

RICHMOND MAGAZINE'S

# RHOMME

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## Living With COLOR

design pros show  
you how to do it right

**Herb-Infused  
Holiday Menu**

**The Man Behind  
Monument's  
Holiday Flair**

**An Ashland Cabin  
Escape**

**Metallic  
Hostess Gifts**

# de-coding COLOR

BY CARRIE NIEMAN CULPEPPER  
PHOTOS BY KIP DAWKINS

how two local designers  
live with color

If it weren't for color, we'd be living in a black-and-white, film-noir world — all mystery and no fun.

While many of us go for safe white or cream walls, or the very Richmond red dining room and yellow living room combo, we found two local creatives who've got something to say about color — and mostly it's: Don't be afraid! They've taken opposite approaches to adding color to their worlds. Kat Liebschwager, interior designer and co-owner of Ruth & Ollie home-accessories store on Grove Avenue, goes for a neutral palette with pops of color in the details. On the other side of the spectrum, interior designer and decorative painter Beth Scherr throws caution to the wind, saturating the walls with color. Here's how they came to choose and love their color.

Beth Scherr, pictured here with her dog Jack, balanced the natural elements and earthy tones in her living room with flashes of gold, like the gold-leaf tree pods that accent her coffee table, or the gold lanterns hanging in the corner. "I definitely have to have those shots of shine to make it unexpected."



Comfort and fun were paramount for Kat Liebschwager when designing her own house. "I want to be happy when I see the things in my house and I want people to be happy being there," she says. The Joe Delulio painting determined the lime green, orange and turquoise accent colors that run through the house.

## Color in the Details: Kat Liebschwager



TEN YEARS AGO, KAT AND MIKE Liebschwager might not have expected they'd one day own a home shop. Kat was in marketing and Mike finance, but a death in the family caused them to re-evaluate how they were spending their days. Now their store Ruth & Ollie is a year and a half old, and the Liebschwagers never look back; in fact, there's talk of expanding the shop in order to carry more furniture.

Kat also recently received an exciting recognition: She was one of 25 semi-finalists in Oprah's "Knock, Knock, It's Nate!" interior-design competition. Shopping in Ruth & Ollie can give you a clue of what the Liebschwagers' Museum District home is like: bold accessories and modern accents.

Inspiration for their home came from a Joe Delulio painting (far right) that the couple bought at Art Works in Manchester. The painting's lime green, orange and turquoise determined their accent colors and also show up in other pieces of art. "You have to keep it consistent and carry it out throughout the house," Kat says. While the accents are bold, the walls and furniture are neutral. "You don't have to have a huge sofa that's lime green to have impact."

### LIVING ROOM

The Liebschwagers' living room is broken up by the front door, but both sides share similar color accents. "To me you see the turquoise drapes and everything else is kind of calm," Kat says. "It's black and white, and then you see, wow, this color." Kat says her friends tell her they feel like they're in a bar. "That's what I want it to be like, a cool lounge in SoHo."

[BELOW] PAINTING: THE HILLCREST BY LAURA LOE PAINT; BENJAMIN MOORE'S MUSLIN DRAPES: SHANTUNG-SILK MADE LOCALLY BY ACCENT DRAPERYS SOFA: LEATHER FROM LA DIFFERENCE COFFEE TABLE: BY SHINE, FROM RUTH & OLLIE LAMP: PAULETTE IN AQUA BY ARTERIORS HOME, FROM RUTH & OLLIE END TABLE: VANGUARD ANTHOLOGY COLLECTION, FROM RUTH & OLLIE PILLOW: KOKO CO., FROM RUTH & OLLIE [RIGHT] PAINTING: BY JOE DELULIO SOFA: BLANC D'VOIRE RECOVERED IN VINYL LOCALLY BY WHETSTONE UPHOLSTERY COFFEE TABLE: INTERLUDE FROM RUTH & OLLIE PILLOWS: PEKING HANDCRAFT, FROM RUTH & OLLIE RED PLATE: LOCAL POTTER AT 17TH STREET FARMERS' MARKET



"When I tell people I have turquoise, orange and pink [in my house] they think it must look like a circus and I'm like, 'No, it's actually really fun.'"



