

Bonnie Krims as seen in: Home & Garden Magazine

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The Fine Print

reflect personal style, highlight special architecture, or pay tribute to history. A coat of paint (and let's face it, autumn is great house-painting weather) and any number of outdoor accents can refresh a tired look, and give new life to a home.



OUTSIDE CHOICE

"THE FIRST THING I ASK A CLIENT IS what colors have appealed to them on homes they admire," says Bonnie Krims, an exterior architectural color consultant based in Carlisle. Once you have a feel for what you like, it's important to think about the overall style and mood that you want to convey. "I ask clients what goal they want their color scheme to achieve," says Krims. "Do they want their home to have a traditional look—or something a little more edgy? Are they aiming for elegant and formal, or earthy and tranquil?"

Consider your home's architecture, but you needn't let it restrict you to a particular style. "Even though our home is a 1900s Victorian, we did not want an elaborate painted lady, but a look that was more conservative," says Rebecca Ehrhardt, a Marblehead home-

owner. "We looked at five or six similar houses on the North Shore to get an idea of what we might like, and that was very helpful."

Like it or not, it's also a good idea to take into account the colors of the houses next door. "If you have a neighbor with an orange house on one side of you, and a green house on the other side, it's going to matter what colors go on your house," says Krims. "You'll be a bit more limited because of the colors your neighbors chose."

THE PERFECT PALETTE

THE NEXT STEP IS DEVELOPING A palette. "There are only seven colors in the spectrum, plus all the neutrals," says Krims. "Red means anything from ballet pink to the darkest barn red. Some clients will have already decided that they want a palette in the yellow family. For others, I go through the color spectrum and determine right off the bat which ones to eliminate—and which ones to focus on." (See "Color 911" on page 149 for more information on color consultants.)

Keep in mind that exterior paint jobs often use several different colors. Homeowners may choose a trim color and at least one or two more accent colors. "Homes typically have three or four colors, although some may have as many as eight colors," says Rische Fraser, a design consultant for Home Décor Group in Swampscott, who worked with the Ehrhardts. "It all depends on the style of the home and where the colors are placed." Fraser used four colors for the Ehrhardts' Victorian: one for the main body or field of the house, another for the trim, a third for the doors and finials on the back porch railing and a fourth she calls



"cycliner color," for highlighting architectural details, "which is particularly important on a Victorian," she says. She showed the Ehrhardts several combinations before they settled on Benjamin Moore's Paritan Gray for their body color, paler Cliffside Gray for the trim,

Make Mine Green

Adding a hint of color to typically neutral outdoor accents like shingles and pavers is a subtle way to make your house stand out:

1. Bricks painted in Vert de Terre by Farrow & Ball
2. A sample pot of Studio Green paint by Farrow & Ball, \$5
3. Shake shingles covered in Green Smoke paint by Farrow & Ball
4. Polished brass frog door knocker with green patina, \$126, Brickman's, Waltham
5. Chocolate Grass accent door mat by Heble Construction, \$42, Lekker Unique Home Furnishings, Boston



COLOR 911

Do you suffer from color anxiety? Are your walls still the same color they were when you moved in? Do you have enough paint chips to paper your walls? You may need a color consultant. These professionals can help you take greater risks, says Bonnie Krims, a color consultant based in Boston and author of four books including *The Perfectly Painted House: A Foolproof Guide for Choosing Exterior Paint Colors* (Rockport, 2002). "It helps to have someone assure you that your decision is appropriate," she says.

Most color consultants look for homes that embody the homeowner's personal style, says Barbara Jacobs, owner of a design company of the same name specializing in color consultation for architects, interiors and decorative finishing in Medford. "I give questionnaires. It gets people to focus on what they want and what's around them," she says. Sometimes she'll ask homeowners their favorite colors, but that doesn't necessarily mean those colors will end up on your walls. "Just because you like a certain color does not mean it is the best color for your home—but it may give me a clue for the color palette," she says.

Some people have a knack for picking the perfect color, but their overall scheme lacks rhyme or reason. For those clients, Krims says, "I find colors that add equilibrium to the home."

The cost of such a service depends on the consultant and the size of the home, but the results may be worth it. Especially once you run through all those paint samples. —Shelby Stone