

HOME AND Garden

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COBI ON COLOUR

Décor doyenne Ladner
shares how to work
with happy hues

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SMALL IS BEAUTIFUL: You don't need to go for a big shot colour in your home as sometimes a nice accent piece is enough.



Don't fear the fuchsia

A little splash of colour can brighten your life

BY KELLY GADZALA

The honeysuckle pink that colour authority Pantone has named colour of the year is great as summery nail polish, but how do you incorporate the bright hue into your home?

Believe it or not, decorating with colour like that could very well be as easy as changing up the shade on your nails.

Working with bright colours isn't as hard as most people think, according to a Canadian design guru Cobi Ladner.

"Colour is the quickest and easiest way to bring personality to your room," she says.

The former editor of *Canadian House & Home* magazine has recently launched a furniture and decorative accessories collection, Cobistyle, which she says was designed in response to the sea of sameness in the décor and design world.

"We have been in a beige world," Ladner says.

Comprised of vivid pink, orange, yellow and lime green pieces, Ladner's collection features Asian-inspired accessories, patterned drapes and inky velvet furniture that pack a punchy colour wallop. Released in 300 stores, a good part of the collection is available at InVu Drapery Co. on Yonge Street near Lawrence Avenue. The collection stands in refreshing contrast to some of the blander tones and styles out there that Ladner sees as having dominated both the high and low end of the market.

Still, the colour tide may be changing. Ladner predicts a good long stretch of colour in our immediate style futures. If you want to jump on the colour bandwagon early, she has some tips for how to do it.

Accessorize colour with neutrals

Colour can be scary for people when it comes to home décor, Ladner says, because it's a commitment. So incorporate it into your home by playing with accessories.

Neutral décor has been the trend for so long, Ladner says, that colourful accessories can be popped into most rooms rather easily.

And if you accessorize with bright pops of colour, the whole colour question becomes less threatening, she says. For instance, the bright patterned sashes in her collection can be tied around a neutral drape and still create an effect.

"I like colour that's tempered by neutrals," she says.

"You don't want too much candy."

Ladner recommends buying several accessories in the same shade — say, a pillow, tray and throw — to create an impact in a room.

"You need to hit that note 3-5 times before the room starts to transform."

Where to start?

It may be hard to believe, but people have walked up to Ladner at public appearances and asked her what colour to put in their living rooms.

Colour, she suggests, is so wholly personal that someone else can't possibly tell you what hue to choose.



FRANCIS CRESCIA/TOWN CRIER

PATTERNS CAN HELP: Cobi Ladner of Cobistyle says that you can pair bright, solid colours with neutral pieces and bring in patterns through accessories like pillows and draperies. If patterns are too much for you then she suggests adding a bright sash to a neutral drape for a pop of colour.

If you're unsure Ladner suggests going back to your favourite colour when you were a kid. Or look in your closet, she says, as we tend to like colours that look good on us.

If you're feeling a little hedgy about incorporating a colour into your décor, Ladner suggests you experiment in a small room like a bathroom. Try a strong colour on the walls for a dramatic effect.

Colour chameleon

Is it appropriate to have different colours in different rooms of your home? It's dangerous territory, Ladner says, as there should be some common thread uniting the various spaces.

But if you crave change, you can alternate

the colourful accessories in your home on a seasonal basis. Ladner puts away her deep red cushions in the spring and adds soft blue pillows, throws and other accessories to her space. Richer, deeper colours, such as those featured in her fall collection, are best for the cooler months, she says.

Some shades can work all-year round, she says, like the bright primary colours suited to a contemporary style. A fuchsia lacquered tray isn't just for the summer time.

Large pieces

Though Ladner says she loves her red sofa, she cautions against putting hot pink on the couch.

Pull back with colour for very large pieces, she says, and opt for neutrals. Remember, neutral needn't mean beige. A dramatic black velvet couch can act as a neutral even though we may not think of it as one, she says.

Meanwhile smaller upholstered pieces, Ladner says, can take a room from average to amazing if done in a wonderful colour:

"Imagine a pink velvet chair beside a window in a bedroom," she says. "Or a lime green tufted ottoman amidst taupe linen sofas."

"The bold colour instantly brings character and personality to the room and the piece itself is such a statement that you can move it from room to room and it will take that charm with it."