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AN APPROACH TO INTERIOR DESIGN

By Donald Grant Sunderland



The approach to interior design starts at the budget. Establish a budget that is within your means, but firstly go out and do a market survey on how much things cost. Be honest with yourself and allow at least another 15% for those unknown extras. Having an overall plan for your renovation can mean you can chip away at certain areas and come back to other aspects later to suit your time frame and budget assuring the design is still retained as a whole.

Start a scrapbook of ideas, if you are using an interior designer it gives a head start on the style you prefer and hence saves valuable time and money.

To achieve an overall colour scheme start at the front entrance, this determines your style for the house and generally is the pivot to the whole design. This can be done with colour and texture. Choose a colour that is warm and inviting, light in tone if it is a small area or with medium depth if the entrance is larger. Start your design with the flooring, then the soft furnishings (Drapes, Furniture Fabric, Rugs) and finally paint colour, after all there are tens of thousands of paint colours to choose from, not so with floor coverings and fabrics.

If there is a hallway scenario choose your colour and move to a half tone of that colour, as within the walls the colour is reflected on itself, hence the original colour you have chosen will be retained. Create interest in this area whether it is in furniture, paintings, sculpture or floral arrangements. However try not to clutter the entrance, as it is generally a high impact area where guests are greeted or farewelled and you need body space. Don't put a mirror facing the front door, it is disturbing to a visitor to have the door opened to them and to see themselves immediately reflected, it is also regarded as bad luck.

These same design principles can also be applied for other living areas. The feature wall is no more. Instead, highlight colour with soft furnishings and have an eclectic array of furniture to add interest to the room. Table lamps can also give a great ambience to the room, even during the day.

The kitchen is generally regarded as the hub of the house and it is also the most expensive room to renovate. There are a lot of options to consider, and what you choose really comes down to budget.

The most economic kitchen is one constructed from Melteca/melamine cabinetry with laminate benchtop, the most expensive, wood veneer or lacquer with granite or granite composite benches. The clever bells and whistles built into the cabinetry can be expensive and, in most cases, not necessary.

One can improve the functional design by incorporating underbench drawers, using Lazy Susan's in blind corners and pull out bins for easy reach. When designing your layout consider your main working area - often referred to as "the triangle". This is the optimum spacing between Fridge, sink & Oven/hobs and is generally designed in a triangular shape for ease of use and accessibility. This triangle space should, ideally, not distance more than 9 metres altogether otherwise the cooking procedure becomes a marathon event.

If choosing a laminate top it is preferable to go with a dark colour as then the dark edged joins are less obvious. The colour of the granite top is personal choice (Mostly people choose black although this trend is changing).

I do avoid marble or polished concrete as these tend to stain, which can look unhygienic after several months and need refurbishing regularly.

When decorating your kitchen, choose your flooring first. Whether it is ceramic tiles, vinyl or polished or laminate woods. Expect cleaning and maintenance problems with vinyl unless you choose a commercial grade. On choosing your cabinetry, make sure there is enough tonal or colour contrast between benchtop, cabinetry and floor, a near miss colour can look like a mistake.

Continuing through your home, bathrooms are also an expensive area to refurbish. Tiling is the most practical coverage. It is advisable to reline the walls with Gib Wet Zone, a waxed wallboard making for extra water resistance. The floor should be professionally waterproofed with a guarantee; it is extremely expensive to pull the bathroom apart should a leak appear.

When choosing a floor tile, go for a large 450 x 450 tile no matter what size the bathroom is. The less grid lines, the larger the bathroom will look. Placing the floor tile on the 45 degree diagonal can also increase the visual size of the room. You can also use the floor tile as a skirting tile by cutting it down to a third of its size. If you plan to have wall tiles I would take them to the ceiling unless the stud height is extremely high. The secret to a bathroom is to keep it simple unless you are trying to create a Victorian styled room. I believe it's better to have coloured grouting as white grouting soils very quickly and it is hard to keep it looking immaculate.

Lastly, don't forget to enjoy the satisfaction that comes from redesigning or updating your home. It's always great to step back and admire what you have achieved.

COLOURS OF THE MOMENT

Our world has become somewhat beige in the last decade, this is changing slowly where subtle colour is enhancing what would appear to be otherwise a boring room.

Almost like a rebellion the 70's styling tried to make a comeback with clear, bright colour used lavishly around the room patterned and plain. However, its popularity did not last as the step was too great for most people. Now, the temptation to plunge to something different in a more sophisticated way is exciting both the designer and home user.

