

## Here's how to 'spring' into a perfect paint job

As the mercury begins its rise after a winter hibernation, spring is when many of us finally rise off the couch and make the great leap toward painting the house.

Whether it's minor trim work or re-painting the entire house, this is the season when 25% of all exterior paint jobs occur. An even greater number of paint projects are considered during this period, but dismissed because of their perceived difficulty.

But the fact is, with a little paint knowledge, proper preparation and a quick primer on how to paint, the process is as rewarding as it is essential. So if you're about to give your home a new coat, here are a few things worth remembering before stepping up on the ladder.

### Paint Selection

With winter but a memory, you may notice that the season's coldness and moisture have left your siding cracked and faded. Or, you may be sick and tired of the color you've lived with all these years. Whatever your reason for painting, the first thing to decide is what kind—and color—of paint to use.

First and foremost, paint experts agree that the last thing you want to do is skimp on paint quality, especially for your home's "envelope."

Lower-quality paint doesn't offer a durable enough coating and is prone to fading, cracking and peeling. Premium paints also cover more fully in one coat, thereby saving you time and money by not having to paint a surface over and over.

When selecting the color scheme, remember that color can make a house look larger (lighter tones) or smaller (darker colors), as well as more inviting or secluded. Also, make sure the color you choose will complement your home's landscape and surrounding area.

Once you've decided on the color, your next step is selecting a sheen. According to Tom Rapps, brand manager for Dutch Boy Paints, the simplest piece of advice is to go with a flat or satin finish for all your primary surfaces, and a gloss or semi-gloss for trim, doors, trellises, etc.

Your next dilemma is latex v. oil. Oil-based paints once reigned supreme, but most pros now prefer the ease and convenience of latex.

"Oil penetrates wood better, but latex dries faster, doesn't yellow and can be cleaned up with soap and water," says Rapps. "In addition to being more environment-friendly, latex also expands and contracts with the temperature, something oil paints don't do."

### How Much To Use?

Armed with the information on what color, sheen and type of paint you want, don't wait until you're in the paint aisle to figure

and they'll all say the most important step to a great paint job is great preparation," says Rapps.

The two-step process entails preparing the house and the surface. In preparing the house, the key is to cover or remove anything you don't want painted, from cars in the driveway to bushes, screens and shutters.

To prepare the surface, scrape away loose, scaling paint; replace damaged siding, sills and trim;

sand the gloss off shiny surfaces; caulk cracks or gaps around windows and doors; and scrub away dirt, grease and mildew.

### Next Step: Painting Your Masterpiece

Now that you've got the right paint and the proper surface to receive your would-be creation, the hard part is behind you. Believe it or not, the most enjoyable part of the whole project is about

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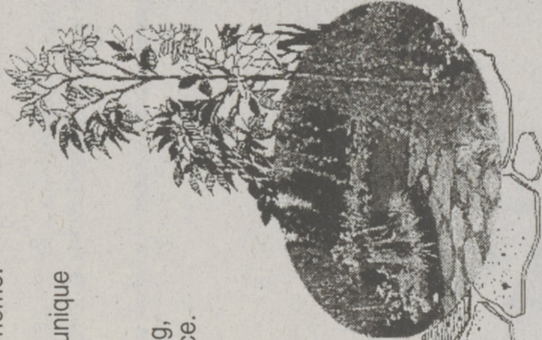
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## Kitchen design signals new age of hospitality

While we're waiting for the millennial clock to strike, we seem to have one foot on the brake, and the other on the accelerator. This is true of our lifestyles, work patterns, politics, and even the way we look at design.

A good example is what's happening in kitchen planning. There we're bidding farewell to the age of cocooning and welcoming the age of hospitality.

"Our clients still consider the kitchen their comfort zone," explains designer Alyson O'Hanlon, a partner at Rutt of New York City. "But they're no longer closing the door on the outside world. Instead they're welcoming others in and entertaining more. It seems like people seek a community closeness we associate with the past, probably as a reaction to the high-tech world all around us."

In design, this translates not just to kitchens that have room for a crowd, but also to the way they look. While we often revisit the past, with heirloom touches and elegant architectural features, we give them a new, highly personal spin, and we also look to the future with a fresh, global

perspective. We do that with design inspirations from around the world."

Designer Barton Lidzky of The Hammer & Nail, Wyckoff, Conn., explains O'Hanlon. "Before we design, we interview our clients and find out how they cook and entertain, so we know if they need extra freezer space, two dishwasher drawers, an additional sink, cabinets that will store baking paraphernalia, a place to display pretty china, or cabinets especially outfitted to hold trays, small appliances, giant bags of kibbles for the family dog, etc. It's quite involved, and it's not a task for do-it-yourselfers. It takes a professional designer to sort it all out. Nor is it a task for ordinary cabinetry. Only custom cabinetry can meet the requirements of these demanding kitchens."

Hospitable Colors

Since cabinets are the major element of every kitchen, it follows that they dictate the way the room will look. Today, cabinetry comes in an infinite range of styles, colors and finishes, so any look is

possible. Ranges with extra burners, grills, griddles and ovens are often called for, and islands that are equally adept at food preparation, everyday meals, and entertaining are part of most of this designer's kitchens.

Organization is all-important in these multi-purpose kitchens,

so storage is a top priority.

"Nobody feels comfortable in a kitchen where every counter is cluttered with stuff that should have been stowed away," explains O'Hanlon. "Before we design, we interview our clients and find out how they cook and entertain, so we know if they need extra freezer space, two dishwasher drawers, an additional sink, cabinets that will store baking paraphernalia, a place to display pretty china, or cabinets especially outfitted to hold trays, small appliances, giant bags of kibbles for the family dog, etc. It's quite involved, and it's not a task for do-it-yourselfers. It takes a professional designer to sort it all out. Nor is it a task for ordinary cabinetry. Only custom cabinetry can meet the requirements of these demanding kitchens."

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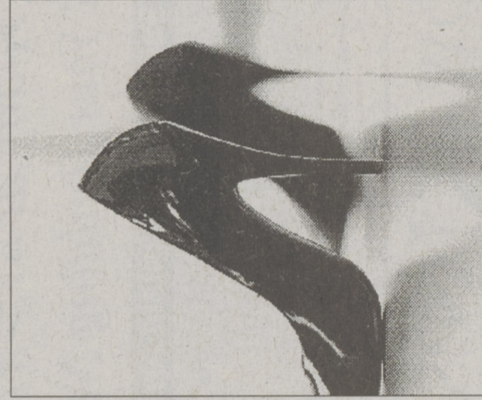
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The white kitchen has come far since its cold, clinical days. Here, a linen finish is used to give a look that's clean, but also warm. Artistic tile work and fine architectural details add beauty and interest.

See HOSPITALITY, pg 4

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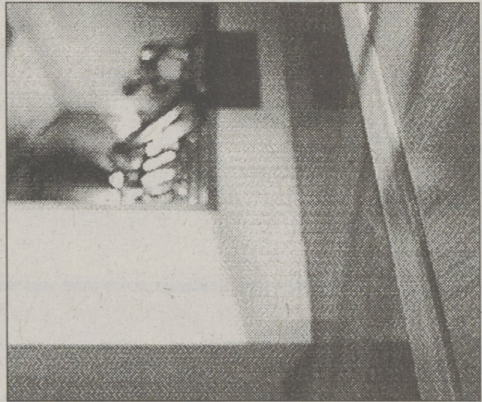
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