

SEEING WHITE

BY KRIS BRIGDEN

The last time you saw an all-white room did you feel comfortable or did you feel timid and afraid to relax? White is one of those colours that many homeowners fear and shy away from.

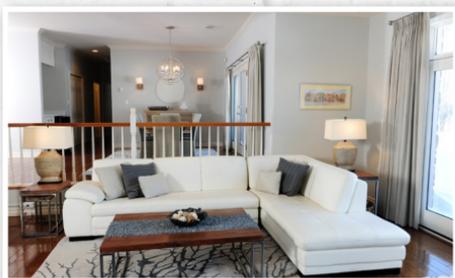
Why? It is an extremely complex shade. There are literally thousands of paint colours in white, some are stark and antiseptic, some are creamy, some are grey. Everyone has an opinion on decorating with white. Your neighbour will tell you it is cold, your best friend will tell you it isn't functional.

Often when younger people are decorating their first home they do not have the means to buy quality stand out furnishings, so the trick is to add colour on the walls to distract from the furnishings and infuse a sense of style. Alternatively white paint can turn a garage sale find into something to talk about. As we age and we collect and can afford quality pieces, a home can become like a gallery. You want a nice white canvas for your hard earned furnishings.

Truth is white is a very personal and sometimes the perfect decision depending on your application. White has seen a comeback as of late. The 'beach look' is hot right now. We all look at magazine shots of a fresh white room and envy at the calm and style it presents. Then we stop and think, "The kids would trash that white slip covered sofa," or "my place would look dirty all the time." There are many ways white rooms can be achieved that circumvent the fear but still get you the wow.

HERE ARE SOME HELPFUL DESIGN TIPS TO ACHIEVE WHITE BLISS:

- *Choose the white paint you are most comfortable with.* Then go ahead and paint it all; ceilings, trim, baseboards. Even whitewashing an old floor that needs to be replaced can change a room's appearance for a fraction of the price.
- *Buy décor items carefully,* make sure white is the predominant colour.



- *Group White items together* in vignettes on coffee tables, hutches and bookshelves.
- *Add some wood,* either in a coffee table or end. It doesn't matter what stain strength, mahogany, driftwood, or walnut. The wood is a stark contrast and makes white whiter.
- *Glass, mirrors, and ambient or lamp lighting* reflect white well. Add elements of these items wherever you can.
- *Add texture in lieu of colour.* All accoutrements should have a different texture or pattern if all white. This helps with layering and interest.
- *Choose one or two other colours to offset your white.* Let's say it's navy and soft grey. Instead of a white sofa the sofa is navy velvet and the occasional chairs are soft grey leather. Remember though to add the white and navy or white and grey throws and pillows.

As a designer I know first hand white can make anything thing old look new, fresh and clean. White can be a backdrop for fabulous, and it's a bold statement without being bold. White — love it or fear it, can be your best friend when decorating. With practice, the fear of white will fade and the addiction for this shade will take over.

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