Paint colours are moving to middle tones like Resene colours Coriander, Craigieburn, Tonto. Or Dulux Lyttelton, Hoon Hay. Taubmans Sunflower Seed 4J1-3. WattyI have a warm mid toned neutral in the colour Igloo 39A-3P or even a deeper tone Sequola Dusk 39C-1P that gives you the freedom to experiment with more vibrant colours in the soft furnishings.

One of the most useful and easiest colours to use is Resene Tasman a grey mid tone blue green. It picks up colour that is within the room and is particularly good with woodgrains and paprika or chocolate brown colourings. It is suitable as a day colour as well as a night time colour as it responds well to both artificial and natural light. British Paints Serene Green has the ability to pick up any highlight colours in a room.

A calming colour with the same qualities, hues and tones is WattyI Oxford Cloth 63A-3P.

Colour can affect your state of mind. Dulux colour Devils Backbone (Rich Dark Red) is excellent for a dining room as red is regarded as a colour to make you hungry.

Taubmans Sumptuous Red 4C1-8 will give you what the name says Sumptuous, with the added advantage of making your silver or gold gilt framed paintings look majestic.

A complimentary colour to red hues are those deep greens. Ideal for a masculine finish to a room that highlights rimu furniture, try Taubmans Cottington Green 6M1-7 for the more dark grey green look.

If you are looking for a good nights sleep, Dulux Watermelon Pink will lull you into a relaxed state. Another soothing colour is British Paints Soft Touch, painting the architraves and skirtings British Paints Light Air. Paint some furniture British Paints Ghost Grey in a high gloss enamel to give grounding to the room. Add black linen drapes for extra drama.

Or if you would like to stimulate the intellect try Taubmans Panama Hat (Light Ochre) or British Paints Rice Pudding.

Yellow is perhaps one of the hardest colours to get right for a room, it depends on so many factors, natural light, carpet colour, artificial ambience and it is not happy sitting next to wood grains. It also intensifies with colour reflection from one wall to the next. A safe bet is WattyI Artic Spring 32B-1P - it may appear insipid on the chart but in the room it is magic especially if teamed up with light denim blues.

For that soft Blue British Paints Midday Blue trimmed with lemon yellow soft furnishings will give you the opposite colourway.

White is regarded as a colour that can most easily change the mood of the room, hence what white does one choose? For that stark, clean and contemporary look Resene Black White N93-005-100 will deliver. You can use this colour for walls, ceilings and architraves. Add pure primary colour and black with furniture highlighted with chrome.

If you are wanting to achieve a warmer look Resene Soapstone N93-008-081 steps away from the cool palette. It's also an ideal colour for use on ceilings.

Some great neutral colour selections for walls include Dulux Glinks Gully (Warm) or Pupu Springs (Cool), or Resene Tea (Y80 -017 -081 series) perhaps the safest colours to use. Trim with Dulux Sandfly Point. For a cooler neutral Watty! colour Leek 49B-1P, is exceptional, it is a great base colour to show off artwork.

British Paints Tender Mauve on the walls with touches of furniture painted British Paints high gloss enamel Foundation Clay will give you a tone on tone room. Soft whites in the furnishings will give a floaty ambience, beautiful for a young girls room.

Having recently returned back from Italy I've seen Lilac colours are making a new comeback. The art of using lilacs is to refrain from the more intense tones in the range. An ideal Lilac for an elegant bedroom would be Watty! Evening Haze 71A - 3P. Window dressings to match this colour would suit soft olive and white shades will calm the room.

People tend to ignore black as a colour. Like whites there are so many to choose from. For a warm black Taubmans Bear Cub Black 6R1-8 is great and usually matches well with black aluminium joinery. For a more blue black Taubmans Elegant Evening 6R3-8 is great and can transform that old cedar front door.

Exterior whites need to have more depth of tone to allow for natural glare eg: Dulux Midhurst, Hoon Hay, Glendhu Bay. Use a gloss acrylic paint as it has far greater dirt resistance and is easy to wash down.

