

Domain

NEW LIVING

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SERENE SCENE

Requiem for a dream

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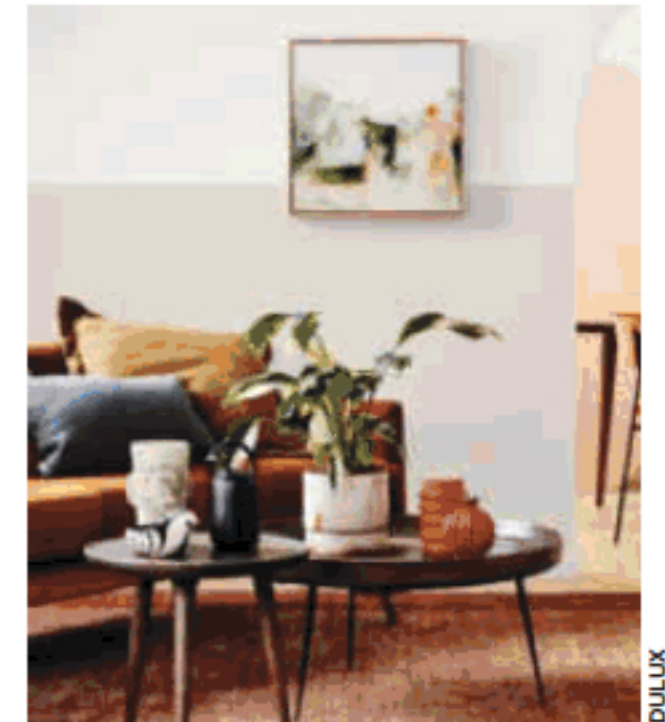
COVER STORY

By MARY O'BRIEN



Back to nature

Earthy tones, showcased in this Studio Tate project, are staging a comeback for autumn.



DULUX

Colour trends come and go but some don't always make a splash on the home front. This year everyone is talking about earthy shades, sage greens, warm neutrals and dashes of red.

As the weather cools down, these colours are a natural go-to option to freshen up the home and they are making the leap from interior design magazines and websites to the living room.

Grey-green is the new IT colour, according to some experts. Add in terracotta, russet, maroon and natural materials and you have a cosy space for the cooler months.

The big paint companies are mostly opting for these autumnal colours, which are an easy fit in Australian homes. Global colour guru Pantone this year is plumping for ultra violet – an edgier choice – so it will be interesting to see if it transfers from the catwalk to the home.

Of course, designers say if you stick with warm neutrals on your walls, you have the flexibility to play around with colour and give your rooms a fresh new feel.

“Most home enthusiasts are comfortable with earthy shades as we see these natural colours in everyday living,” says Dulux colour-planning expert Andrea Lucena-Orr.

These hues also work well with the greys and neutrals that are so popular now, and can add a beautiful ambience to any space, she says.

“Autumn is a natural drawcard to go to those earthy tones: mustard,

OUR COVER

Green Gables home in Mount Martha by Studio Tate. Photo by Sharyn Cairns.

STUDIO TATE

burgundy, earthy greens,” says interior designer Wendy Bergman of Bergman & Co. “I’m a big mustard lover but I like to use it more in furniture than decor.”

She also likes to use pinks, fleshy shades, purples and injections of vibrant colours.

Alex Hopkins of Studio Tate has been working with earthy tones for the past year. “The beauty of these colours as a trend is that they are unlikely to date quickly,” she says.

Stylist and trend forecaster Bree Leech says terracotta is very popular right now. “There’s a strong movement towards warm tones – which is quite cliched in autumn – but this year I really think people are starting to embrace those colours.”

She has also noticed warm pink and darker tones, such as plum and russet, staging a comeback.

“We’re getting a global look with tribal influences, even an Eastern influence with little bits of red.”

So what’s the best way to work these earthy shades into the home?

Introduce a beautiful dramatic essence into your study nook or home office with a terracotta colour, advises Lucena-Orr.

“Oranges are known for their thought-provoking quality, so this is a perfect room to add a natural earthy colour and really make the space a welcoming one.”

Bergman prefers a softer version of these colours. Timber is a great earthy colour palette within itself, the designer says.

“The easiest way to change your



“If you stick too closely to trends, they become irrelevant over time.”

home, whether seasonal or if you get bored, is with cushions, throws and glassware. They are a quick and easy way to change a style and mood in a space.”

Earthy tones, green and timber play a starring role in the Bergman-designed restaurant Angus & Bon, which opened in Prahran in January.

She likes strong injections of colour, such as burgundy or vibrant green.

Designer Kate Challis, who has just finished a long renovation on her own home, says: “earthy colours are being reinterpreted and revitalised by teaming them up with pastels, for example burgundy with fairy-floss pink and chocolate browns with mint greens.”

Hopkins believes rich tones create an atmosphere of comfort and a sense of depth in a space. Create an

interior based on what you need and your environment, she says.

“If you stick too closely to trends, they become irrelevant over time.”

She teamed tan tones with fresh white in a recent project at Green Gables in Mount Martha.

Hopkins likes to create a story in her interiors and run with a colour or theme, picking up details throughout a home.

“Have a story rather than splashing colour on walls that you will be sick of in six months. Think in more sophisticated ways about how you can layer those textures and tones.


“Gone are the typical feature-wall days, people are realising this trend is not a timeless option.”

Conversely in small spaces, such as powder rooms, studies or nooks, you can experiment with colour and create a little “jewel box”.

People are going back to the classic treatment of painting all rooms in a colour and leaving the skirtings, cornices, ceilings and doors in white, she says.

“Using layers of similar tones together can create such a warm, inviting place,” stylist Leech explains.

Investing in terracotta planter pots, repainting furniture or painting half-height walls in a dining area brings colour into the home, she says.

“Australians don’t necessarily love red or orange as a clean colour but when it’s dialled down and made more of a brown-based red and the orange is more pinkish we can embrace them. They almost become the Australian outback colours.” 

BEST TIPS – COLOUR SMART



Invest in great bed linen and beautiful throws for your sofas. Add layers for the colder season to make a room more inviting.

STYLIST BREE LEECH



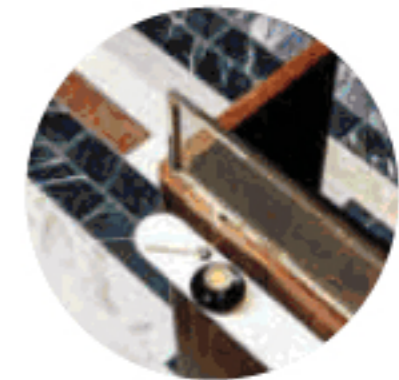
Play with earthy colours in pots. Invest in art. Buy a beautiful Aztec rug.

DESIGNER WENDY BERGMAN



Introduce a dramatic feel into your study or home office with a terracotta colour.

COLOUR EXPERT
ANDREA LUCENA-ORR



Be courageous: don’t be afraid of colour and texture. Ask advice from the experts.

DESIGNER ALEX HOPKINS