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decorating with color

MEET THE SEASON'S NEWEST HUES

singing a new tone

It's color to the rescue when a designer is asked to refashion an empty nest.

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To create interest in the living room, designer Kelley Proxmire hung a sunburst mirror atop a larger rectangular one. Other pairs include porcelain-based gourd table lamps, bergère chairs and painted circular sofa tables.



Coral plays into a band of rich color in the abstract art, this page, that hangs above a former dining table, which is pulled into service for extra-large gatherings.

The home's center hall, opposite, has a painted foyer console and a new mirror that reflects the homeowner's existing vintage grandfather clock. Silk coral curtains with geometric trim peek in from the living room.

Unlike the old woman who lived in a shoe, this homeowner knew exactly what to do when her nine children were grown and gone. "My client wanted to refresh the entire first floor of her house, which includes the master bedroom," recalls interior designer Kelley Proxmire of her Ellicott City, Maryland, project. "She told me she wanted a happy, inviting house, and I can't think of a better way to do that than with color."

Living Coral may be Pantone's 2019 Color of the Year, but it's what the homeowner gravitated toward when Proxmire began working on the five-bedroom house a few years back. "It was important for us to have a nice flow of coral throughout the house, and to combine it with the homeowner's other preferred colors, blue and green," explains Proxmire. Thus, the living room has a traditional sofa and two bergère chairs upholstered in patterned fabrics (one petite, one larger in scale) containing the coral hue. The color then becomes more saturated in the

dining room across the center hall, where the chairs are upholstered in solid coral fronts and seats and backed in a coral-and-cream chevron.

"In the great room, we took away a massive dining table and turned the former eat-in space into a secondary seating area," says Proxmire. (The primary one centers around a fireplace and TV.) The useful space, which faces the backyard, also features a mint sofa and green-and-white trellis-patterned curtains. Tan and coral tones appear in this room's palette as well, drawn from the pretty botanical chintz that Proxmire selected for the circular tufted ottoman that acts a centerpiece.

"For the master bedroom, our approach was driven by a blue-and-cream linen print. Above all, we wanted this space to be serene," she says. The intimate sitting room off the bedroom serves as a transitional spot for reading or relaxing, with a soft blue sofa and quieter touches of coral. "It is a happy and welcoming home," says Proxmire.





Trellis-patterned wallpaper and a tan-painted ceiling provide a pleasant backdrop for at-home dining. The wood furniture sports different finishes because Proxmire likes to impart the feeling of pieces collected over time.



Proxmire took a vintage fiberglass Corinthian capital and added a marble surface to create a one-of-a-kind console, top left. A tone-on-tone striped paper brings subtle interest to the walls.

A blue-painted bench connects this sitting room to the master bedroom beyond, left. Gray paint refreshed the preexisting secretary desk.

A pair of comfortable check-patterned armchairs, above, sit on casters, so they're easy to move around when the room calls for rearranging. In the foreground, an iron-based mirror-topped cocktail table introduces a new material to play foil to the wood furniture.

decorating with paint

- **CHOOSE HUES** When picking a palette, just like with your wardrobe, pay attention to hues that you naturally gravitate toward. Then take a balanced approach: If you pick a strong, saturated dominant color for a given space, soften it with neutral fabrics and accessories. Similarly, if you start with a neutral background, embrace dashes of color to enliven it.
- **GET SMART** For a quick update, look beyond four walls. On ceilings, interior designer Kelley Proxmire prefers paler colors, like light blue. Painted floors and furniture are back in style, she notes. Coat the insides of bookcases with color to add interesting contrast.
- **CHANGE UP THE ROUTINE** Paint trim, including moldings and baseboards, the same color as the wall, or in a darker version of the wall color, instead of white. This can help prevent a smaller space from feeling chopped up and create a dramatic backdrop in larger ones.

"I love to use green in rooms where you see the outdoors. It helps blend indoor-outdoor spaces."

—DESIGNER KELLEY PROXMIRE



In the great room close to the kitchen, above, a comfy tan sofa sits across from the TV above a fireplace. The two spindle chairs sport a fresh blue-and-white-patterned print.

Four armchairs with mint-green piping, left, create a conversation area around a large circular ottoman whose La Cinta fabric by Lee Jofa appears on throw pillows throughout the room.

Thibaut's Janta Bazaar wallpaper has a custom Roman shade to match. The print enlivens the mudroom, right, with pretty colors and botanicals. A small bench offers a spot to comfortably pull on shoes and boots.



A custom-pleated-and-trimmed valance and curtains frame a series of windows in the master bedroom. A pair of matelassé-covered chairs creates a reading nook along with a velvet ottoman. Hotel liners layer the bed with tidy luxury.

