

Australian colour trends...naturally

While the vast majority of Australians live in urban clusters around the coast, the iconic imagery of the outback's Red Centre is increasingly a major influence on the colours we choose to paint our home exteriors.

"The bland creams and greens of the past have been replaced with more natural and interesting colours," says Kim Chadwick, a designer with Melbourne based Blend Colour and Design.

"Deep reds and oranges, sunflower and mustard yellows, and yellowed neutrals reflect the look of the sunburnt country we inhabit.

"Australia's range of climates is reflected in other popular colours such as greys, steel blues, teal and peacock mixed with caramel and honey colours, natural timbers, all stone coloured neutrals, textured blacks, stark but dimensional whites, softer greens, olive greys and rust."

Backyard to the future

"Australian backyards are changing. The Hills Hoist placed in the middle of a rectangular patch of grass edged by an equally geometric garden and timber fence is fast becoming a thing of the past," says Kim.

"With the aid of painted finishes, the fence could be a coloured backdrop to the garden, a deep orange feature behind a Bali pavilion, a steel blue backrest for perimeter seating or a charcoal boundary adding depth to gardens.

"Screens can be used for dividing spaces and for adding interest and detail. Moroccan, Asian and Middle Eastern patterns bring decoration to the outdoor space and if placed with consideration can cast wonderful shadows on surrounding coloured walls."

Sustainably Mellow Yellow

One of the strongest growing trends in Australian housing is the quest for sustainable living.

"Increasingly, manufacturers are creating building products that are recyclable, renewable and responsible. In the paint industry, water based paints lead the way in products that support the environment.

"The colour of sustainability is yellow, the colour of sunshine, of pure life giving energy and

reflect a desire to be true to our environment.

"All shades of organic greens through to olive browns complement this trend."

Outside in

The modern Australian house has large, open and flexible living areas that merge with outside dining and entertaining zones. Gardens and landscaping are linked to the house.

"Stone feature walls (stack stone, slate, sandstone), rendered planter boxes, ledges, elongated window shapes, integrated garage doors (timber or painted to match the render), monotone bricks in

beige or black, and sometimes a feature coloured front door are all new trends in modern housing," says Kim.

"The colour palette is predominantly stone-inspired neutrals including browns and taupes, warm and cool greys, black and charcoals. This is highlighted with features of either texture (mainly stones and cedar coloured timbers) or deep colours of personal choice – maybe green, purple, red, pink or orange."

Life's a beach

The very nature of a beach house is somewhere to relax, unwind and find balance and inspiration. The colours that surround us are highly personal but generally,

many beach houses are painted in lighter airier colours while city houses are getting darker.

"The colour cues are simply from the beach," says Kim. "The white caps of the waves, the blues, teals and greens of the water, the perfect sky blue, all mixed with the golden tones of the sand and accent colours taken from the local surroundings."

Rusty roofs

"Australians have grown up with the notion of old rusty tin roofs so it isn't all that surprising that one of the most popular finishes at the moment is rust! Either from real metal or, increasingly, from paint products, the rusted roof is a hit," according to Kim.

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What price quality texture coatings?

While modern texture coatings have been around since the 1970s, their popularity has grown tremendously in recent years.

Today's homes often features a textured surface, sometimes on the inside but most often on the outside where the finish receives its greatest test protecting the building against the UV rays of the sun, and from wind, rain and pollution.

Texture coatings are increasingly popular as the exterior finish on a second storey combined with brickwork on the lower level, as an all over texture finish on the walls or even as a texture feature wall in the garden.

They are becoming more and more popular because top quality texture coatings not only look good but, importantly, provide



excellent protection over a long period and require little or no maintenance.

There are many types of textured finishes on the market. Some are basically cement renders while others are two or three step systems involving a primer, texture coat and acrylic top coat.

You may have trouble visually distinguishing between a freshly

applied thin coat of site-mixed cement render and a multi coat system, but over time the differences will become obvious.

The problem is that, once applied, the finishes may look pretty much the same but their performance will vary considerably.