### OUR HISTORY WITH COLOR

Southern homes are historically colorful places. The dusty Williamsburg blue we think of is actually the aged version of a blue that was a lot brighter during its day. It has to do with our climate, says Patrick Schmidt, a spokesperson for the American Society of Interior Designers. Warmer climates tend to have brighter colors "because you need a bright color in the house to continue the brightness of the exterior that you come out of." Think of all the turquoise in the Caribbean.

## FAMILY ROOM

The Liebschwagers wanted the family room, where they have their TV and where they spend the bulk of their time, to be a calm place with just a few pops of color. Because they have two, dark-haired dogs, a dark couch was a must. "You see Laura Loe's painting over the sofa when you walk in the door, so that's the bold statement, but then we wanted everything else neutral," Kat says. Lime-green accents are picked up in the vases and lamp.

**PAINTING:** MAPS BY LAURA LOE **SOFA:** TCS INC., FABRIC BRUNNSCHWIG & FILS' SABATINI CHENILLE **CHAIR:** ALPHAVILLE PAVILION CHAIR **COFFEE TABLE:** BY INTERLUDE, FROM RUTH & OLLIE **LAMP:** PALOMAR BY SHINE, FROM RUTH & OLLIE **TRUNK END TABLE:** FROM WEST END ANTIQUES **MALL PILLOWS:** BROWN-AND-WHITE LORE/KANDY BY PER, FROM RUTH & OLLIE. BROWN FAUX-FUR PILLOW, FROM LINENS & THINGS **BOWL:** RECLAIMED WOOD, BY DAVID MODISETT, KAT'S DAD, AT RUTH & OLLIE **VASES:** GLOBAL VIEWS, FROM RUTH & OLLIE **DRAPERIES:** JF FABRICS' CALLEN LINEN IN DESERT, MADE LOCALLY BY ACCENT DRAPERYS **SHADES:** MALIBU TORTOISE, FROM B&W MANUFACTURING



## BEDROOM

Kat asked Mike to act as her client for the bedroom. He requested something soothing. Kat thought of a spa but didn't want to use the typical spa colors of blue and green, so she pulled from a file of fabric swatches that she loves and found a lot of beige colors. Chocolate and gold were used as accents, then the couple found a painting by Diane Clement at Art Works and got the idea to use it as a headboard, which is where the purple came from.

**PAINT:** BENJAMIN MOORE'S LADY FINGER **BED LINENS:** DUVET COVER AND MATCHING SHAMS, FROM LINENS & THINGS **PILLOWS:** LUX FAUX-FUR PILLOWS BY ROOST AND PURPLE POLKA-DOT PILLOWS BY CARRERA SILK, BOTH FROM RUTH & OLLIE **PAINTING:** FIRST LIGHT BY DIANE CLEMENT **LAMP:** MOONBEAM BY CURREY & CO., FROM RUTH & OLLIE **TABLE:** FROM WEST END ANTIQUES **MALL VASE:** WATERFORD