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Resene	Tonto	Coriander	Soapstone
Black White	Craigieburn	Tasman	Tea
Dulux	Hoon Hay	Devils Backbone	Watermelon Pink
PuPu Springs	Glendhu Bay	Midhurst	Glinks Gully
Lyttelton	Taubmans	Cottington Green	Sumptuous Red
Panama Hat	Sunflower Seed	Watty!	Arctic Spring
Oxford Cloth	Igloo	Sequola Dusk	
British Paints	Serene Green	Light Air	Midday Blue
Soft Touch	Rice Pudding		

DESIGN TIPS

Top 15 Tips With Donald Grant Sunderland

1. To achieve the best paint finish possible, preparation of the base to the manufacturers specifications and the use of superior tools and paintbrushes are imperative. Allow a lot of time to complete the preparation and each paint coat, this allows the paint to be applied carefully, precisely and to be feathered off to a high finish. Don't paint under a temperature of 10°C as it will make the paint lose its lustre and can effect the drying agents in the paint.
2. A good paintbrush will last for years if looked after. Use separate brushes for acrylic paint designed and separate brushes for enamel paint. When cleaning brushes used with enamel paint, brush-cleaning product is a sure way to preserve your brushes. However, make sure you use it in a well-ventilated space and only use on natural hog bristle brushes.
3. Enamel paint is best used for doors, windows, sills, architraves, skirtings and where one paint surface meets another. Enamel paint is harder and creates a non stick surface where Acrylic paint will adhere both the surfaces causing them to stick.
4. Ceilings are best painted in a low sheen acrylic paint rather than a flat, this allows for non-smear cleaning of fly dirt. If repainting ceilings remove fly dirt with sugar soap, don't try to paint over it as it penetrates through the paint and multiplies the problem on the roller.
5. After painting a room it pays to have a professional person spray Insect/fly deterrent chemical around windows and doors, this eliminates fly dirt and will help make your ceilings and walls look sparkling new all the time.
6. When you are painting a room, clear the room of all furniture and fittings where possible. Cover the floor with a drop cloth to avoid accidental seepage. Tape your drop cloth to the floor with duck tape to avoid movement.
7. Changing the colour of the room is only a weekend and a pot of paint away, but make sure you have all the necessary paint aids to make the job easier from quick drying fillers, sandpapers, solvents, excellent brushes and paint trays. Buy to suit your own capabilities and to deliver the quality of finish you require.
8. Placing furniture so it faces you as you enter the room gives a welcoming aspect, especially into the bedroom. This is not always possible depending on the position of windows and doors so a small-furnished bedroom chair appropriately placed in the room can achieve the same feel, just don't make it a dumping ground.

9. In the lounge an ottoman is perhaps one of the most useful pieces of furniture it acts as a stool, footrest and coffee table all in one.
10. Design from the floor up. When you start doing the job, work from the ceiling down. Design your room starting with the floor treatment, follow with the soft furnishings and finally the paint or wallpaper colours.
11. With standard 2400 stud height make the drapery start just below the ceiling level, this gives the appearance of height to the room and lets the fabric tell its textural or pattern story. Don't cut drapes off at the sill of a window, take it to the floor as it gives more elegance to a room. An alternative to curtains is to dress the window with a roman blind.
12. On choosing a fabric for direct exposure to high UV sunlight, avoid dark colours and 100% natural product, as they will bleach within months. You may want to consider a UV film (Glasshield 2000) application on the windows will save your soft furnishings.
13. Use block out linings on your drapery, not only does it help to preserve the drape fabric from the UV, it also helps stops the fabric from becoming silhouetted during daylight hours. This can cause your fabric to lose its pattern and textural feature, making for a less impactful and clean look.
14. When designing your bedroom, don't limit your bedroom design to an existing duvet cover, they are cheap to replace. Think of them instead as a seasonal change having a variety to choose from. Duvets with the odd scatter cushion are a very economical and instant way of changing a bedroom.
15. If you are going to use wallpaper in your new design you should wallpaper after you have painted your ceiling or nearby walls. You don't want to get paint on your wallpaper. Make sure your paint is dry before you do any wallpapering.

THE RIGHT TOOLS FOR THE JOB



Having just completed the repainting of the exterior and some interiors of my house the pay off for good quality paint tools has been well rewarded.

Firstly I have had to readdress the exterior paint work of my home only 5 years after the completion of the build. This is unusual. It all comes down to an inferior job in the beginning. Painters skipping coats, not following the paint manufacturers procedures and using inadequate brushes that showed brush strokes, patchy paint cover and poor cutting in from weather board to architrave. An untidy job can look what it is, cheap, although the costs of paints and sealers are still the same expense. Unfortunately when one is building the stresses of all the decisions required and the want to shift into your new abode, turns the blind eye to the paint job and you want them to just finish the job and go. A poor job resulted and the painters fled with the final payment.