A thin layer of site-mixed cement render, although hard, can be quite brittle and our extreme temperature ranges can cause it to crack and split. Manufactured renders from quality suppliers will outperform cheaper site-mixed renders. In contrast, multiple layered texture systems, whilst slightly more expensive, have the advantage of providing a thick, strong and flexible layer that remains resistant to the elements for 10 years or more.

You may think you are saving money by choosing the less

expensive basic render system, but it will be a lot costlier if it has to be repaired or replaced a year or two after it has been applied! Even then, it is almost impossible to patch or repair a thin one-step render, and maintain an even appearance. At the Paint Quality Institute, we recommend you consider only top quality, multi-coat acrylic texture systems from reputable manufacturers.

Today's texture coatings often owe their beauty, strength and performance to the use of quality acrylic polymers in their formulation, combined with correct application methods.

For example, they are better at retaining colour, protecting against airborne pollution, water ingress, dirt pickup, mould and fungus than lower grade renders which might initially look the same.

The other issue to consider is whether you do the job yourself or hire a professional applicator.

While there are some excellent DIY texture coatings available, the longer lasting multi coat systems require a higher level of skill and experience to apply, and are only available through accredited professional applicators.

Of course, the upfront cost is a little higher but top quality texture coatings provide a higher level of protection over a longer time, so the cost per square metre over the life of the project will certainly be cheaper than lower grade render systems.

And, as your home is probably the biggest investment you will ever make, doesn't it make sense to choose the best in long term protection? ■

Media Note

Text, photos and graphics from this special DIY Painting Guide, as well as other articles and images can be downloaded from our websites at:

www.paintquality.com.au
www.paintquality.co.nz

Just click on Press Room and follow the links to DIY Painting Guide.

Information

Michael Beresford
The Rohm and Haas Paint Quality Institute
From Australia: 1800 338 015
From New Zealand: (09) 276 4866
Mobile: (0419) 302 143

Images

Peter Maslen
Idea Communications
p_maslen@ideacom.com.au
From Australia: (03) 9348 9944
From New Zealand: +61 3 9348 9944

NEW logo reflects international role



For more than a decade, the Rohm and Haas Paint Quality Institute (PQI) has provided homeowners, painting professionals, retailers and the media with the latest on the benefits of top quality paint and painting.

With offices in the USA, UK, Europe, South Africa, Brazil, China and Australia, an important aspect of this work has been to monitor and showcase the latest design and decorating trends worldwide.

Reflecting that mission, PQI has updated its logo to better reflect its role internationally in promoting contemporary design and decoration using quality paint.

The new logo will be progressively rolled out through PQI's international network of information sources, including websites and publications. ■

Help! Is it time to call in a professional?

As the warmer months are approaching, it is a good time to start planning to freshen up the exterior of your home with a coat of paint.

But if you don't have the time or don't feel confident about painting, then hiring a painting contractor might be the answer.

The investment in a professional painting contractor will not only save you time, they will give you a professional result while enabling you to get on with your life.

But how do you choose a contractor who will do a quality paint job?

Ask friends for recommendations

One way is to ask for recommendations from family, friends and work colleagues who have used a painting contractor recently. Their experience can be invaluable and take the guesswork out of finding the right contractor.

If you don't know anyone who has used a painter recently you could also visit your local paint specialist store. They will be able to give you two or three names of reliable contractors in your area.

The Master Painters' Association, which provides representation and training for qualified tradespeople, will provide a list of members suitable for your project through their website at www.mpa.org.au

As a fallback, you could look in the classifieds section of your local newspapers or a local telephone directory.

Once you have some names, contact a number of painters for a quotation. You don't need to call them all, just select, say, three of them so that you can compare their quotations.

Prepare work list

Before meeting with them think about the paint job in detail, writing down a comprehensive list of areas that need painting, the colours and finishes you want, and when you want the job to start.

Choosing colour is important. For inspiration, you can get some good ideas from popular decorating magazines, or you can engage the services of a colour consultant from one of the major paint companies or paint stores.

As part of your work list, specify that they must use top-quality paints. That way you'll be assured of premium finishes that last longer than ordinary paint. Usually these will be 100% acrylic primers and topcoats, or the new water based acrylic enamels.

Inspect project

Then ask them to come to your home to inspect the project and provide them with the written list.

