

Bright and Easy

Whether we use it to create 'zones' of space, add a focal point or simply express ourselves, we're becoming more adventurous when it comes to colour in the kitchen

The psychology of colour goes back a long way: red was traditionally used for dining rooms because it was considered an appetite stimulant, while, pre-refrigeration, sky blue was often favoured for the kitchen or pantry because it was thought to ward off flies. There's no doubt that colour has some amazing abilities – not only can it lift (or depress) our mood, but it can also give the illusion that a space is bigger or smaller than it really is – extremely useful in interior design.

MOOD

"Colour influences our mood and behaviour every waking minute, whether we're aware of it or not," says colour psychologist Angela Wright. "But there's no such thing as a 'bad' colour – as in music, where one note on its own won't provoke an emotional response until it's put with other notes, it all depends how colour is used." Angela theorises that red stimulates the body, while blue stimulates the mind; yellow is the colour of emotion, whereas green is about the balance of all three of these. "A highly saturated colour is always going to be stimulating, and a

low saturation colour is always going to be soothing," she says – so whereas bright red may perhaps be too physically stimulating, a pale pink will have a less strong effect. "Green always works well in a kitchen, because it's the colour of abundance," says Angela. "It's primeval – we know we're not going to starve when the landscape around us is green."

LONGEVITY

Fashions change quickly, so think about how you use colour in the kitchen, where you'll probably be spending thousands. "With the current trend for vibrant colours such as fuchsia pink, lime green and burnt orange, it's vital to remember that your units will still be with you in ten years' time," says Alno designer Tracy Stobie from Altrincham Kitchen Centre. "It might be worth selecting more muted shades as a backdrop and confining bold statements to items that can easily be changed." If you're cautious, restrict colour to areas like the kitchen island, or do as kitchen designer Debbie Bowden, of Barnes of Ashburton, suggests, and buy painted timber units,

"If you get bored of the colour, you can just rub it back and start again. It's much more versatile."

ON TREND

"There are two main colour directions at the moment, in terms of trends," says Dulux's global colour designer Louise Smith. "Tomato reds and damsons – foodie colours – that are really warm and easy to live with; and really bold, candy brights like pink and yellow, used in blocks of colour, which comes through from fashion."

Worktops, flooring, tiles and splashbacks can indulge your love of colour without being too over the top, while appliances such as ovens and fridges can add an irreverent touch; LED lighting has also opened up new design possibilities. For a near-instant facelift, accessories such as tea towels and utensils can be switched around in seconds, but never underestimate the power of food itself to brighten things up: a bowl of oranges or big jar of lollipops are style statements that are as temporary as they are tasty. • • •



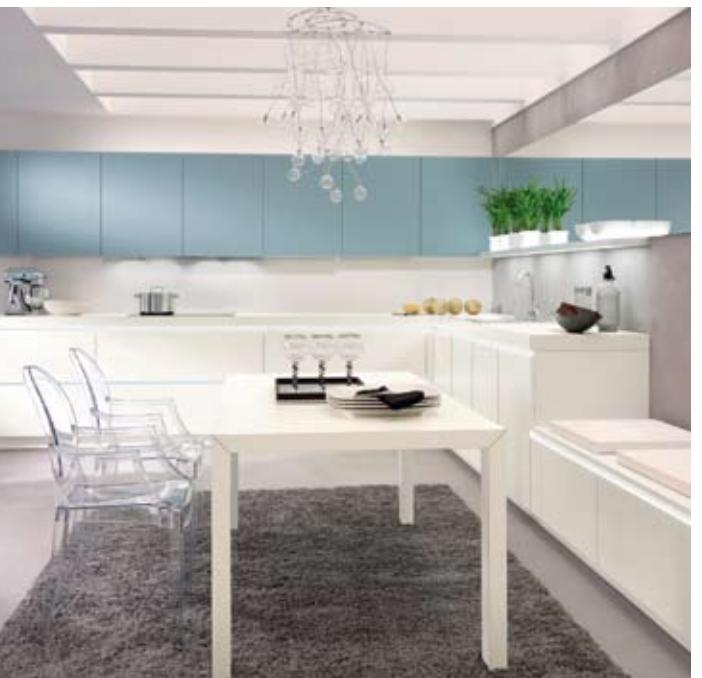
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