

Overcoming caterwauling noise of colour

Colour Confidential's Jane Lockhart strives for calm, comfort

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POSTMEDIA NEWS

On the phone from her home in Toronto, Jane Lockhart is almost shouting to make herself heard.

"I'm so sorry about that," she hollers over the caterwauling of an ancient feline. "He's old and he forgot that I fed him this morning."

She tries, again, to talk about the importance of colour in a home and what it says about what you want from life. Not surprisingly, for the star of W Network's Colour Confidential, Lockhart's 1940s-era home is a study in muted tones and quiet corners.

"You see?" she says, laughing over the cat's yowling. "I have lots of pets and people who are really sloppy in my life. When I get home, I need my house to be friggin' quiet! So I can't have things around me that irritate me."

None of which would be found in her latest furniture line, Jane by Jane Lockhart, being sold through Sears Canada. The all-Canadian collection, which is customizable in colour and fabric, is modern, durable and, above all, comfortable.



Jane Lockhart's new furniture line includes the Barry chair, left, with its playful geometric print. Lockhart recommends limiting your colour palette to five hues on the main floor, punching colour on select pieces of furniture such as the Granger sofa, where sunshine meets mustard yellow.



PHOTOS: POSTMEDIA NEWS

It's a feature she insisted on when designing the sofas and occasional chairs.

"No. 1 is comfort," she says. "That sounds ridiculous to say, but you'd be amazed at the number of people who go to buy a sofa and sit on it in the winter with a coat on. If you're going to watch TV, you'll need one with a higher back and longer, lower arms, in case you lie down. It's those

elements that add comfort."

So, too, does colour. Homeowners "seem to be beige-out" and are rejecting the '90s fascination with taupe and brown, she says, and instead are turning to white palettes with crisp contrasts of grey.

Colourful hues are also making their way back into homes, she says, through furnishings and decor.

"Colour tends to follow economic

shifts. People go through something like a recession and they express their needs for something different in the objects around them. They'll buy a turquoise vase for that reason. It's a way of creating a new identity or feeling."

And which colour you choose depends a lot on personality, lifestyle and even age.

Lively red cushions set against a

grey and white palette, for example, "can be stimulating and active, since red comes to the eye faster than blue. It gives off energy and excitement." (Interestingly enough, chickens also find red exciting: U.S. company Animalens Inc. makes red contact lenses for chickens that decrease their aggression and boost egg production.)

Biology aside, culture has a role to play, too. Considered the No. 1 favourite colour of children worldwide, "blue is a soothing, relaxing colour," she says.

"That's true in every single culture and country because we all live under the same sky."

Equally eye-catching is yellow, which is chosen by "people with a higher IQ."

"But the other thing to think about is that you create high contrast with yellow. It gives a room energy. Whether we realize it or not, we find colours that match our vibrations. It's also got a historic background in terms of decorating and decor, in British and French design. Plus, yellow is a happy colour because it has that reflective quality and any ambient light will be reflected in that space."

So, too, is pink, at least according to the now-famous Baker-Miller study in the 1980s of a bright, obnoxious "drunk tank" pink. In that study, aggressive prisoners were

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JANE LOCKHART, INTERIOR DESIGNER

put in pink holding cells; their heart rates lowered along with their blood pressure and they immediately calmed down. But, Lockhart warns, "eventually you get used to the colour and the effect wears off within 20 minutes."

Whatever accent colour you choose, however, there are a few good rules to follow.

Limit your palette to three to five hues on a main floor, taking into consideration the flow of tone from one room to the next, which will help "make the space larger and more connected," she says. "The more colour you have, it becomes visual clutter."

Instead, punch colour throughout your space on small pieces of furniture and soft furnishings, leaving the larger pieces to remain neutral. And whatever else you do, avoid cluttering with too many visual cues.

"Less is more."

"Buy things that matter to you and you can change with a few accessories. The more you have, the more you have to manage. There are few things in life that make you happy," she says, "and your home should be one of them."



Colour Confidential host Jane Lockhart says people use colour as a way of creating a new identity.

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