

COVER STORY

Buyers' views coloured

REBECCA DI NUZZO

COLOUR is vital to create a home environment that feels comfortable and reflects your individual style. But it can also turn off buyers when the time comes to sell.

Vendors who love bold feature walls and other big colour statements risk being left red-faced on auction day if their choice of colours fails to attract broad buyer appeal.

Interior designer Frances Cosway, of White Pebble Interiors, said vendors should opt for a neutral palette with tasteful areas of colour when putting their home on the market.

"It's quite a nuance because you don't want to make it like there's no personality in the space," Ms Cosway said. "I think the recommendation is if there is something really big and a massive statement, I'd

definitely recommend toning that down."

Cushions, rugs and other small furnishings were an easy, cost-effective way to create interest in a home without overwhelming buyers.

Surprisingly, she found green was the most divisive colour. People either loved it or hated it, and men typically steered clear of it.

Muted, natural colours such as light shades of blue or green were advised for those seeking to create a calming environment.

And dark tones of blue and black were avoided by many people as they tended to have a gloomy effect on their moods.

Parents should also tone back bold colours and busy wallpaper patterns in children's bedrooms, Ms Cosway said.

These could cause sensory overload in infants and made it difficult for them to sleep.

TIPS FROM THE EXPERTS

SARAH GODFREY: Steer away from bold colour statements when styling a home for sale because people can react differently to colours.

FRANCES COSWAY: Colour is important to create an environment where homeowners feel comfortable. Green is the most divisive colour — they either love it or hate it.

DOM VIOLI: The biggest mistake people make is using too much colour. Only about 25 per cent of the home should have colour and the rest should be styled in neutral, complementary shades.

Whatever colour scheme people chose, Ms Cosway said it was crucial to have a sense of continuity in the home.

Using similar shades of the same colour throughout the property created a sense of flow and calm that contributed to the feeling of comfort.

Ms Cosway said people should choose colours they liked rather than the latest trends.

"It's got to relate back to you," Ms Cosway said.

"It's very important because home is where you want to feel relaxed and comfortable. If you've got a colour in there that you're not able to relate to, then you're not going to be able to (feel comfortable)," she said.

Moving Mindsets psychology clinic director Sarah Godfrey said anecdotal evidence suggested colour had an effect on people's moods.

"It's a sceptical area but it is a hot topic, particularly in

marketing and interior design," Ms Godfrey said.

"There's no really definitive psychological research that says colours shape moods. But there is some research showing colours have a temporary effect."

Some colours had universal meanings that incited similar emotional responses and were thought to be culturally based or instinctual. Red typically made people feel alert and excitable, while white symbolised purity in some cultures and mourning in others.

Similarly, a child who had a happy upbringing might associate the colour of their bedroom with feelings of nurture and comfort and carry those feelings into later stages of life.

Because it was difficult to predict how people would respond to a colour, Ms

Godfrey said the best option for homeowners was to use a neutral palette when selling.

"I think because we are so emotionally driven and we are so complex ... we can make assumptions based on colours due to our experiences," she said. "They (neutral colours) are a blank slate. It allows us to project our own mood straight on to that building."

Melbourne artist Dom Violi said the biggest mistake people made with colours in homes was using too much.

"You end up with a riot of colour that doesn't communicate anything," Mr Violi said. "It's quite a confusing effect rather than anything else."

People who used too much colour in a room also ran the risk of making the space feel smaller than it actually was, creating a sense of claustrophobia, he said.

Artist's palette was a bonus during sale

ARTIST Dom Violi believes colour has subtle effects on people's mood that need to be heeded when setting up a home.

His home at 14 Stephen St, Preston, featured a pea green interior when he bought it — a colour he hates.

"I don't like green very much or chocolate brown. If I sit in a brown room that really affects me," Mr Violi (pictured) said.

One of the first things Mr Violi did when he moved into a new home was paint over the colours he disliked.

"It (colour) is what you identify with. It makes you feel at home," he said.

Mr Violi's home has lots of warm colours throughout, such as burgundy reds and shades of

yellow. He said they were complemented by a dominant grey colour scheme that prevented them from becoming overwhelming.

"There's a whole theory and concept behind what I wanted to achieve.

"I wanted that visual effect as you walk in but also a calming effect inside the house," Mr Violi said.

"So standing from the front door you get these layers upon layers. And because you see them through doorways it's not overpowering."

It's an approach that worked well when Mr Violi's three-bedroom home was sold for \$903,000 by Harcourts, Preston, last weekend.



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