

The New Homeowner's Decorating Challenge:

What Comes First?

Just recovered from the shock of “closing” on your first house? The next step now looms – transforming the house into “your home.” When money is tight and no budget exists for furnishings, design statements can be achieved with a versatile alternative that is inexpensive. Paint is an easy, cost-conscious way to add warmth, coziness and charm to a new home. As a rule, a newly built house needs to be softened and a previously owned one needs a good cleaning and a facelift.

Scott Eppes, owner of Eppes Decorating Center, provides some easy-to-execute ideas for do-it-yourself homeowners. “Paint is the most moderate way to obtain sensational looks in a relatively short time. Shelter magazines are a good source of ideas – for both color and techniques.”

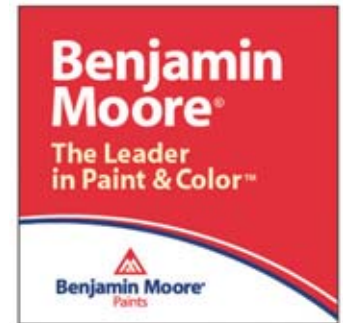
According to **Eppes Decorating**, new homeowners fall into two categories – those who purchase a new house and those who purchase a previously owned one.

A Newly Constructed Home

Generally speaking, a newly constructed home will have an open floor plan in keeping with today's architectural trend for light, airy spaces. The interior will be painted with a wisp of paint, probably all white. Most often the builder will use “budget” paint, since it is assumed that the new homeowner will decorate. However, with the lack of quality comes the lack of longevity. The paint job will not stand up well to day-to-day household chores and traffic.

Eppes Decorating counsels that the most sensible approach is to paint before moving in. The paint job is only as good as the preparation work. It is

imperative that you check out all the walls, room by room, to make sure the plasterboard work is up to specification with all nails countersunk and spackled. The existing paint job, most probably, can be used as the base coat. But if you are putting in the effort to paint, quality paint applies better and lasts longer.



Since stark white is the color of choice of many builders, adding color will bring warmth. Depending on how adventuresome you are, the color spectrum in paint is endless, ranging from the high drama of rich jewel-tones to elegant neutrals.



Moving into a new house is a great opportunity for a situation reversal: once furnishings are collected, the walls of a room fade into the background. During the early years of homeownership, when furniture is sparse, make the most of wall space and openness of rooms.

The challenge: take a stark, open space and make it livable and warm. Paint and color are the answers. Employ a variety of fantasy finish techniques, such as sponging, glazing, and stippling or create faux borders and architectural details to add design appeal.

❖ Rather than a traditional wood chair rail, paint one on the dining room wall or stencil it with a pattern adapted from a favorite tablecloth or china. Simply photocopy the fabric, enlarge or reduce it, depending on the size of the pattern and the detail. Then trace the pattern onto the wall and paint it.

❖ If you are unsure of window treatments, which most are during the first year or so occupying a new house, consider hanging only blinds or shades on the windows with a ready-made valance and a complementary border painted around window. Or, in place of a valance, take a plain, ready-made wood cornice and glaze or paint it with a design.

❖ When you move in, be aware of existing floorcovering. Very often wall-to-wall carpeting comes with new construction and it covers the entire interior space. Make sure that the paint you select for the walls works with the carpet. Using neutral colors – pale greens, bold taupes, sage greens and ethereal blues will take the starkness out of a room and add a warm glow. Don't forget the fifth wall – the ceiling. Consider adding a neutral or medium tone for interest and to enhance your wall color.

❖ To bring warmth into a bedroom, pick a color that will soften the room. Create a feeling of serenity, with whisper soft lilacs, sages and periwinkles.

❖ Take time to look at things differently. Unusual places can inspire a host of "design" possibilities. In the kitchen, select a color from a canister, towel, or curtain and repeat that same color as an accent on the walls or trim.

❖ A paneled door is a surface on which you can bring out subtle detail. Paint the door taupe. Then take a creamy off-white and accent the inner section of paneling. With flush doors, create a special effect by painting panels onto these doors or sponge color onto them for visual interest.

❖ Furniture may be scarce for a sunroom or sun porch. The floor, however, can be transformed with paint. Have fun with these areas and consider a whimsical trompe l'oeil creation. Draw the pieces of a shattered clay pot on the floor with strewn flowers and dirt as though a pot had fallen and broken. Paint it with the appropriate colors.

❖ Create an area rug with paint. Simply mask off an area on the floor, stencil a pattern onto it and paint it. Floral or geometric designs are popular as well as faux marble squares. Be sure to use a clear

seal to protect the painted designs from foot traffic.

Remember to use only paint products designed for floors – porch and floor and patio paints. If

another type of product is used, it may wear off at an accelerated rate.



A Previously Owned Home

For the older house that carries the previous owner's design tastes, the first step is to undo the former occupant's handiwork. A fresh coat of paint is the order of the day to clean up rooms which may not have been decorated in a decade or two.

"Paint goes beyond decorating – it also sanitizes a house." **Eppes Decorating Center** advised. "If surfaces have not been painted in a long time, wash them first, then paint. You'll be surprised at the transformation of the rooms as they are painted."

Most people need time to live in a space before they really know how they want to decorate it. The functions of a room may change – a bedroom becomes a home office; a family room takes on the role of guest bedroom; a sunroom becomes the electronic center of the home with Plasma Wide Screen TV / DVD / Surround Sound Audio, located together in the "Multi-Media Center". Take time in selecting furniture, window and floor coverings – these costly items are not changed on a whim every two or three years. Paint is one versatile design element which can be changed quickly, easily, and at a very moderate cost.

*For further information
on painting interiors, contact*

An advertisement for EPPES DECORATING CENTER. The ad is framed in a dark purple border. At the top left, it says "EPPES" in large, bold, purple letters, followed by "DECORATING CENTER" in smaller purple letters. To the right of this, it says "Serving Tallahassee Since 1969". Below the company name is the Benjamin Moore Paints logo. At the bottom, there are two addresses: "2849-B Apalachee Parkway Tallahassee, FL 32301 (850) 309-7533" and "2270 Allen Road Tallahassee, FL 32303 (850) 385-6649". At the very bottom, it says "Now In Two Convenient Locations". On the right side of the ad, there is a decorative graphic of a hand holding a paintbrush, with various paint-related icons around it.