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Inside *man*

> By *Jermaine Gallacher*

Don't be scared of colour, embrace it and have fun transforming your home

The first thing I did when I moved into my office was paint it pink. There was no way I could work in a white-walled room. When I mentioned this to the architect who has the office downstairs, he was aghast and said there was absolutely no way he could work in a pink one. And so I made the crucial discovery that not everyone wants their office the colour of a fondant fancy with matching rotary phone and desk chair.

It's not surprising people have strong feelings about colour — it changes absolutely everything about a space, turning any room from Plain Jane to Sensational Susan with just a stroke of a brush. Pink makes you look really rather fabulous at any time of the day or night. Dark green can be wash-out city in the daylight hours but turns glam after dark — check out my last restaurant project, the private dining room at Soho's Bar Crispin, for proof. Tucked away downstairs, that bottle-green snug is the perfect backdrop for basement debauchery.

A common misconception is that a small room needs light colours to make it look bigger. I'm sorry but unless you're an old master you can't trompe l'oeil your way out of that one. No amount of Wimborne White will trick anyone into mistaking your box room for a ballroom. Instead, a darker or more intense shade can make a small sitting room or bedroom look bigger. At the very least it'll make it seem dramatic, intimate and seductive. There is a knack to getting this right, though. A dark wall with miles of brilliant white skirting board is an absolute no-no. Instead, paint all woodwork a shade or two darker than the walls for a sophisticated finish.

You don't have to go full Joseph on your home, a flash of colour works nicely if you're in love with your plain white walls (or are too much of a wimp to go the whole hog). Why not paint a cheeky door or two in contrasting colours? Renters don't have to live in Bland Land for fear of winding up the landlord either. You can add temporary wall colour by painting on to huge sheets of fabric and hanging them on the walls. I've done this around my bed and it really adds to the atmosphere.

Feeling inspired? Don't just run to your nearest DIY store for the cheapest (toxic, garish) emulsion. For me there's only one person to buy paint from: the queen of colour, Francesca Wezal of Francesca Paints. She's been hand mixing her eco-friendly paints since 1996. Mylands is family run, super knowledgeable and high quality. If you're hitting the high street, one of my favourite spots for a browse is Leylands and its own-brand paints are a decent buy. Have fun, get creative and don't forget to wash your paint brushes!

Tickled pink:
Jermaine Gallacher in his fondant fancy-painted office

