



Snap, Crackle, Pop!

TAKE
COLOR AND
RUN
WITH IT

Electric colors bring zest and zing to a 1960s-inspired beach house in Strathmere, New Jersey. The starting point was the dining room table: designer Mona Ross Berman based her palette on the orange, yellow, turquoise, and white tabletop. Eames chairs by Herman Miller. Custom chandelier. OPPOSITE: The table is lacquered in Chemcraft's Plasticoor White. The yellow stripe is St. Elmo's Fire, the orange is Fresno, and the turquoise is Burbank Blue, all from Benjamin Moore. Crate & Barrel tableware.



Bright color and dynamic patterns bring the white living room alive. The Moroccan poufs are a Berman signature. "I use them a lot in living rooms," she says. "They make great extra seating, especially for kids. And here, they give you a chance to get a shot of leather into the room." Curtain and blue pillow fabrics are from Duralee's Seaglass Elements print collection. Orange pillows are Meloire Reverse by Quadrille; the yellow pillow is Arcadia Sulphur by Raoul Textiles. The chair cushion is Schumacher's Pisces.



These high-impact colors are straight from the 1960s. The mantra for the house was 'sixties California surfer chic.' I know that's not a real design genre, but I didn't want a cliché, the same version of an East Coast beach house you see a lot on the Jersey Shore.

In a summer home you have greater license to have fun, be irreverent. My client, Maureen Doron, took a leap of faith and said, 'It's bright, sunny, a little outside the box, let's do it!' The 'surfer' part is a relaxed, laid-back feeling. The 'chic' is taking all those elements and distilling them in a new way.

We elevated color to a kind of fashion-y thing, tailored to Maureen. She owns two high-end women's clothing stores called Skirt, which carry lines like Milly, Trina Turk, DVF, Tory Burch—all classics with an update. That's very much in sync with what I like to do in a house—fresh takes on the classics.

There's a level of exuberance here, but there's also a level of restraint. The whole house is basically orange, yellow, turquoise, and white, with a tiny bit of pink here and there. The colors were inspired by that wild geometric pattern on the '60s-style dining room tabletop. Having a visual inspiration keeps you on track.

Orange is my favorite color, so I'm probably biased, but I think it's great here. It's such a welcoming color. Orange feels like a younger, fresher version of red. It's one of the only colors that can be sophisticated and unpretentious at the same time. But it can be a hot color, and I needed a little bit of cool as balance, to cut through the heat. So I came turquoise.

Pulling off all this color would have been much harder if I had used more colors, and different colors in all the rooms. If you walked through this house and you said, 'Now I'm in a turquoise room, now I'm in an orange room,' it would be jarring. The fluidity is both calming and celebratory. It says, 'I can relax here and have fun.'

Even when I don't use the same colors everywhere, I still like the rooms to feel connected. The bedroom should never feel like it's in a completely different house from the living room—the whole house has to make sense as one.

I use color on walls sparingly. But I like to go all out in smaller spaces like powder rooms and mudrooms. They're opportunities for people to say 'Wow!' You don't want to live inside 'wow' all the time, though. I don't believe in very many rules, but I do love the idea that a powder room should always have loads of personality. And we took turquoise as far as it could go in this one.

The doors to the laundry room could have been a lost opportunity—just another pair of white doors. But we felt they shouldn't be an afterthought. Painting them orange made them very visible and special. They read as art.

This living room is all about colorful accents. Even though there's a lot of color, it takes a backseat. The base color is white—white walls, white fireplace, white sectional—so it's easier to be around it all day long. The exterior of that little pair of tabouret tables is white, and the interior is yellow. It's a pop of color you might not notice at first, it's so subtle. It would have been way too much to paint the tables yellow. They might have stolen the show, and they'd have been distracting.

I wanted the fireplace to feel a little formal. That shot of tradition grounds the room. It keeps things from feeling too crazy. A traditional fireplace like this feels classic, and that's very important because you don't want a room to feel trapped in a time capsule. I want the Dorons to walk into this room in 10 years and have it still feel relevant. Classical elements are necessary to make that happen.

A white sofa is a great place to start in a beach house living room—a blank canvas. I love textiles, and pillows are an obvious way to pull fabrics into a room. On this sofa I wanted all the colors in the table represented. But you have to be careful with patterns. Too many can ruin the effect.

Changing the scale of patterns is important, of course, when you're mixing in throw pillows, but you've also got to mix the scale of the pillows themselves. I have a handful of 20-inch-square pillows and a handful of 16-inch squares. They're all just simple squares, no trim or odd shapes. When you find great fabrics like these, it's so great to show them off with a simple shape.

The painted floor in the bedroom is a riff on a classic David Hicks pattern. Maureen says it reminds her of a Missoni dress. The fact that it's only two colors helps give it more impact without making it overwhelming. And most important, it works with the other patterns in the room because it's bigger in scale.

We wanted to take color and run with it a little more in the master bedroom. It's a private space. We started with the paisley on the headboard, and it took off from there. Pink and orange isn't a combination you see much of. Pink and green would have been the easy way out, but it would have taken things in a preppy direction. This house is more subversive than '60s preppy!

PRODUCED BY ORLI BEN-DOR & DAVID M. MURPHY



1. Grass cloth makes a chic backdrop for family photos above the wet bar. 2. The house has a sweeping view of the Atlantic Ocean. 3. Strong color—Benjamin Moore's Fresno—“keeps the mudroom from looking like your everyday mudroom,” Berman says. 4. Barn doors painted the same bold orange pack a punch in the laundry area. 5. Berman used quieter shades of her palette in the guest room. 6. In the master bedroom, Yves Saint Laurent posters pay homage to the owner's love of fashion. 7. Katie Ridder's Beetlecat wallpaper gives the boys' room a playful but “not overly cute” feel. 8. Fermob's Costa extension table carries turquoise out onto the deck. OPPOSITE: “The kitchen has a classic, timeless quality,” Berman says, “with a few fun pops of color to keep it from being staid and predictable”—like the fanciful valance in Arcadia Sulphur by Raoul Textiles and the Modwalls glass tile backsplash.





"The master bedroom has a very retro feel to it," Berman says, "with the pink, tangerine, and lavender color palette, the paisley linen, and the zigzag Missoni-esque pattern on the floor." The floor is painted Salmon Berry and White Dove, both by Benjamin Moore. The headboard is upholstered in Henry in Rose by Raoul Textiles. Pouf from John Derian. OPPOSITE: "Powder rooms are places where you can gild the lily. We used a loud geometric in a bright ocean blue to give it a slightly over-the-top feeling." Wallpaper is Recessed from Studio Printworks. FOR MORE DETAILS, SEE RESOURCES