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Kelley Proxmire, Inc.



## Throwing Shade

Designers show how you can carry a color theme throughout the house.

BY KATE ANDREWS

**F**OR THE PAST SEVERAL YEARS, NEUTRAL COLORS have been all the rage in interior design, but like the butterfly bursting out of its cocoon, homeowners have embraced more color. Two Virginia designers gave us their expertise on incorporating a single color throughout a house—in these cases, blue.

In decorating a young family's Arlington home, designer Kelley Proxmire, based in Bethesda, Maryland, used bright blues and greens around the downstairs living and dining areas, including a deep navy paint on part of the dining room wall, balanced with white trim.

For fabrics, Proxmire went with striking prints, which help spread color, she says, without becoming too overwhelming or dark. For instance, a chair in the den is covered in a blue and white "animalistic print" that replicates feathers. "I love it," says Proxmire. "It has a fresh, crisp look. I call it youthful. You don't see it that often."

Pamela Harvey designed the interiors for a large Colonial home in western Fairfax County. The homeowner loved gray walls and classic Virginia hues, she says, but to keep things brighter, Harvey used multiple shades of blue—from baby blue to navy and turquoise—as well as pops of hot pink, lime green, and lavender throughout the house.

She started work in the dining room, using light-blue lotus fan wallpaper and complementing Schumacher fabric on the host chairs, plus richer blues on the tablescape. It's a traditional, subtle look, but not at all boring. "The rest of the house kind of spun out from the dining room," says Harvey. "The jumping-off point was that wallpaper."

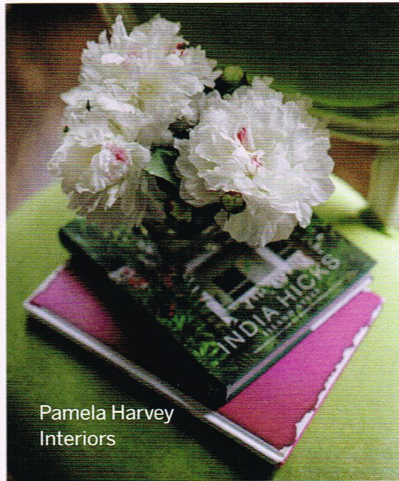
Her Herndon-based company, Pamela Harvey Interiors, made a custom settee in tufted blue-sky velvet for the wall below the stairs in the foyer. It's a striking piece, as are the bright pink-and-white patterned club chairs in the living room, all of which came about through discussions with the homeowners.

"People are very specific about what they want," Harvey says. "I really feel like the first floor or your public spaces should carry a common thread throughout. The rooms need to gently flow into one another."

As for carrying a color theme upstairs to bedrooms and home offices, both Harvey and Proxmire encourage homeowners to go for it. Bedrooms should still be soothing spaces with calming colors, Proxmire says, but pillows, chairs, and lamp shades offer opportunities to continue a color scheme, as well as wallpaper on the ceiling. "You're lying there, looking up," she says

**"The rooms need to gently flow into one another."**

—Pamela Harvey



Pamela Harvey Interiors



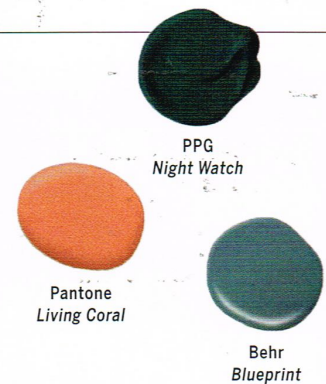
with a laugh.

“Gray alone can be too dull,” Harvey says, especially in a bedroom, so she placed a pear-green chair in the Fairfax home, as well as lavender print fabric on pillows and a light green throw on a chaise longue. The effect is cool and calm, yet with punches of occasional color.

She advises paying attention to the undertones of neutral colors to decide which brighter shades are good matches—a bit like examining your skin tone when choosing a lipstick. And when in doubt, Harvey adds, “I always feel like you can pull green into most rooms.”

Proxmire also incorporates color by painting trim different hues, not just the traditional white, and using darker colors on walls, as long as a room has plenty of windows or door openings. She also has noticed that people are more open to using brown wood (albeit sparingly) in their design, after shunning the '70s trend in recent decades, in addition to more colors.

Whether homeowners are seeking professional design work or doing their own updates, Proxmire advises, “Edit, edit, edit.”



## LIVING CORAL and other COLORS OF THE YEAR

Pantone used to be the only body allowed to name a color of the year—and in many corners, it’s still the shade that matters most—but other companies have also taken on the annual duty.

Interior designers Kelley Proxmire and Pamela Harvey gave their thoughts on Pantone’s 2019 Color of the Year, **Living Coral**, and other trends, including how to incorporate the popular colors into your home décor.

“The shades of coral are fresh,” Harvey says. “It’s kind of a happy color. I think people are tired of neutrals. It works well with blue; it works well with gray; it works well with greens.”

Deeper colors, especially jewel tones like PPG Paints’ deep green **Night Watch**, are also coming back in popularity, she adds.

“One thing that I’m pushing now is all shades of green,” Proxmire says. “Going back to the shades of nature: green and tan, green and white, green and brown.”

Dark blues are popular, as we see in Behr’s slate shade, **Blueprint**—the paint company’s 2019 hue. Navy never goes out of style in Virginia, Harvey says, and is showing up in unexpected places, including stair rails and kitchen islands.

One thing to keep in mind, Proxmire says, is that it may take a couple of months for the anointed colors to reach the broader design marketplace.

Bedrooms should be soothing spaces, Proxmire says, but pillows, chairs, and lamp shades offer opportunities to continue a home's color scheme. Harvey agrees, and uses accessories, like the green chair and colorful pillows in this bedroom, to add punches of color to a calm room. +