

## Metamerism: when colors change with the lighting

By Irene Woodworth

Do you know that 40 percent of paint purchases are due to an original color mismatch? That is a lot of "Oops" cans in the stores.

When I go to the big box home improvement stores and go by the paint department, I often see someone with lots of paint chips on the counter as they struggle to find the perfect color for their home. Unfortunately, color has a way of changing with the light. Most of us do not have fluorescent lighting in our homes like these stores have, especially in the paint department. Some of the displays have some different types of lighting that also give colors a different look.

Where do you start with color? How do you deal with radius, or more modern rounded corners in a room? Where is your starting or stopping point for an accent wall color or to change a color in a room? You may look at a color on a small color chip, but here is something to consider that most people ignore or are not aware of, and it is a big factor when they choose a color for a room: What kind of lighting is in the room?

There is warmer and cooler light that comes into a room depending on the direction in relation to the sunshine. Is the room facing east, west, north or south?

Why does color change in a room and in some areas look totally different than on the paint chip? There is a concept called "metamerism" that is recognized in the design field



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as the change of color depending on the direction of the light that is reflected on the color. Have you ever noticed that a light yellow wall can change from yellow to gray and even orange in a room? That is what happens with metamerism.

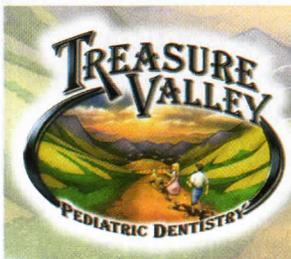
It is a good idea to look at the colors and think about what colors you like or do not like. Either one (like or dislike) is a great starting point.

Other factors to consider are: How do you want the room to feel? What kind of use will you be getting out

of this room? Many clients who are empty nesters no longer entertain so they are turning their dining rooms into offices, playrooms for their grandkids or even media rooms.

What is the function and use of the room? When people call me to do color consultations, I always tell them that those appointments are only done from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. That is the time in a day when we have the most daylight, and we can examine the color in the room in relation to the light source. (The light source is the direction of natural daylight that comes into the room.)

For example, if you have a north-facing room and most of its light comes through the northern exposure, which is a cooler light, it will make the colors appear cooler. It would be a better idea to select a color that is in the warmer palette (reds, yellows and oranges) to avoid this color dilemma. ■



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