




# COLOR CODED

A neutral background palette; some bold, punchy accessories; and a bit of practical design know-how can add a feeling of calm and consistency to any interior space.

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88 cottages & bungalows

WITH EACH YEAR COMES THE AMASSING OF ITEMS that, in time, can feel overwhelming in a space. Competing colors, patterns and graphics can muddy up an interior design, making it feel small, cramped and chaotic. The New Year is all about fresh starts. What better time to reevaluate your home's décor to determine if it still suits your style and feels like the well-kept space it should be?

When Dallas, Texas, interior designer Abbe Fenimore was tasked with helping a young, newlywed couple create a more streamlined and organized aesthetic in their home, she knew exactly how to do it: Get creative with color and accessories. But, she notes, "It was crucial to find a way to mix the homeowners' love of color and patterns in a way that would not look too young." Moreover, Abbe needed to find a harmonious balance that would yield "the perfect blend of masculine and feminine." Read on to discover how Abbe achieved her goal, as well as her best tips for creating an organized, clutter-free space with the help of color, bold graphics and a few well-placed accessories. 

SEE RESOURCES, PAGE 96.

For consistency and cohesiveness, start with a neutral color palette. This not only helps create connectedness in a space, it also encourages a calm and soothing ambience. Before adding in the bright splashes of color, Abbe started with a combined dominant palette of white, eggshell, powder-blue and espresso-colored hardwood. She then introduced punches of color by incorporating decorative items into the design. "If, for example, you want turquoise to be a dominant color in your home, add a few pops of that color in each room," Abbe says. "Complementary pieces of art, throw blankets, pillows and a few accessories in your chosen color will help tie all the rooms together."



January 2013 89





Maximize the natural attributes of your space. "The most important way to create a clean aesthetic is to make sure that each room has a space plan that works," Abbe says. "If bulky furniture blocks a beautiful view or keeps you from moving around easily, your home will never feel comfortable." Rather than neglect a vacant corner in a remote part of a room, play up the space by filling it with a single armchair upholstered in a beautiful fabric. Additionally, take advantage of natural light sources—which always make a room feel bigger, cleaner, and more open and airy—by outfitting them in sheer Roman shades rather than heavy draperies.

Avoid making too many statements in a single area. "Too many accessories can create a cluttered and anxious room. Edit, rearrange and edit again until the space looks natural," Abbe says. To prevent clutter while still keeping necessities at the ready, she suggests employing baskets or unique containers to hold extra throw blankets, pillows and other items. "This will add a bit of softness to the room and display a few of your favorite items when they are not in use," she notes.



On a budget? Think creatively. Don't have the budget-specific design elements, such as draperies? "Purchase solid off-the-shelf draperies and add a fabulous graphic or solid trim to create a custom look easily," Abbe says. Additionally, use color, patterns, trims, hardware and other embellishments to create a look you love on pillows, blankets, lampshades, cabinets, walls and furnishings.



Plan your design around big-ticket items. "Start with basic, well-made furnishings upholstered in durable fabrics that fit the scale of your space well," Abbe says. "Once you have tackled those investment pieces, it will be easier to create the overall look you are going for." Moreover, don't overcrowd an area with too many clunky pieces. A simple bistro-style dining-room set is a much better fit in this airy corner than a large, cumbersome table for 12.



Add drama. In the master bedroom, the combination of dark X-leg benches, matching lamps and nightstands, and a Gothic-style chandelier add a bit of drama that complements the overall color scheme and design. For a bit of sparkle, add glass and mirrored furnishings in select areas. "Adding pieces with mirrors can really open up a small space," Abbe says. "I love using mirrored nightstands in the bedroom; they help balance the bed, and they throw light back into the room."



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