish ([see story](#)).

What makes a home is those who live in it, so it makes sense that designers suggest owners add their own flair to their living spaces.

"The most successful rooms are rooms that represent the people that live there, and not the kind of [theme you'd find] in a homogenous, kind of reproductive bougie hotel," said Patrick O'Donnell, international brand ambassador at [Farrow & Ball](#). "The most successful rooms are the rooms that talk about you as a person."

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