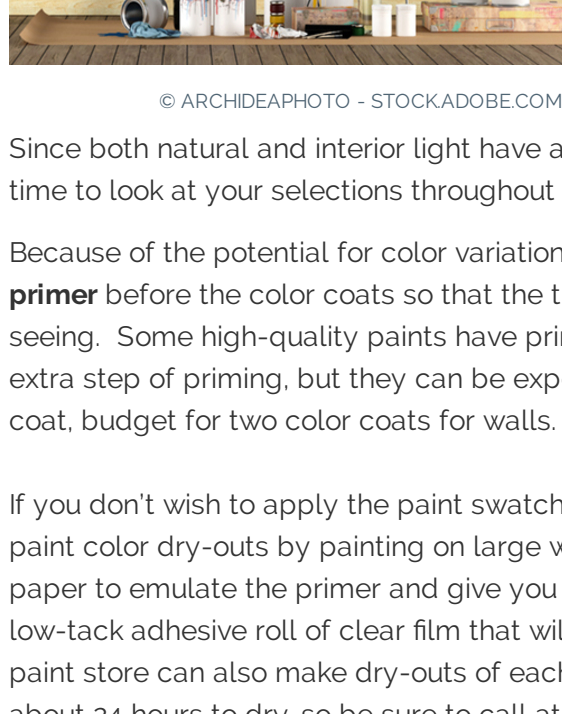




Choosing the best interior colors for your project can be one of the more personal and challenging decisions you'll make. There are many dynamics and nuances to consider and to apply. **Light and the surrounding colors have the greatest effect on our perception of color.** The base color, texture, and finish will also effect the final outcome.



Let's Have a Primer on Testing and Selecting Color for Interior Walls.

SWATCHES

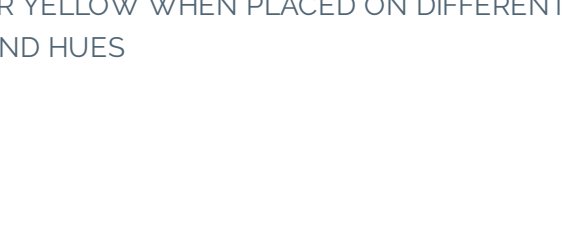
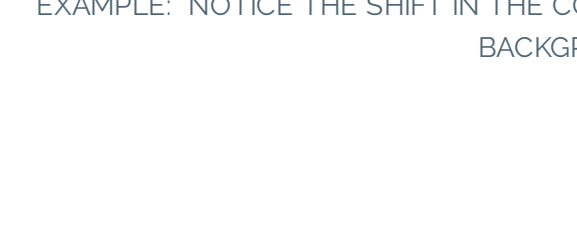
After you have narrowed down your options by selecting your paint chips, I suggest you create **paint swatches**, by applying a sample of each color on the wall or surface to illustrate the color. This is especially important if you are painting directly over an existing color.

Since both natural and interior light have a tremendous effect on paint colors, take your time to look at your selections throughout the day and in bright and low light situations.

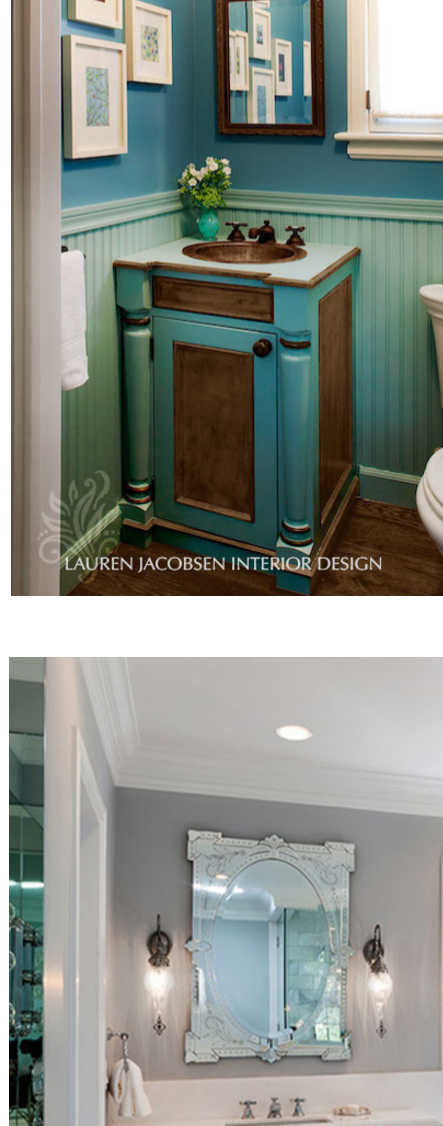
Because of the potential for color variations, I recommend applying a **white base coat primer** before the color coats so that the true color you've chosen is what you end up seeing. Some high-quality paints have primers already mixed in which saves you the extra step of priming, but they can be expensive. One rule of thumb: even with a primer coat, budget for two color coats for walls.

