

# Add a Little Color

TIRED OF NEUTRAL EVERYTHING BUT DON'T WANT TO GO TOO WILD? EXPERTS SHARE THEIR FAVORITE SURPRISE SPOTS TO PUT A SPLASH OF PAINT.

By Stephanie Sisco



If you're a fan of vibrant color but still recovering from a regretful choice to paint your entire college living room turquoise, this story is for you. Consider adding an unexpected accent shade to the interior of a cabinet (seen here), along your staircase risers, or on a piece of furniture. "Choose a color that relates to something else in the room and fits in with the style of the space," says Patrick Sutton, an interior designer in Baltimore. Here, he went with a bold orange tone that complements the warm wood of the cabinetry.



## Shelf Brackets

For metal surfaces, Sherry Petersik, author and DIY blogger at [younghouselove.com](http://younghouselove.com), recommends Rust-Oleum Universal spray paint because of its comfortable trigger mechanism and built-in primer. Lay the brackets outside on a tarp or old piece of cardboard and “spray in short, sweeping motions to keep your paint even,” says Rachel Mae Smith, author of *Hello Color*. Let it dry for at least 10 minutes before applying the next coat; four or five thin coats should do the trick. To seal, spray on a coat of Krylon Colormaxx Acrylic Crystal Clear in satin (from \$4; [krylon.com](http://krylon.com) for info) and let it dry overnight.

### PICK YOUR PAINT

Go with one color or choose a rainbow assortment (as shown above). It’s also fun to use four shades of one color and install the finished brackets in gradient order for an ombré effect, says Smith.



**TO TRY:** (From left) Rust-Oleum Universal Matte spray paint in robin’s egg, \$7; [homedepot.com](http://homedepot.com). Montana Gold Acrylic Professional spray paint in Viola, from \$7; [dickblick.com](http://dickblick.com).

## Furniture

“The prep is key,” says Tracy Morris, an interior designer in Washington, D.C. First, sand the entire piece with 100-grit sandpaper to remove some of the old finish and rough up the surface a bit so the new paint has something to adhere to. Thoroughly wipe it clean, then use a mini foam roller to coat it with a primer (like Kilz Max White Water-Based Interior Primer, Sealer and Stain-Blocker, \$35 per gallon; [homedepot.com](http://homedepot.com)), which will provide a clean base and prevent any oil in the wood from bleeding through your color. “Sand between coats and clean off the dust before applying the next coat,” says Erin Gates, author of *Elements of Style*.

### PICK YOUR PAINT

Find inspiration from your accent pieces (like the cactus pillow below). “It’s important to consider your existing flooring, fabrics, and window treatments,” says Dee Schlotter, senior color marketing manager for PPG Paints. Hold up a few possible paint swatches against these elements to make sure everything will work well together.



**TO TRY:** (From left) Regal Select in Peacock Feathers, \$60 per gallon; [benjaminmoore.com](http://benjaminmoore.com) for info. All Surface Enamel in Naval, from \$68 per gallon; [sherwin-williams.com](http://sherwin-williams.com) for info.



For more designer-approved paint colors, visit [realsimple.com/perfectpaint](http://realsimple.com/perfectpaint).





## Staircase Risers

Gates suggests using a polyurethane-based porch and floor enamel here, as it's durable enough to withstand high traffic. Alternatively, try paint with a semigloss finish, which is easier to wipe clean and doesn't hold on to dust, grime, and scuffs like a flat finish can. Line the top and bottom edges of each riser with painter's tape (such as Frog Tape, \$8 per roll; lowes.com) to protect the stair landings. Remove the tape before the paint is dry to help ensure a clean line.

### PICK YOUR PAINT

If you have a "shoes on" house, opt for a darker shade to mask scuff marks (above: Teal Ocean in satin, \$53 per gallon; benjaminmoore.com for info). If your heart is set on a lighter color, says Petersik, pick a medium gray or tan to hide the debris that collects in the crevice between step and riser.



**TO TRY:** (From left) Regal Select in Revere Pewter, \$60 per gallon; benjaminmoore.com for info. Night Watch, from \$35 per gallon; ppgpaints.com for info.

## Interior Doors

Again, primer is crucial. Gates likes a satin or semigloss finish for doors and trim, but cautions that "the shinier the paint finish, the more it will highlight flaws on the surface." Ideally, remove the doors from their hinges and paint them flat atop sawhorses. If that's not possible, paint in place, making sure to cover the floor below. Apply painter's tape to protect knobs and hinges. If your door has panels, use a paintbrush to get paint into the crevices, then follow with a four-inch foam roller on the remaining surface to smooth out the brushstrokes. Sand down any drips that develop between coats.

### PICK YOUR PAINT

Using a complementary color on a closet door and updating the hardware can give the space an entirely new look. Consider a pastel for a subtle addition to a guest bedroom (below, on door: Satin Ribbon, from \$48 per gallon; dunnedwards.com for info). Or use a brighter shade to add character to a kids' space.



**TO TRY:** (From left) Valspar Signature Interior Paint and Primer in One in Beach Blanket, from \$32 per gallon; lowes.com. Regal Select in Cinco de Mayo, \$60 per gallon; benjaminmoore.com for info.

