

LIVING IN TEXAS | DESIGN



HAPPY HUES From above: A family room designed by Mary Anne Smiley pulls colors from a diptych by Christopher Martin, and furniture from Roche Bobois and Allan Knight atop a cowhide rug from Truett Carpet creates a cozy space; the dining room features neutral wallpaper, and clear and white tones to bring out the drama of the owner's hand-carved buffet.

THROUGHOUT TEXAS

UNFORGETTABLE HUE

For Mary Anne Smiley—The Purist—and John Allison—The Modernist—bolder is better when it comes to color.

By Connie Dufer

Their rooms pulsate with vibrant color. Yet Mary Anne Smiley of Dallas and John Allison of Austin and San Antonio know that the same design element that transforms a house can also be its scariest enemy. The secret to getting color right? Start without it. "I love this approach, as it gives me a blank canvas to use color as I want on everything else and creates a lovely platform for those colors to zing," explains Smiley. And Allison, co-owner of Nest Modern's two stores in Austin and San Antonio, will often start with gray or taupe, even when the client insists on a bold shade. "I won't be satisfied until a room pops, and [I] push all my clients outside their comfort zone."

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PHOTOGRAPHY BY STEPHEN LABUSCH

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COLOR POP Clockwise from top left: Strokes of black on the table base and handrails add drama to Smiley's recent project; a carved marble fireplace hosts a painting by Jay Maggio from Craighead Green and an art glass piece by Susan Longini from Kitrell Rifkind Gallery; "Full of Joy" sculpture by Michelle O'Michael anchors the living room.



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The Purist

Smiley notes that clients often find her through her website, with galleries of color-coordinated rooms. "Though I am known for being fearless in my use of color, what people often miss is that I rarely use strong or bright color on walls," says the designer. "The color most often comes in small doses in finish materials and/or furnishings so that the colors can be used in their most vibrant hues." A recent project, for instance, a rush job finished in just six weeks leading up to Thanksgiving, transformed rooms with challenging spaces into welcoming, color-infused gathering spots for a large extended family. Look closely, though, and you'll see the colors concentrated in art and accent pieces, with sofas, paint, flooring and most case goods in neutral. "The living room is all white walls, all neutrals in furnishing. The only color is in art and pillows. People look at that room and think, Wow, look at all that color. You can really pop some things in strong color if your background is neutral." maryannesmiley.com

MARY ANNE SMILEY: THE PURIST COLOR TIPS & TRENDS

Color Smarts "Fundamental art classes are an absolute necessity. A designer must have an understanding of the color wheel, and the effect of different colors in their different forms."

Go-To Shades "Sherwin Williams Window Pane and Rice Grain"

Trending "Violets such as purple and orchid from pale to intense are being used in interesting combinations. In nature, violet is one of the hues that is used in small amounts."

In Black-and-White "A touch of black-and-white really makes rooms dramatic. I learned this in Photography 101: When you're doing a photograph, you always have to have pure black and pure white for all the tones in between to look right."

In Your Home? "Predominantly white. Some hot pink, orange, lime green, red, yellow, turquoise and black-and-white."



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