If you don't wish to apply the paint swatches directly to the wall, you can create large paint color dry-outs by painting on large white boards or white cover stock coated paper to emulate the primer and give you true color. You could also use [SureSwatch](#) a low-tack adhesive roll of clear film that will enable you to see a sample color. Your paint store can also make dry-outs of each color for you on request. They usually take about 24 hours to dry, so be sure to call at least a day in advance.

I cannot stress this enough, **TEST, TEST, TEST**. Study the swatches in natural and artificial light for a day or two and you will see the colors shift as the light changes.



EXAMPLE: NOTICE THE SHIFT IN THE COLOR YELLOW WHEN PLACED ON DIFFERENT BACKGROUND HUES



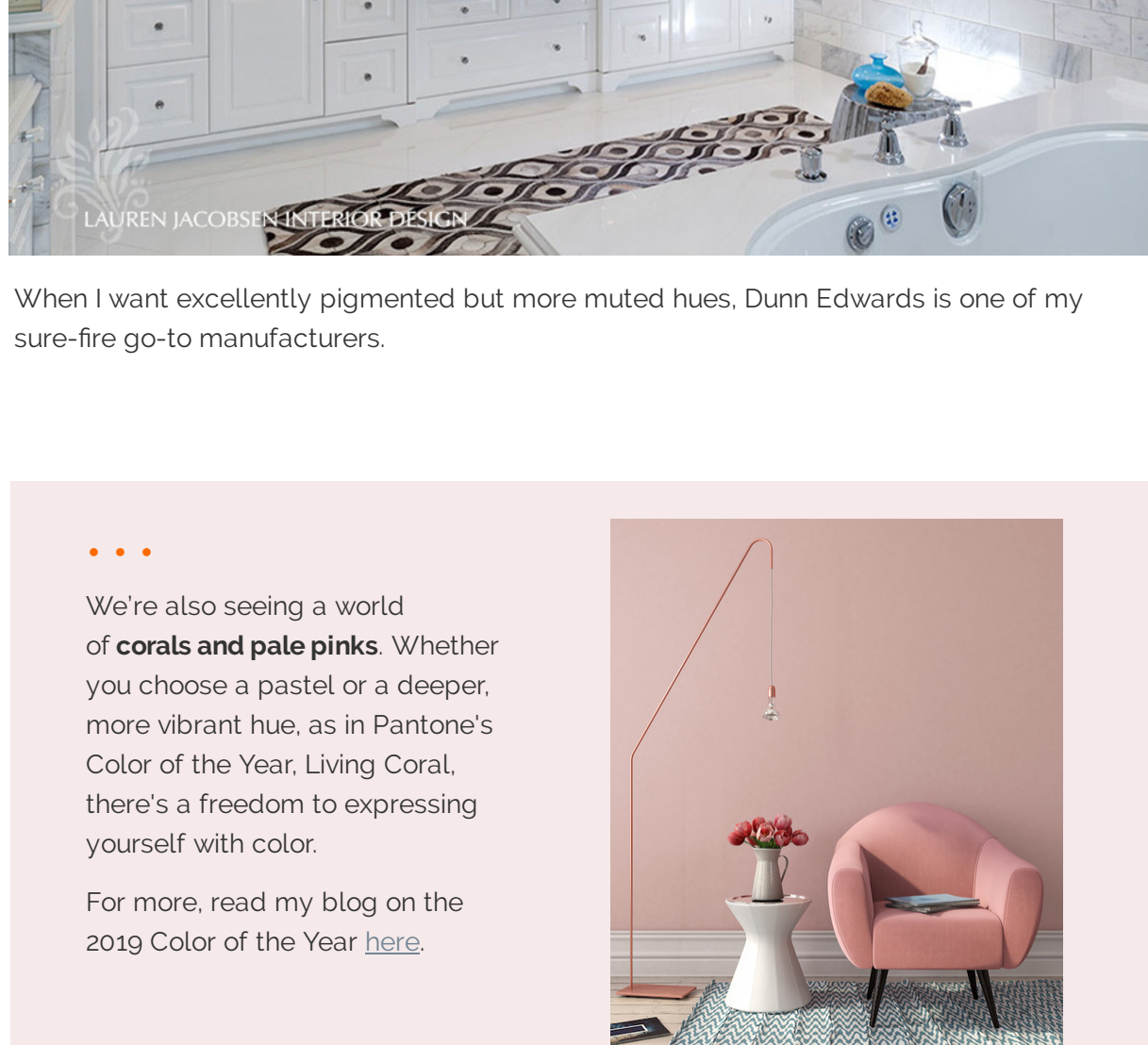
COLOR

Color is back and in a big way. Homeowners are embracing lively colors again to reflect happiness and upbeat energy.

• • •

Greys are still versatile and varied with lots of options as is the wide world of whites. This neutral color combo is still popular with some homeowners. Rule of thumb: the more white you combine with gray, the airier and fresher the space will feel. If you have an abundance of natural light a soft, pale gray will act as a neutral.

