

# COLOR

Variety of vibrant hues for interiors

Continued from Page 1

well-received by local customers, according to Wagner.

"Low VOC paints (Volatile Organic Compounds) and ceramic flats are selling," he said. "Low VOC paints don't have the odor of conventional paints while ceramic beads offer a protective surface that resists stains and is scrubable, even in a flat finish."

**Painting tips from pros** Joe Peters of Prestige Painting Inc. is a third generation painter (fifth generation, if you count turn-of-the-century "coaters" in his family).

"I tagged along with Dad on painting projects since I was 8 years old, when we worked on the Fisher Theater," he said.

What has he learned over the years to ensure a successful paint job?

"Preparation is key, cleanliness is godliness, and patience, patience," said Peters.

Jeff Sanborn, coating specialist at Brown Lumber, has dealt with many different paint customers, some with more ability than others. His advice?

"Take a class, rent a video or get some advice from wherever you buy your materials," he said.

According to Peters, common mistakes do-it-yourselfers commit include improper or non-existent surface preparation, lack of familiarization with paint application and materials and improper dry time and coat coverage.

"The paint is only as good as the surface you prepare," he said.

Sanborn added, "Prep is 95 percent of the job, and it is usually the part that people dislike the most. Don't be tempted to skip or do a poor job on prep. You'll end up with unsatisfactory results and will have to repaint far sooner than you'd like."

When can a homeowner do it themselves?

"Most people think they can do it themselves. They might, as long as they are willing to live with the results," said Peters.

"What is your ability and what are your expectations — or perhaps more importantly — your spouse's expectations?" said Sanborn.

And when should a homeowner turn to a professional painter?

"It depends on the size of the job and the results they are expecting," said Peters. "Most of our customers have large areas or want a professional appearance."

"If you are repainting simply to change to color, then most people can do it themselves; however, here are some considerations," said Sanborn.

"If you have vaulted or cathedral ceilings, you will have to rent scaffolding, in which case it might be better time-wise and money-wise to hire a professional," he said. "If you have peeling paint, or a stain or water spot that keeps coming back, it is usually indicative of a bigger problem. In these cases, at least get a professional opinion."

"Houses older than 1978 need to be checked for lead in the paint. If you have lead in your paint you may want to call a professional. If not, use an encapsulating product," said Sanborn.

Both Peters and Sanborn advised homeowners to check references before hiring a painter. According to Peters, contractors and paint supply stores are good sources of referrals. Sanborn advised homeowners to get several bids.

"Unfortunately, painting is one of the easiest business to start. You can get a bad paint job and be taken advantage of," said Peters.

As Peters sees it, an interior paint job is too crucial to the appearance of a home to leave anything to chance.

"Paint provides the role of art in the frame of your home," he said.

**Tom Tracey is a local freelance writer.**

## Painting tips

Here are a few basic painting tips that can be helpful: When choosing the type of paint to use, remember that oil-based paint is more durable and will last longer than latex-based paint.

Both oil- and latex-based paints come in enamel and flat finishes. Enamel finishes are less porous and, therefore, easier to keep clean.

Also, an enamel finish is better for use in wet areas such as the kitchen, bath and laundry.

## Selecting flat latex paint

Here is a way to compare flat latex paint brands. Since there are no government regulations that require paint manufacturers to list their content, this test should be helpful. Buy a small sample of each brand that interests you. Mix the samples completely and place a dollop of each sample on a piece of scrap wood or cardboard. Place a drop of food coloring onto each dollop of paint. The food coloring that spreads the least indicates the best paint.



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