

How to choose the
right paint color
(the first time)



CONTRIBUTING FACTORS

Before we dive in, there's a few important factors you need to take into consideration when choosing a paint color, which I'll be covering in this presentation:

1. WHICH DIRECTION IS YOUR ROOM FACING?
2. SAMPLING (THE RIGHT WAY)
3. LIGHT REFLECTIVE VALUE



NORTH, SOUTH, EAST OR WEST?

Let's start with one of the most important things you need to establish when choosing a paint color:

WHICH WAY IS THE ROOM FACING?

This is easy to figure out if you have a phone with a compass app (iPhones come with it). Once you have the direction of the room established, it's time to figure out which types of paint colors work best for your room.



NORTHERN FACING

The natural light in a northern facing room appears as a grayish blue, which means it's *cool* light.

The biggest mistake you can make when deciding on paint for a northern room is choosing a *bright, stark white*, hoping it'll brighten up the space. I regret to inform you that choosing the brightest, starkest white will be a mistake for a northern facing room.

You may want to test this theory to “see for yourself,” but I promise, you can't fool the wrath of science). Trust me, I've tried.

A northern facing room will never look *completely* white in natural sunlight.



My living room, painted BM White Dove

NORTHERN FACING (CON'T)

Northern rooms can still *appear* bright if you have enough windows, but don't confuse bright with warm.

The best thing you can do for a northern facing room is either embrace the darkness and choose a dark color (I painted my northern facing office black and it turned out beautifully), *OR*, paint it a warm color like off-white.

My favorite northern facing room whites are BM Cotton Balls and BM White Dove.



Another view of my living room after I painted White Dove - this photo was taken around 11 am on a sunny day and it's probably the brightest I've seen this room yet

SOUTHERN FACING

Southern rooms usually get a lot of natural light and continue to get warmer as the day progresses. You can rest peacefully knowing that if you want to paint a southern facing room white, it will most likely look *white*.



My bathroom is southern facing and I used BM Simply White, which is perfect for a southern facing room

EASTERN FACING

Eastern rooms appear bright and warm during the morning and usually continue to get brighter as the day progresses.

You'll notice in the afternoon that eastern rooms appear grayish, almost acting like a lesser version of a northern room. Eastern rooms look great painted with warmer colors.



Via Paintzen

WESTERN FACING

Western rooms start the day appearing grayish but tend to brighten around 12 pm. They can handle warm and cool colors, but warmer colors can become *very* warm during the afternoon.



Via Farrow & Ball

SAMPLING

Choosing a color without sampling is a big fat **no**.

P A I N T W I L L :

- Look completely different on a color chip than on your wall
- Look completely different in a northern facing room vs. southern facing room
 - Look completely different on a computer screen than on your wall
 - Look completely different at 9 am vs at 3 pm
- Pick up colors of the furniture, floor, trees outside and house next door (if the window is big enough) and therefore impact the way the color appears on your wall

sugar cookie	OC-94	windswept	OC-95	navajo white	OC-96	gentle cream
white opulence	OC-70	whitewater bay	OC-71	sand dollar	OC-72	pink damask
ancient ivory	OC-134	meadow mist	OC-135	cream cloak	OC-136	celery salt
mountain peak white	OC-122	cotton balls	OC-123	bavarian cream	OC-124	alpine white
white dove	OC-18	dove wing	OC-19	seapearl	OC-20	pale oak

S A M P L I N G

The cost of samples can add up quickly, and if you're looking at a BM or SW color, I recommend going to Home Depot and purchasing the Behr sample. It's cheaper and the color match is almost perfect.

Here's how I recommend sampling paint:

P O S T E R B O A R D S

For each color you want to sample, buy one large white poster board (I get mine at a local dollar store) and cut it in half (or use the whole poster).