My second attempt of painting the exterior of my house has been a completely different experience as the professional painters have gone about to repair the original outcome and passage of time damage. The exposed brush strokes, which harboured dirt and pollution have been sanded back to a smooth surface and the right tools for the job are being used. Especially designed enamel brushes for the enamel painted areas

and acrylic brushes for the acrylic paint. The difference is immense. On average the 75mm width PAL brushes were used, designed for a premium-finished job of minimal visual brush strokes and great paint coverage. A brush capable to be well loaded with paint makes the blending in of strokes far cleaner and less labour intensive. The cutting in brushes designed for that tricky architrave to weatherboard or window pane meant the use of masking tape was virtually non-existent. I am now the proud owner of a well-painted home, sharp colour scheme and the smartest house in the street.

Ask a professional painter what he or she looks for in a brush. Firstly ergonomics are a major factor. A solid wooden handle is ideal, it is light, balanced and shaped for the hand. Natural hand sweat is minimised with wooden handles and lacks uncomfortable production mould joins likely to occur in plastic handles. A quality brush is not likely to break down so quickly with the constant stress put upon it. Stainless steel ferules, the part of the brush holding the bristles, ensures the brush doesn't moults, lasts longer owing to strength and doesn't rust which could inadvertently colour a light hue paint. Paint needs to be applied with care, long premium synthetic bristles will not divide or random bristles poke out in odd directions giving the perfect finish without frustration.

A premium bristle also reduces time as the paint quantity loaded onto the brush is greater without dripping to the ground, hence coverage and finish is superior to begin with.

There is no comparison between the cheap plastic handled, shorthaired, coarse fibre brush that is heavy, generally having bristle loss from the start to the finish of the job. This leads to a frustrating work experience and a job not well done. Nothing is more annoying than trying to pick the bristles out of your newly painted paint, leaving forensic evidence of fingerprints and nails. This makes for an arduous time consuming exercise.

A premium quality brush can also take the hammering of cleaning, whether it is through soap and water or solvents. Caring for a brush properly can double its life span making for a more economic option in the end.

Fortunately I have long run colour steel roofing so I didn't have to address the roof, unlike my neighbour who had a rough job done on her home. I witnessed her iron roof being painted with a mop. The mop simply covered the roof in uneven swathes and the paint dried unevenly. Already the job is beginning to blister. If care and preparation had been considered a far more sustainable result would have happened. A quality roller designed for corrugated iron would not only have made a superior job but a lot less paint would have been applied creating time for the paint to harden between coats and the job not having to be redone for some time.

I decided it was time to repaint my ensuite, not because of the paint job but because I wanted a change. It wasn't a big area as most of the bathroom was tiled but I wanted to achieve a very smooth look. I used acrylic enamel (Resene Spacecote colour Alabaster) to match with the tiles. This required the appropriate roller and sleeve.

I purchased a PAL acrylic enamel sleeve designed for the job. The advantages being there was virtually no splatter, full load pick up so I was able to cover the surfaces quickly and I was able to control the roller close to the cutting in edge. The finish I wanted was far better than expected. The sleeve was expensive but as it was of superior quality, it washed up like new, without breaking down as it has a Phenolic core that won't soften with water mass. The sleeve now re-labelled 'acrylic enamel paint only' is perched waiting and ready for the next job to be done.

With enthusiasm I decided to repaint the bedroom. The ceilings, architraves and skirtings were still in excellent condition and I really only wanted to change the wall colour. As an interior

designer it is always great to have change in the home and painting the walls is perhaps the most economic way of doing so. Armed with PAL brushes, rollers and sleeves designed for acrylic paint, I transformed the room over the long weekend. Allow time to paint, don't put yourself under stress by the attitude "I'll have it done by lunchtime". It should be an enjoyable experience and this will show through in the completed job.

Good quality tools made the job enjoyable and easy. A superior paint tray that never twisted or buckled between the stress of roller and floor meant 'even loading' on the roller and nil 'roller edge' residues on the walls. The different widths of rollers 100mm, 180mm, 230mm meant I had the ability to cover from those narrow wall widths to the greater divide. I did mask some areas but generally with my sharp eye I was able to cut in with a PAL cutting in brush designed for the job.

You get what you pay for. The cheaper rollers with generic fabric sleeves and shorter fabric nap, will splatter, give an uneven coat cover, pull wet paint off the wall as you work it and leave behind an unwanted texture no matter what paint quality. The job becomes slow. The ability to recycle is limited as under cleaning buckling is likely. This could also happen with paint loading whilst doing the job - how messy is that!

PAL has now come up with a feminine variety of paint tools - URBAN. The quality is supreme and equally functional, just a little easier to use for those who find the larger brushes, rollers and paint trays daunting or cumbersome.

