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Denver's Mile-High Magazine |

November 2005

Atmosphere Home

Painting the Town

Thinking about repainting your dwelling? James Martin, owner of Denver's architectural color-consulting firm The Color People and one of the nation's leading authorities on color, takes a moment to discuss paint, palettes, and personal style.

By Cheryl Nedderman

COLOR IS "The most relative thing there is in this world. It changes with scale, finish, light, and texture. It's never the same; it's not mathematical."

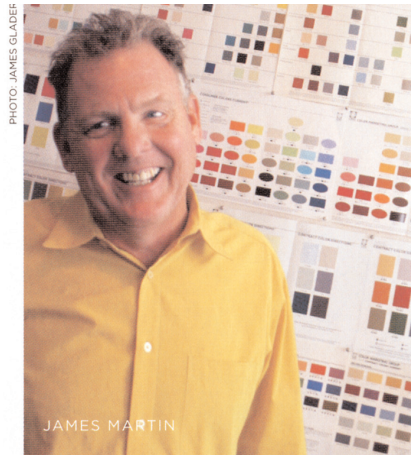
IF YOU WANT A FABULOUS ROOM "Start with something that's fabulous. If you have a color that's fabulous, start there. Got a fabulous rug? Start there. A pillow, a window treatment? Start there."

WAIT "To choose your paint color. You'll have only 12 types of rug to choose from, but more than 1,200 paint colors. The great thing about paint is you have this wonderful selection."

ALWAYS "Sample before you paint. Paint a 3-square foot section of the wall. Frame it with newspaper to block out the old color, and look at the sample in different types of light over a couple days."

DO-IT-YOURSELF "Painting is easy. The key is using really good brushes. If you're painting, you're going to need three things: a roller, extension handle, and a good brush—a 2 1/2 -inch cut brush with an angled point. A professional-grade paint-brush will save you hours of time."

EVERYBODY IS CHEAP "About paint—they get all worked up about a



DREAM IN COLOR Local color expert James Martin advises clients to save money on labor, so long as they never cheap out on the paint.

couple of dollars a gallon. Don't ever go with the cheapest paint you can find, because with paint, unlike other things, you get what you pay for. The more expensive paints always look better."

UNIFY EVERYTHING WITH "The trim color—make it the same from room to room. Not everything has to match perfectly, but it has to be thematic, with continuity between rooms. Then find colors that go with the trim color."

THE KEY TO SUCCESS "Is having the wall and trim color working

together. The real trick is the right amount of contrast. Modulate deep colors with a more tan trim, which will give the illusion of off-white. If the trim were white it would have too much contrast and look like a cave."

FOR SMALL HOUSES "Paint each room a different color but also follow a color theme. It makes each room a completely different experience. You can take a moderate house and really maximize what you have by making each room unique."

ACCENT WALLS ARE "Sometimes good and sometimes not, depending on the room. If a room is long, do an accent wall at the end of it. Also, accent walls at the ends of hallways are nice because something happens at the end."

AN ALL-WHITE ROOM IS "Evil. It's cold, harsh, glaring, and uncomfortable—in every situation."

THE HOTTEST COLOR RIGHT NOW IS "Citron green/yellow. After eight years, nobody's tired of it yet. It's a color phenomenon. Go ahead and paint your house these hot colors if you're willing to repaint in a couple years. Well, hell! Forget that. Who cares? You're doing it to make yourself happy. Use whatever color you want."