



## DECORATING TIPS

# COLORS OF WILLIAMSBURG

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Envision a brilliant shade of orange . . . rich in character and depth, somewhere between a spicy paprika and an early morning sunrise. You know the color. You see it in all the hottest new interior design trends. Today's top designers—and savvy homeowners—are using it to accent and accessorize nearly every room of the house.

What you may not know is that it isn't exactly new.

We call it Tucker Cupboard Orange and it is yet another example of how 18th-century design influences what we see and do today.

Eighteenth-century home design was all about amazing color. Those who could afford it lavished their rooms with bold paints, from brilliant oranges to electric blues to vibrant kiwi greens. These weren't just wall colors—since homes of the period also boasted incredible surface decoration, color abounded on trim, molding, mantels, and built-in furnishings.

Interior paint was a rare luxury in early colonial homes, as the paint-making process was expensive and complex. But in 1730, the first readymade paint hit the American market. It was an alluring feature, and houses for sale during the 1730s were often described as having painted rooms.

Paint research in Williamsburg began in the 20th century with the first wave of archeological exploration and the effort to restore the 88 original buildings that remained in the town. That research ultimately helped shape the interior and exterior colors of the 500 authentic reproduction buildings that are part of Colonial Williamsburg's 400-acre Historic Area.

By painstakingly peeling back hundreds of years and layers of paint, grime, and dirt, our curators discovered that the 18th century was all about color. The WILLIAMSBURG color collection is a "thoroughly documented, exceptionally accurate collection of color," said Willie Graham, a Colonial Williamsburg architectural historian.

But how does a historically accurate palette influence today's designs? And how does it relate to trends for the future? Here are some colorful examples:

Brown is all the rage right now and is expected to be a hot trend for several years. It was everywhere in the 18th century as well, but for a different reason—Spanish brown was an inexpensive pigment often used for

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“mopboards” (baseboards) and other wood trim considered more utilitarian than elegant. Today, it can be both—our Everard Washboard Brown is a sought-after color, especially for walls, with a rich chocolate hue.

As popular today as it was in the 18th century, an all-white scheme makes spaces flow into each other to transform a room into a luxurious getaway. Paired with painted trim, neutral walls are a quintessential Williamsburg look—a cool neutral helped enhance a candle-lit room during 18th-century evenings.

Also popular today is the “greening” of American design—people looking to add more natural colors and textiles to their homes. Green tones like Everard House Willow—influenced by the Far East and forecasted to be a hot trend through the end of the decade—have a decidedly 18th-century (and enduringly fresh) feel.

WILLIAMSBURG colors are timeless, rich, and saturated, lending themselves to even the most contemporary décor. It’s no wonder WILLIAMSBURG is a design leader in transforming the rich traditions of the past into the way we live today.

