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Homeowner's UPDATE



A year of bold interiors

No matter which color experts you follow for your home interior inspiration, one thing they all have in common is bold, beautiful colors.

Pantone's pick of regal Ultra Violet is meant to evoke creativity in your spaces while Benjamin Moore's Caliente spices up the room with a confidence that cannot be ignored. A harmonious balance of rich blues and greens, marine-inspired Oceanside is the color of the year selected by Sherwin Williams.

The keys to using these colors are placement, pieces and pairings.

If you're excited about painting these colors in broad strokes around your home, think about the placement. Choose interior doors, a powder room or an accent wall in the dining room.

If you want to embrace new color trends without the commitment of paint, throw pillows and rugs in one of this year's colors are foolproof picks.

Also in this issue...

[Bad back? Small changes at home can help](#)

[The scary truth behind falling furniture](#)

[Pros and cons of vaulted ceilings](#)

[Patriotic Fruit Pizza](#)

Print this issue.



When pairing these bold colors, look to tone them down with rich, neutral colors. Remember opposites can attract, too. Use colors from opposing sides of the color wheel for an unusual but stylish combination.

It's natural to shy away from these powerful hues, but there's nothing to fear. These colors allow you to add personality to your spaces that your favorite neutrals just can't offer.

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Bad back? Small changes at home can help

If your back feels achy, there are small changes you can make in and around your home that could help relieve the pain and prevent new problems from surfacing.

- 1. Stretch before regular household chores.** It could make scrubbing the bathtub or mopping the floor that much easier.
- 2. Ask for help.** Enlist a second set of hands to help carry a heavy vacuum up the stairs or invest in a lighter model. Consider trading your push lawnmower for a self-propelled mower, a riding mower or hire someone to get the job done.
- 3. Upgrade your bed.** If your mattress and pillows are not providing enough support, a good night's sleep might be an impossible goal. Talk to your doctor about strategies for better sleep.
- 4. Be aware.** Think about where you sit the most and how much time you spend hunched over your computer or electronic devices. Monitor how these daily household activities affect your body and make changes accordingly.

Once you understand what causes your back pain, you can optimize your lifestyle and home to support healthier posture and a better back.

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The scary truth behind falling furniture

Turning your back for just a moment gives a child just enough time to turn furniture into a jungle gym and get hurt. According to Nationwide Children's Hospital, around 15,000 kids visit the emergency room each year due to falling furniture.

When purchasing furniture, choose pieces with wide bases and steady legs. If a toddler climbs shelves and pulls on drawers, a top-heavy piece will easily tip over. Talk to your kids about the dangers of climbing on furniture, and keep toys close to the floor so children won't be tempted to scale the bookshelf.

You can also secure furniture and TVs to walls with mounts and safety straps, which you can find online or at your local home improvement store. Some furniture manufacturers now provide safety straps with the purchase of certain shelving units. Install these as an extra line of defense against kids who pull and climb.

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Pros and cons of vaulted ceilings

Wildly popular in the 1980s, vaulted ceilings have regained some popularity as a home design feature in recent years. Here are some points to consider.

Pros

It's hard to beat the natural light that a wall of windows in a vaulted room lets in, and the visual appeal can make any room feel grander. In addition, vaulted ceilings provide the opportunity to highlight unique touches like exposed rafters or beams. Vaulted ceilings are a great use of what could otherwise be useless attic space, and they provide an aesthetic that standard 8-foot ceilings just cannot match. In bathrooms, vaulted ceilings make temperature control easier by allowing unwanted heat and humidity to rise. Vaulted ceilings also complement tall stonework fireplaces, oversized windows and other large design features.

Cons

A tall, open space will likely make the room less energy efficient, leading to higher utility bills. It can also be more difficult to create a cozy atmosphere under such a high ceiling, and chores like dusting and changing light bulbs can be challenging. Trying to retrofit an existing room with a vaulted ceiling may be difficult or impossible, depending on the home's architecture. Because of this, it's better to look for a home that fits your preference, rather than planning to add vaulted ceilings to a house that does not already have them.

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Patriotic Fruit Pizza

Ingredients

1 (16.5-oz.) pkg. refrigerated sugar cookie dough
1 (8-oz.) pkg. cream cheese, softened
2 cups heavy cream
1 cup powdered sugar
2 tsp. lemon zest
1 cup strawberries, sliced
1 cup blueberries

Directions


Preheat oven as directed on package. Spread cookie dough evenly in 9x13-inch baking pan. Bake until golden, about 10 minutes.

Beat cream cheese in medium bowl for 2-3 minutes until smooth. In separate bowl, whip heavy cream until peaks form. Gently fold whipped cream into cream cheese. Add powdered sugar and lemon zest. Mix until creamy. Cover and chill for 30 minutes.

Spread chilled mixture over cooled cookie. Arrange strawberries and blueberries to resemble the American flag.



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