

My home renovations

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The who's who of hues

Choose your shades wisely, as they can make or break a refurbishment, writes **Belinda Parkes**.

The floor plan of your renovation may have been decided, but how it looks on completion will largely be determined by the colour scheme.

Choosing the colours of your walls, floors and fixtures can be one of the most stressful parts of renovating, because it injects your personality into the project and transforms it from a house to a home.

Interior designer Samantha Bacon says that while neutrals are the most popular base colour the trend is to use bright tones as an accent through cushions, artworks and even kitchen appliances.

People are choosing to turn focal points such as a fireplace into a feature, or use wallpaper to change an atmosphere.

"The mood you are trying to create is really important," the designer says.

"So you need to consider how you want the room to function and how

you want people to feel when they are in that room."

But while Bacon says colour can make or break the look of a house, she warns there are many things to consider apart from what looked good in a friend's house.

The same paint colour can appear different in a south-facing room with little natural daylight to when it is used in a north-facing room capturing the sun.

Bacon recommends painting a sheet of plasterboard and carrying it into different parts of the house to test it.

"A good rule of thumb is to use full-strength on the walls, a half-strength on the trim and internal doors, architraves and skirting, and a quarter-strength on your ceiling, and you can't really go wrong."

The University of Sydney's architecture and design faculty associate lecturer and researcher, Zena O'Connor, says light and colour



Mixing it up ... property owner Ilana Lamont relied on gut instinct. Photo: Anthony Johnson

are powerful mediums that should be considered together.

"A lot of natural or artificial light will make colours appear brighter and more intense, and the opposite will occur in rooms with less natural and artificial light," O'Connor says.

She says the more contrasts in a room, the busier it will feel, while for a more relaxed mood there should be less contrast.

However, she says a house should reflect the personality of its occupants. "Obviously, individual colour preference also dictates

whether interiors are deemed busy, calm or relaxing, just as some people can relax while listening to Mozart while others prefer to relax listening to Jimi Hendrix."

To build a colour scheme, she recommends starting with special pieces - artworks or a couch - and adding colours that co-ordinate, ensuring a blend of similar colours as well as contrast ones.

When first-time renovators Ilana and Dugald Lamont transformed their Californian bungalow in Kensington last year, they used a

lime-green "Caprioska" as a common thread, using paint, light fittings, tiles and art pieces to lift the Porter's White Sand walls, red-brown Vanilla Bean features and the dark floorboards.

Ilana says although she called in Melissa Bonney from The Design Hunter as a project manager, a lot of the colour scheme was based on her own gut instinct. She loves neutrals but always adds a splash of colour. By surrounding herself with the decor she loves, her house is a reflection of who she is.