

A NEW KIND OF NEUTRAL COLOUR FOR YOUR HOME

Green is the new beige

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Special to QMI Agency

If Jane Hall had her way, the new "builder's beige" would be green. And although new homeowners might balk at the idea, the Toronto-based artist and designer says not to worry because green goes with everything.

"For me, the number one neutral is green," says Hall, who refers to her Toronto home decor store as a beige-free zone. "Mother Nature did not get it wrong ... Statistically, it is a colour that people respond positively to," she says.

Positive or not, it's difficult to imagine new homeowners jumping on board with the idea. Even Hall knows from experience that most people are afraid to use colour, especially after years of being told that neutrals like beige are important for resale, a notion she "fundamentally disagrees with."

So just how do you go about

selecting a paint colour for your new home or condo? It's nearly impossible to select vibrant colours from a builder's palette because there's no way to visualize how the light will fall in a room or how the colours will flow.

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— Jane Hall, artist

"We suggest that people pick white so that it's easier for us to go and repaint a nice colour on top of it," says Yanic Simard, principal, Toronto Interior Design Group, noting that homeowners are more likely to tire of white, prompting them to paint colour sooner.

Nevertheless, the basic idea is to match your cabinetry and

flooring, he says. If you've chosen white cabinets with darker countertops, you should stay with white or grey walls.

If your cabinetry is cream and your floors are espresso, lean more towards the creams and beige. "And yes, paint the whole house the same colour to carry the story," says Simard, whose personal favourite is Classic Grey from Benjamin Moore.

Simard, who works closely with Benjamin Moore, says the 2011 forecast is about giving a sense of structure to the "crazy, chaotic world" we live in and that there's no right or wrong when it comes to deciding on a colour for your home. "It's like a piece of clothing; it's so personal," he says.

Meanwhile, Hall encourages people to be inspired by their gardens or by a trip to the tropics. "We're there to reenergize and we feel wonderful, but then we come back to our beige boxes," she says.

Inviting colours like Lunar Month blue and red Jujube give off a home, comfortable vibe.