There are a number of questions you need to ask to assess who will be most appropriate, including:

- How will the surface be prepared and painted, including the brand of paint to be used, the gloss level and number of coats to be applied?
- How will surrounding areas – furniture, furnishings or garden beds – be protected?
- When is the work scheduled to start and finish?
- Is there a warranty on the finished paint job and what does it cover?
- Can the painter provide names of previous clients to be contacted for references?

Then compare their responses and, of course, the cost! Try to make sure you are comparing 'apples with apples'. That way you can make an informed choice and ensure the result is a quality paint job! ■



When you are seeing spots before your eyes

You don't need a bump to the head to see spots before your eyes when it comes to paint. Sometimes the spots are due to minute fungi growing on the wall.

Mould, or mildew, usually occurs in areas that tend to be damp or receive little or no direct sunlight such as kitchens, bathrooms and laundries.

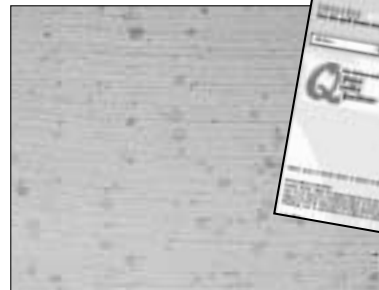
Sometimes, you may be unsure whether the spots are marks or mildew.

To test for mildew, apply a few drops of household bleach to the area. If this removes the spots it is probably mildew.

What causes mildew?

A combination of moisture, little direct sunlight and low airflow in these areas provides ideal conditions for mould.

Use of oil based paints or lower quality water based paints can provide a breeding ground for mould, as can bare surfaces that haven't been cleaned or primed



properly before the topcoat has been applied.

Additionally, painting over a substrate or coating where the mildew hasn't been removed beforehand will usually lead to regrowth.

Removing mildew

It is a relatively simple process to remove mildew. Just create a mixture of one part bleach with three parts water and scrub it off, then rinse thoroughly with clean water.

Wear rubber gloves and glasses to protect your skin and eyes.

To take preventative action to protect against mildew, always

use a top quality water based acrylic paint in kitchens, bathrooms and laundries.

Paints with semi gloss and gloss finishes provide the most protection.

Quality paint manufacturers now offer a number of products specifically formulated for use in wet areas that resist mould growth and give added protection.

Remember, if you encounter other challenges like this, a visit to the Problem Solver section of PQI website,

www.paintquality.com.au will provide solutions to most common painting problems. ■

Natural timber look needs quality finishes

It wasn't all that long ago that a typical backyard consisted of a patch of grass, a clothesline and a barbecue with a table and chairs.

Today, the great outdoors has come inside.

Nowadays, the rear of the house is often designed with doors that completely open it to the elements. Decking that flows from the interior to an exterior barbecue area has made the outdoors an integral part of our living space.

Al fresco lifestyle

Timber is a key feature of this integrated al fresco lifestyle as a design element in wall panelling, pergolas, sun screens, fencing and decorative features.

With this new lifestyle that's attuned with nature, the trend is to keep timber features looking natural.

Timber looks great at first but without protection from the elements, it will lose both its structural integrity and good looks.



PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF METRICON

So how do you keep that natural timber look?

While opaque exterior paints provide the best long term protection for feature timber, today's semi-transparent, water based acrylic varnish stains are a popular alternative.

The light pigmentation of acrylic varnish stains provides the golden natural colours and protection from the sun's UV rays, and the transparency allows the beauty of

the natural grain to show through.

While there are a variety of finishes available in oil or water based products, top quality 100% acrylic water based timber coatings are your best choice for long lasting sun protection.

And, of course, being water based, brushes and rollers simply wash out in water making the job of maintaining your timber's natural look, that much easier! ■

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"Black rust, white rust, true rusty oranges with copper green patina stains all fit within the rust colour palette and these textured features are blended with timber, stone and glass to create exciting layers of weathered colour and texture."

"In fact, all metallic surfaces are in demand – from zinc to copper

and from stainless steel to industrial blue steel."

Whatever look you want for the exterior of your home, the Paint Quality Institute recommends you choose quality paint from a reputable manufacturer. That way you'll have the widest possible choice of colours, finishes and products to help you achieve your dream home. ■