## Color on the Walls: Beth Scherr

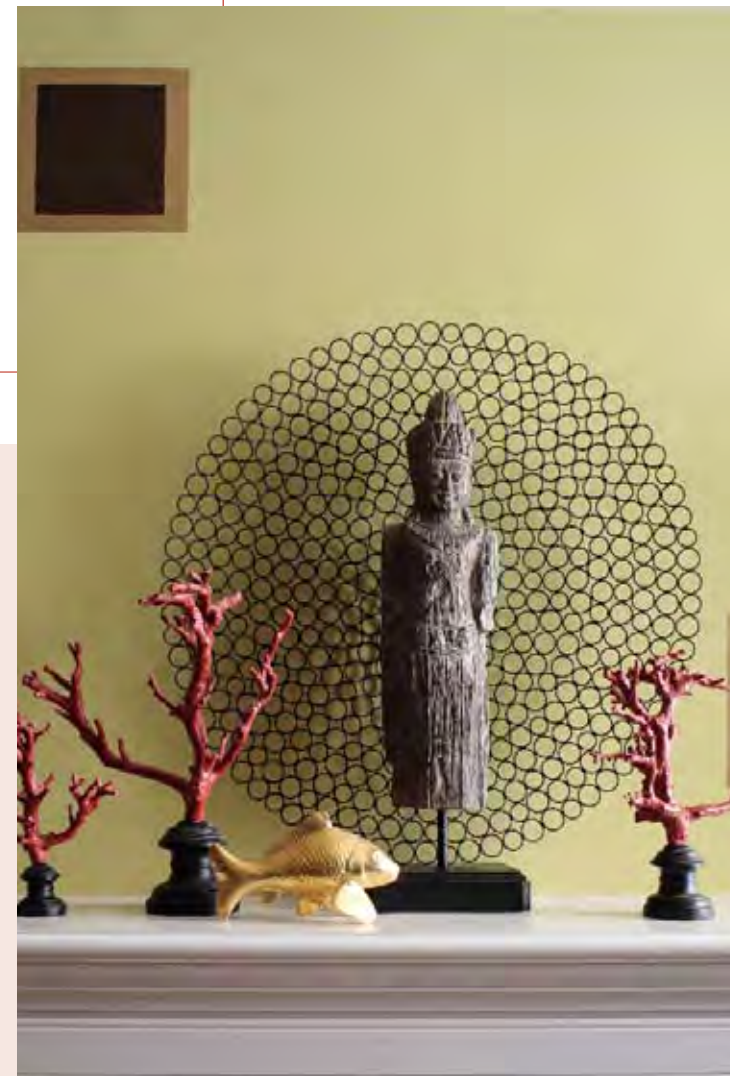
BETH SCHERR HAS A VENTURE TO COVER ALMOST any interior need you might have — interior-design services, decorative painting, home or retail staging — she does it all. Scherr comes from what she calls "a Thalhimer's department-store background," in that her whole family worked there. She followed in their footsteps, opening a retail space called Du Soleil in Carytown and later expanding to a second location in Old Town Alexandria. "People would come in and say, 'I love that but I don't know how to use it in my house,'" so she began going to people's homes and giving advice and eventually sold the shops (and they have subsequently closed). Now she has a design business and regularly travels to home and accessories markets, helping North Carolina's Design Workshop Inc. with their booth display.

About a year ago, Scherr made a pretty drastic change to her own interior. She moved from a 1908 home in the Fan, where she'd been for 11 years, to a '50s ranch in Bon Air with her boyfriend, a custom carpenter and artist. "My old house had a lot of crown moldings, so I tended to do that with more neutral colors [so the moldings would stand out]. Here there are more modern moldings, so I wanted to use stronger, bolder colors." Scherr has found that her new home matches her lifestyle these days. "The Fan is noisy and there's a lot of energy there. Here we have an acre, and it's so much more laid-back." And the décor reflects that natural vibe.

## MANTEL

The living room began with the green wall color. Beth Scherr and her boyfriend came to a compromise: He picked sage and she added yellow to bring it a little closer to chartreuse, giving the earthy color a bit more edge. She also "funked it up a bit" with the gold leaf and chocolate squares randomly painted on one wall. The chocolate was pulled from some of the room's fabrics.

**FISH:** GOLD LEAF FROM VELLUM, NEW YORK **ROUND METAL SCULPTURE:** FROM PIER 1 **CORAL:** FROM TWO'S COMPANY **STATUE:** WOOD FROM STOREHOUSE



## HOW TO PICK COLOR

Color forecaster and consultant Denise Turner says she's seeing more experimentation with color in people's homes, and attributes it to the plethora of home shows on television. But how do you pick? Follow your heart is what both Kat Liebschwager and Beth Scherr tell clients. Which colors make you feel good? Scherr suggests picking colors that emotionally convey how you want your home to be; do you want a stimulating or comforting environment? And don't be afraid. "If there's a color you really like but are afraid to use everywhere, use it on an accent wall."

