

anatomy of a room

This living space oozes laid-back cool and manages to make neutrals feel warm – colour expert Ruth Mottershead explains how it's done



Designed by Arent&Pyke, this garden room features colours in varying saturations for a soothing scheme that holds plenty of interest

This scheme is made up of predominantly diluted colour. Due to their soft strength and natural undertones, these shades are gentle, tranquil, earthy and comfortable, and the combination of these colours, alongside the off-whites and neutrals within the scheme, provide for an especially restful interior.

Although the blue carpet is more saturated than the green sofa, the two colours share similar pigmentation. Both colours are soft, each allowing the other to play a role. The blue of the carpet is strong enough to ground the scheme, yet gentle enough to ensure the green of the sofa doesn't get lost. The temperature and strength of each tone is what makes these colours work in harmony and the neutrality of the green means it is especially versatile, allowing the two different elements to complement each other.

Neutrals with yellow-beige undertones, like those of the stone wall, add warmth – they are relatively easy to use as their pigmentation ties with so many shades of pink, red, yellow, green and blue. There are multiple individual shades within the wall that contain direct links to other elements within the space. The green sofa, the off-white wall and ceiling, the wood flooring, the yellow cushion and the white chair all have relatable undertones – these relationships are what ensures the successful integration of the stone into the room.

The deeper accents within the room – the floor lamp and chair legs – add definition and a graphic quality. The striking dark elements provide less than 5% of the colour within the room, but are enough to give structure, strength and a hardness that is not present in the remaining space. These elements provide contrast without overpowering the overall softness of the interior.



Similarly, the coffee tables are a complete contrast to the rest of the scheme: they also provide hard edges and strength to the space that are absent elsewhere. The tables are a focal point rather than an accent, however, and also contain earthy undertones of brown and muted pink. Although bolder in colour, these shared undertones relate to the warmth of the stone, the neutral on the walls, and the wood in the flooring and the frame around the artwork. The larger of the two tables appears to contain green and blue, making a key connection with the carpet and sofa. Although the tables and soft furnishings are of contrasting textures, they too share pigment to create cohesion and balance.

There are touches of white that are clear but understated – the fluffy chair, the ceiling lights, the door frame and the specks within the carpet. These elements help us to understand the scheme more clearly, identifying the warmth within the neutrals on the walls. The white features speak to each other; the specks within the carpet would be lost without the other white elements to ensure their visibility. The chair provides the key accent upon which all the other features can make a

connection. Using a small proportion of a contrasting tone in this way adds interest, depth and clarity to a colour scheme.

The whole scheme has an earthy, natural feeling. Each of the tones can be commonly found in combination within our external environment – this makes the space feel both comfortable and easily understood as we are so used to seeing these colours used together outside. This natural approach to decorating ensures a smooth transition from this room to the garden.

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BLUSH

LUTE

TRACERY II

CLAY MID

BASSOON

ETRURIA

PURPLE BROWN