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# color

of the Year  
for 2022

BY CATHY PURPLE CHERRY, AIA, LEED-AP, FOUNDER AND PRINCIPAL  
OF PURPLE CHERRY ARCHITECTS      photography by David Burroughs and Durston Saylor



At the end of each year, color experts and prominent paint brands choose and announce their “Colors of the Year,” setting design trends for the months ahead. Most of the color selections are inspired by cultural shifts, global events, and even fashion trends, making them just as much of a cultural statement as the experiences that inspired them.

Nearly all of the 2022 Colors of the Year are a green hue, from Benjamin Moore’s October Mist to Sherwin-Williams’s Evergreen Fog. Coincidence? I think not. These calming and soothing shades are a clear response to what has been one of the most tumultuous years in recent history. More specifically, the COVID pandemic has influenced the need for serenity in our built environments. Nature brings this to us. Thus, subtle colors of green are the most prominent new colors.

Incorporating green into interior design ties inside spaces to the outside environment through the windows that surround the space. We’re seeing some variations of these shades currently being used in upholstery, particularly in velvet or in case goods in lacquered finishes. The colors also very much lend themselves to the current design trend of the modern farmhouse. These new colors would look fabulous on a vertical or horizontal board siding within a room.

To celebrate the 2022 Colors of the Year, I’ve provided our top seven tips for selecting paint color and sheen for every room in your home. I hope you find these tips helpful.

#### Exercise your patience

Believe it or not, paint is one of the last decisions we make—and it is usually one of our clients’ first questions at the start of the design process. Just like how you can box yourself into a corner, you can box yourself into a design by choosing a paint color too early in the process. By selecting an exact paint color and designing around this color, you limit the design possibilities. We strive to have a general sense of a client’s desired color palette for direction. Still, we do not select exact

paint colors until after choosing most other interior selections. We then have our pick of thousands of beautiful colors to compliment a design.

#### Do your research—it’s worth it

To gently repeat ourselves—do your research; it’s worth it! Do you lean towards warmer or cooler tones? Maybe you love the simplicity of a white wall, or you are all about the drama with a bold pop. Pinterest, Houzz, and design publications are helpful tools in discovering what you are naturally drawn to. The next question is—do you see yourself living in a space like the image? You may be drawn to specific photos but may have an emotional reaction to the “feel” of the space after further thought. Color and tonal quality can affect our mood. Many people love the look of gray tones, which have become quite popular in the last few years, but they may feel differently when they envision living in a gray space. You may realize you prefer warmer tones over cooler tones, even if in the gray family.

#### Understand transitions

Understanding the architectural layout of your home and how paint colors transition is critical. Further, understanding the







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volume of the space and the orientation to natural light is significant. Our architectural and interior design teams understand the importance of these transition areas and how paint colors will transition to one another and the light. In the increasingly popular open concept floorplan, these transitions are key and lead to us specifying fewer paint colors to avoid open sightlines with multiple hues. Our eye senses interruption when design elements, including

paint, do not flow throughout an open space. We aim to have your eye carry seamlessly throughout your home, so it picks up on all of the beautiful moments.

## Don't forget trim and ceilings

We often recommend painting the trim and ceiling the same color but different sheens (stay tuned for sheen advice below). Going back to transition, knowing how the trim tracks from space to space or even within a single area is essential. It is not uncommon for us to specify the same trim and ceiling color throughout an entire house. It provides a level of continuity as you move throughout your home. This approach is frequently practiced in the heart of the home—the kitchen. If you love a timeless white kitchen (which many of our clients do), you will appreciate the continuity of the cabinetry matching the trim color. Further, when using a darker color in a room on every element, the monochromatic room can be quite enveloping and nurturing.

## Utilize the existing color palette

How do you select colors from here? Use the design elements and materials in the space! When we work through the design process, we select materials that tonally come together to create a holistic design. The color palette is already set when it comes to choosing that perfect paint color. Cabinetry finishes, fabrics, and rugs all

influence the direction. Still wanting a bit of color? Pop a pale blue or a fun wallpaper on your ceiling to compliment your palette. One of our “go-to” collections is Benjamin Moore’s OC collection.

## Brush up on sheen

Paint sheens are relatively straightforward if you keep a few guidelines in mind. There is a general rule of thumb: the higher the gloss, the higher the shine. And in turn, the higher the shine, the more durable and wipeable that surface is. More durable, sounds like a no-brainer? A higher gloss sheen will also highlight any potential imperfections in your drywall. Here’s one last tip before you dive into sheens: check with your manufacturer for the differences in sheen. There are subtle differences between manufacturers.

## Purple Cherry Cheat Sheet:

- Flat paint—No Shine
- High Gloss—All Shine
- Eggshell, Satin, and Semi-Gloss—In between Flat and High Gloss

Ceilings and trim are also fairly straightforward. We recommend flat for drywall ceilings and semi-gloss or satin for trim. Semi-gloss is a traditional paint trim, but we are seeing a trend towards the lower sheen of satin. This sheen level provides that perfect amount to highlight the beauty of the trim profile but at a lower level of gloss.

Our “wet areas,” the bathrooms and laundry rooms, need durability against potential moisture while also avoiding the look of a high gloss sheen. As a broad stroke recommendation, an eggshell or a satin wall paint sheen will give you that extra bit of protection without the “glare” of a semi-gloss or high gloss sheen.

## Sample, sample, sample (and sample again)

Bigger is better! Larger format samples allow you to see the color—a 5’x5’ area should do the trick! If you can sample on multiple walls within a space, do it. Color can change throughout a space, and light is key. If you can, live with the color and feel it. Better yet, look at the color when using that particular space during the day and the evening. And remember, you may need more than one round of samples, and that is okay! Color is an essential aspect of the design.

We hope you find these tips useful!



Born and raised in Virginia, **Cathy Purple Cherry** ultimately landed in Annapolis, where she grew a large architectural firm specializing in high-end custom homes and estates. Today, the firm has four offices—Charlottesville, VA, Middleburg, VA, White Sulfur Springs, WV, and Annapolis, MD—and specializes in creating luxurious residences across the United States. A talented architect, visionary, and three-dimensional thinker, Cathy can marry clients’ dreams with the reality of the built environment. While she revels in the

intricate design opportunities presented by high-end residential architecture, Cathy is equally passionate about her philanthropic efforts. She and her firm offer their design knowledge and sensitivity to the special needs community via the Purple Cherry Purposeful Architecture Studio. A true creative servant, Cathy Purple Cherry is unfailing in her efforts to impact all those around her positively.

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