If you don't know where to start, Liebschwager suggests checking your closet: The colors you like wearing are likely the ones you'll like living in. Or find something else you love like a piece of art or a fabric or accessory that can trigger a color scheme. "This is your house...if you want pink draperies, you should do it."



**FOYER**

The foyer was an homage to one of Scherr's favorite designers, Kelly Wearstler, who, apart from designing stunning modern spaces for boutique hotels mostly in L.A., is now well known for being a judge on Bravo's *Top Design*. In order to give the space Wearstler's modern-Hollywood-glamour look, Scherr used traditional pieces made funky with lacquer, such as a Chippendale mirror and classic bust. And don't be fooled: That's not wallpaper. Scherr and her painting partner spent three days stenciling the traditional damask pattern in high-gloss white paint, waiting for it to dry after each application and cleaning the stencil before moving on.

**BUDDHA:** WHITE LACQUER FROM PIER 1 "POD"; **IN BUDDHA'S HAND,** GOLD LEAF FROM MAGENTA **ART:** UNKNOWN **PLATES:** FORNASETTI DESIGNS BY ROSENTHAL **PAINT:** VALSPAR'S DUON



**LIVING ROOM**

Scherr's personal design aesthetic is simple: "I buy pieces that I love and mix them together because that's what makes my space pleasing to me. I'm passionate about everything in my surroundings." From the very traditional leather chair to the modern gold side table, Scherr makes it work.

**LEATHER CHAIR:** WILLIAM ALAN CO., **HIGH POINT TABLE:** GOLD LEAF, ARTERIORS HOME **PILLOW:** WORKING CLASS STUDIOS SILK PRINT PILLOW FROM SHOP SCAD, THE SAVANNAH SCHOOL OF ART & DESIGN **SHOP LAMP:** JAMIE YOUNG CO. **VASE:** GOLD LEAF FROM ROSE TATOO DESIGNS **BONSAI:** FROM GREEN FRONT FURNITURE, FARMVILLE **BOOKCASE:** BAHARI **GOLD-LEAF PLATE:** BLI-ERWARE INC. **WHITE FISH:** JONATHAN ADLER **PAINT:** VALSPAR'S OLIVE MARINADE

**HOT COLORS FOR 2008**

"I'm seeing a lot of movement toward brighter colors," Liebschwager says. The everywhere chocolate-brown-and-pale-blue combo is starting to fade, she says, but chocolate is showing up with lilac or orange. Also rich colors such as Kelly green and navy are making a comeback.

"Brown has been so hot for so long and it continues to be hot, but black is coming back," Scherr says. Black and white mixed with chartreuse green, yellows, and other bright colors are one side of the spectrum that's very hot, she says. The other is earth tones such as brown, sage green, paprika, which are still big and complement all the recycled and reclaimed materials now on the market.

**BEDROOM**

Since the bedroom window looks out onto the home's wooded backyard, Scherr decided to give it an outdoorsy feel, but "in a really sophisticated way, not in an Adirondack way." Instead of a headboard, she painted a sort of bamboo-forest motif on the wall behind the bed. She contrasted the warm browns with a shot of unexpected color on the ceiling to match the bedding. Modern interpretations of natural forms, like the silver-painted tree pillow, pop up around the room. "I wanted everything to be my twist on nature."

**LAMPS:** JAMIE YOUNG CO. **BEDDING:** WEST ELM **PILLOWS:** STUDIO CHIC EXCEPT HAND-PAINTED SILVER-LEAF BRANCH PILLOW, BY AVIVA STANOFF STUDIOS, BROOKLYN **DRAPES:** CHOCOLATE-BROWN VELVET FROM STOREHOUSE **MIRROR:** STARBURST MOTIF FROM GLOBAL VIEWS

