Color your world

Five Greater Boston designers give tips for finding colors that will work for you.

Jeannine Campbell

Jung/Brannen Associates, Boston

"What kind of statement do you want to make? Do you want to use color to make a strong visual impact, or do you want to use a neutral palette to not detract from the furnishings or the architecture of the space?"

"The other thing that's quite important is lighting, whether the space has lots of natural lighting, and, of course, north or south exposure. If it's a space you would use most often at night, you would want the coloring to be more conducive to that time of the day or style of entertaining."

Kathleen Fox

The Designing Woman, Cohasset

Don't start with a paint color. "It's much easier to match a paint exactly to a fabric" than the other way around.

Don't be afraid of color. "People tend to go neutral because they think it's safe. It can be safe, but it can be boring."

Take a test drive. "If you're nervous about a color, go buy a quart and paint a 2-foot-square section on all four walls so you can see how the light hits it, day and night."

Dana Noble

Noble-Lawton Interior Design, Boston

"You have to be careful to use [color] in the right proportions. Use stronger colors on smaller pieces."

"When using traditional furniture, use muted colors, and when using contemporary, like Italian furniture, use stronger colors."

"Background colors are very important. You could take the most expensive painting in the world and if you put it against the wrong background color, it could look like something from Wal-Mart."

Freya Surabian

Freya Surabian Design Associates, Winchester

"The setting of a house itself dictates a lot of it. If it doesn't get a lot of direct sunlight, then you can go overboard with bright colors," for example.

"By looking at the colors people wear, you can almost always tell what colors they want to have around them. If they feel comfortable wearing it, they'll feel comfortable living in it."

Karin Weller

Karin Weller Interior Design, Cambridge

"You can change the season of the room by changing the color. Color is mood. When I do yellow walls, for instance, I think of summer. I think of bringing light and brightness into a room, and sometimes I use fully saturated colors. The fall, I associate with muted tones and earth tones. The winter, I think of Nordic light and bringing in pale, soft, muted colors. And spring, I think of freshness, and mixing fresh greens and pastels with lots of white. "

Jeannine Campbell said Jung/Brannen chose deep purples and orange-reds to reflect Trinity Communications' corporate self-image.

Freya Surabian said the bold colors in this room were dictated by the dark woodwork and the "big, colorful personalities" of her clients.

GLOBE STAFF GRAPHIC/MICHAEL PRAGER