



ask a designer:

HOW TO CREATE DARK AND DRAMATIC INTERIORS


It's a common misconception that coastal properties should be decorated in white or neutral colours, and accessorised with stripes, shells and driftwood. Interior designer Elaine Skinner of Camellia Interiors, with showrooms in Truro and Rock, believes otherwise, and regularly uses a palette of rich, dark tones when implementing design schemes for her coastal clients. Here she offers professional advice and tips on using dark colours successfully in coastal properties.

5 good reasons to embrace the dark side

- ▶ Dark walls and window frames actually draw attention to the sea or countryside views beyond.
- ▶ Cottages often have small, dark rooms that can just look dingy and depressing if you paint them white. Don't fight the lack of light; instead, embrace it with dark, strong colours.
- ▶ Dark hues create a luxury boutique feel and really deliver on drama, leaving a lasting impression, so don't let your self-doubt deter you.
- ▶ Deep shades create a cosy, cocooning and restful mood, lending instant intrigue, glamour and sophistication to living rooms, bedrooms, kitchens, bathrooms, hallways and cloakrooms – everywhere, in fact!
- ▶ Rich colours are the perfect backdrop to showcase your cherished accessories and really make them pop!

I'm still nervous – how do I begin using dark tones in my own home?

- ▶ When choosing your colour palette, it might be easier to take an existing decorative object or a painting that you love as a starting point. Interior magazines and designer portfolios are other great sources of inspiration.
- ▶ Experiment in smaller doses, like adding soft furnishings and accessories such as throws, cushions or lampshades that aren't too expensive to buy.
- ▶ Nothing transforms a room faster (or more cheaply) than a few litres of paint! You can also use a rich colour to paint floorboards, pick out woodwork details or paint wood panelling.
- ▶ Build up to creating an accent wall, either using paint or richly patterned and textured wallpaper. A strong colour on one or two walls can completely transform a room.
- ▶ For bathrooms, you can achieve big impact by painting the outside of a claw-foot tub or using a rich tone on the walls alongside classic white suites.
- ▶ As you gain confidence, you could invest in an upholstered headboard, a bed valance, toning curtains or blinds, or recover a sofa or armchair for a luxurious and cohesive look.
- ▶ Remember that you're not limited to dark grey or black; there's a wealth of colour out there, including midnight blues, teal green, rich reds, earthy browns or opulent purples.

Elaine's parting words of wisdom? "Be bold – if you really hate it, you can always repaint it out. But I can guarantee that you'll love it, and once you start, it's quite addictive!" 

Got an Interior Design dilemma? Contact Elaine at info@camelliainteriors.co.uk, www.camelliainteriors.co.uk and on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.