The outcome of my painting experiences - forget budget go for quality to premium quality in all products from the paint to the tools you use, to achieve the best finish to be proud of and enjoy for years to come.

LOOKING AHEAD



Following the European design trend can first be noted in fashion, interior design follows with the same thought waves. This may be due to dressing ones self up first and the house then follows.

The fashion design is tending towards a more casual but tailored look in both colour and form with a left of centre feature that works with the garment but has an eclectic edge. In Europe the same has already linked through to the home. Drape fabric is plain but with the natural texture of the linens, walls are painted in the variety of whites whether it be WattyI colours of 'winter sky 39A-2P', 'air blue 69A-2P' or 'white shadow 26A-2P' to name a few. Flashed with Resene 'Belladonna V41-091-332' as a highlight colour in high gloss enamel picking out an architectural feature such as a sill or a bay window. Ceilings always are up to the mark painted white and Resene 'alabaster white' in low sheen gives the depth of a plastered ceiling.

Black and white combo gives the tuxedo ambience to the room. Vision wallpapers have brought out an architectural range with flamboyant designs both bold and subtle, suitable for that dramatic entrance or entertainment room. Even painting the walls black, Jacobsen paints have brought out the perfect black 'licorice 0583'. Lighten the room by painting the ceilings, scotia's, doors and architraves in Resene' black white N93-005-100'. Wide width venetian blinds or shutters also painted 'black white' tailor the windows. The floor in natural jarrah colourings gives warmth. Contemporary white furniture with highlights of chrome and large shaggy white rugs furnishes the room. Extra large fuchsia coloured cushions tossed randomly onto the floor break up the formality of the room. A large multi coloured art piece such as a Carl Maign impressionist floral canvas strikes the wall with flamboyance. A trend that suits the European architecture but performs well in both New Zealand contemporary and traditional homes.

We can look to Europe for inspiration and world trends in interior design but as a nation we are gaining our own confidence in architecture and interior design. We are at last embracing our environment and cultures as a form of design, making ourselves unique to the rest of the world. Pacifica design is becoming more dominant, we have seen it for some time now in design of sports stadiums, commercial properties and public amenities such as libraries, airports, museums and art galleries. Slowly the residential property is moving in the same direction especially so with landscape design with very Polynesian style sculptures being placed within our native plant gardens.

Previous exterior and interior trends have gone with the safe 'beige/white' paint colours, still remaining popular and will do so for a number of years after all it is what most people are comfortable with. However as the economy weakens the want of upgrading and moving into bigger and more expensive houses with appropriate mortgages is waning. The home owners are now upgrading with what they have, expressing their own personalities rather than the homogenised "paint to on sell" philosophy. This means a trend towards more confident colour schemes from wall colour to drapery and accessories.

Pacific pride is flourishing, take the blue scheme, where sea meets sky in Resene colours such as 'Cut Glass B85-012-208' combined with 'Parachute B76-064-218' and enhanced with 'Clockwork Orange 059-135-056' or with a similar coloured fabric. Bright cushions or wall hangings of printed hibiscus or frangipani patterned cloth adorn the sofa's and walls. Tapa print lampshades add to the ambience of the room.

Tropical sunsets are inspired in Taubmans 'new Mexican gold Y27-37-77' with highlights of 'crimson crazed R69-45-39'. Dark rustic furniture would sit well with this scheme, suited to an informal entertainment room.

Colin McMahon is an inspiration for New Zealand greens in Dulux New Zealand colour map colours of Matakana and Pukekura Park, with cream carpet and furniture this scheme can look stunning.

Even if one is afraid of such diverse colour, the background of whites like British Paints 'hint of blue' 'powdered night' or 'lab coat' bounces light around the room with a hint of colour contrasted against the brilliant colours of the pacific seen in furniture, rugs and accessories. Even kitchen bench tops are taking on a tropical aspect with Trelise Coopers 'colours of the world' for Stonex. Hues of clear turquoise, fuchsia, and deep blues to brilliant yellows can sit well with the white palette. If one wants to have a more moody palette Taubmans 'rats tail G74-01-46' 'coastal fog Y59-02-70' or 'sequoia R60-09-29' would create a dynamic contrast but additional floor and table lighting would be required.

There are also the natural colourings as seen in Tapa cloths, weavings and shell ornamentation. This could be transferred into wall colours such as Dulux 'Oreti 18', 'Urewera 41' or 'Glinks Gully', all very neutral until the darker soft furnishings bring the room together.

We are diverse in cultures and bringing a piece of this into your interior brings in our own identity to be proud of setting the trend for things to come..