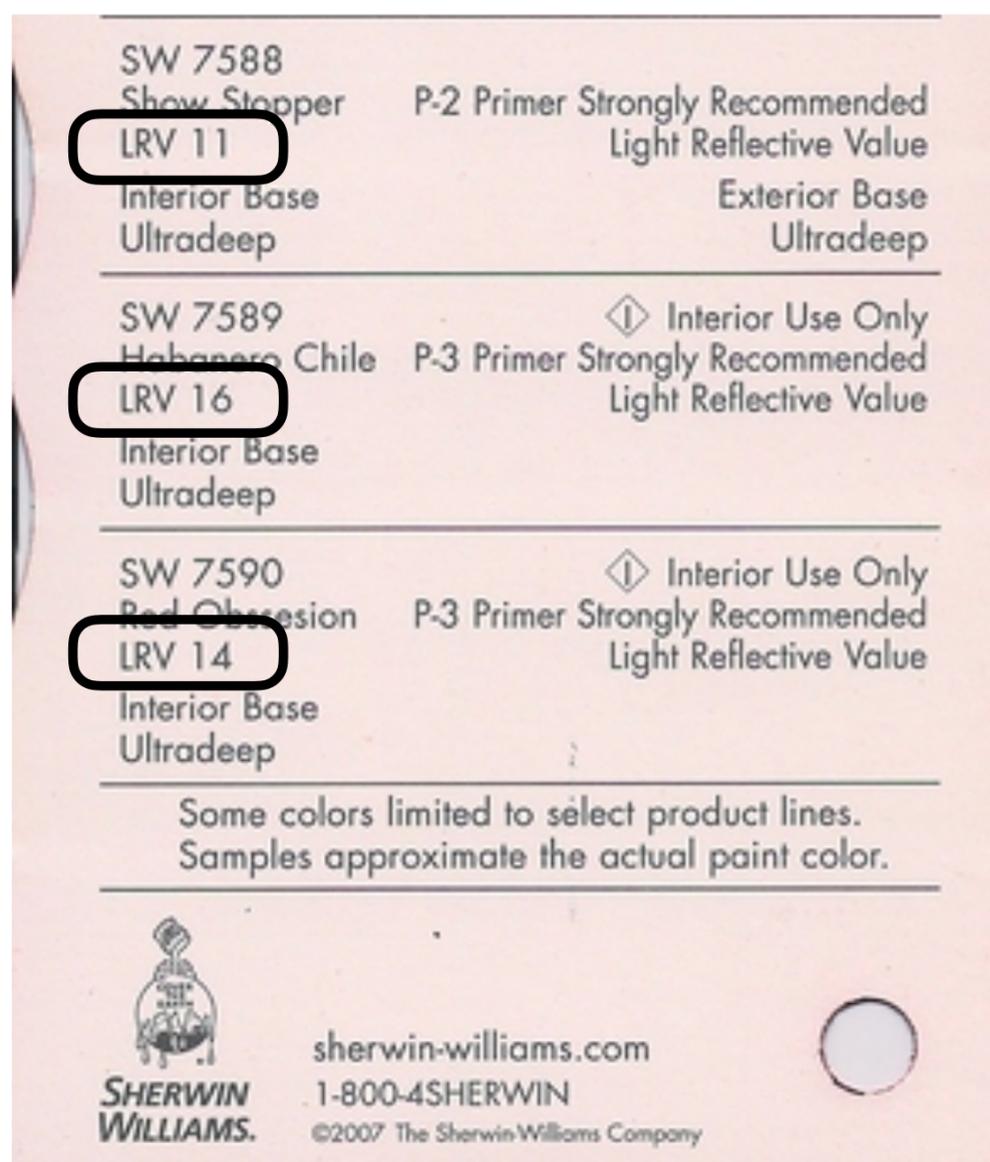
Using a mini-roller, paint a single color sample on the entire board and label it. Let it dry, then **paint a second coat**. Leave a bit of white around the edges so you can choose a color without it being compared to another color but instead, compared to white.

Tape it to the wall and keep an eye on it throughout different times of the day to see how it changes with the light. Look at it in sunlight, when it's raining, at nighttime when the lights are on, etc. I usually take photos of the poster board throughout the day and then go back to look at how the color has changed.

L I G H T R E F L E C T I V E V A L U E

Defined on a scale of 1-100, LRV is *how much light the paint color will reflect on the walls.*

The higher a paint's LRV, the brighter a room will appear. So, if you want your room to appear light and airy, aim for a paint with a higher LRV (at least 70+).



*You can usually find the LRV on the back of the paint chip,
or on the paint manufacturers website*

EXAMPLES OF LIGHT REFLECTIVE VALUE

LRV: 5



SW Greenblack

LRV: 26



SW Dovetail

EXAMPLES OF LIGHT REFLECTIVE VALUE

LRV: 58



SW Repose Gray

LRV: 68



BM Balboa Mist

EXAMPLES OF LIGHT REFLECTIVE VALUE

LRV: 85



BM White Dove

LRV: 92



BM Chantilly Lace

HELP! I CAN'T CHANGE MY PAINT COLOR AND I HAVE NO IDEA WTF TO DO!!

Swap out the lightbulbs. There's a science to light bulbs, and the color temperature of light bulbs *can* change the appearance of your room.

Color temperature is measured in Kelvins (K) and there are two things you need to remember when choosing light bulbs:

High Color Temperature = Cool Light

Low Color Temperature = Warm Light

Higher color temperatures of 4700K and above, have a *cool*, or blue color. Lower color temperatures, in between 2700K and 3000K, give off *warmer* colors that appear yellow, orange, or red. This may be hard to grasp at first but don't worry – 99% of the time Kelvins are listed on the packaging.

The perfect example of this color temperature concept – our old kitchen walls:

Before: Bulbs were about 5000K, making the kitchen look too bluish for my liking.

After: Bulbs were 2700K making the kitchen look like the perfect, neutral gray!



MY FAVORITE WHITES



Chantilly lace



Benjamin Moore

LRV: 92.2

A clean bright white

PERFECT FOR: Cabinets, Southern facing rooms (ceilings, trim and walls)



Via Studio McGee

White Dove



Benjamin Moore

LRV: 85.38

A warm off-white with the slightest hint of gray.

PERFECT FOR: northern facing room, walls, trim, ceiling



Cotton Balls



Benjamin Moore

LRV: 90

Similar to White Dove but a bit lighter and appears cooler in a northern facing room.

PERFECT FOR: northern facing rooms, walls, trim and ceiling



Via Just A Girl blog

Simply white



Benjamin Moore

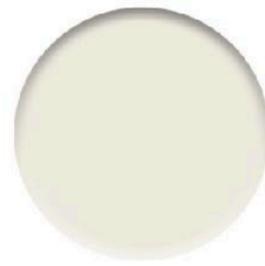
LRV: 91.7

A crisp, clean white

PERFECT FOR: southern rooms, walls, trim and ceilings



alabaster



Sherwin Williams

LRV: 82

A creamy, warm white

PERFECT FOR: northern and southern rooms, walls, trim
and ceilings



Via Addison's Wonderland