Gray undertones tend to neutralize and balance color because they diffuse pigmentation, offering a more muted look. Even though I'm known for incorporating beautiful colors into interior spaces, those colors can often be muted.



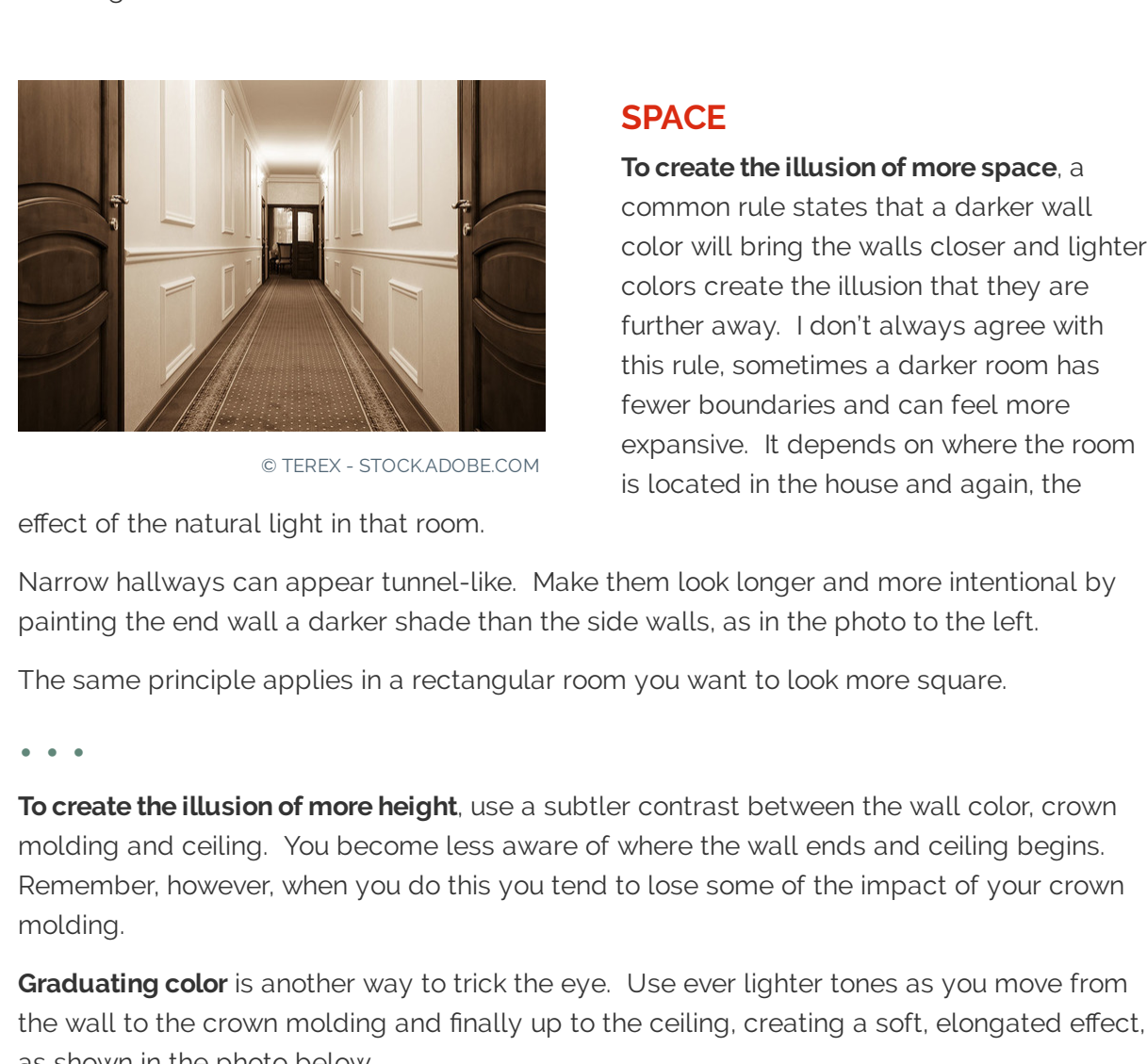
When I want excellently pigmented but more muted hues, Dunn Edwards is one of my sure-fire go-to manufacturers.

We're also seeing a world of **corals and pale pinks**. Whether you choose a pastel or a deeper, more vibrant hue, as in Pantone's Color of the Year, Living Coral, there's a freedom to expressing yourself with color.

For more, read my blog on the 2019 Color of the Year [here](#).



This room has a dark rich tone on the walls but when paired with white it not only becomes elegant but also crisp and open.



Deeper wall colors are a great way to call out lovely woodwork such as mantles, crown molding and other elements.



SPACE

To create the illusion of more space, a common rule states that a darker wall color will bring the walls closer and lighter colors create the illusion that they are further away. I don't always agree with this rule, sometimes a darker room has fewer boundaries and can feel more expansive. It depends on where the room is located in the house and again, the

effect of the natural light in that room.

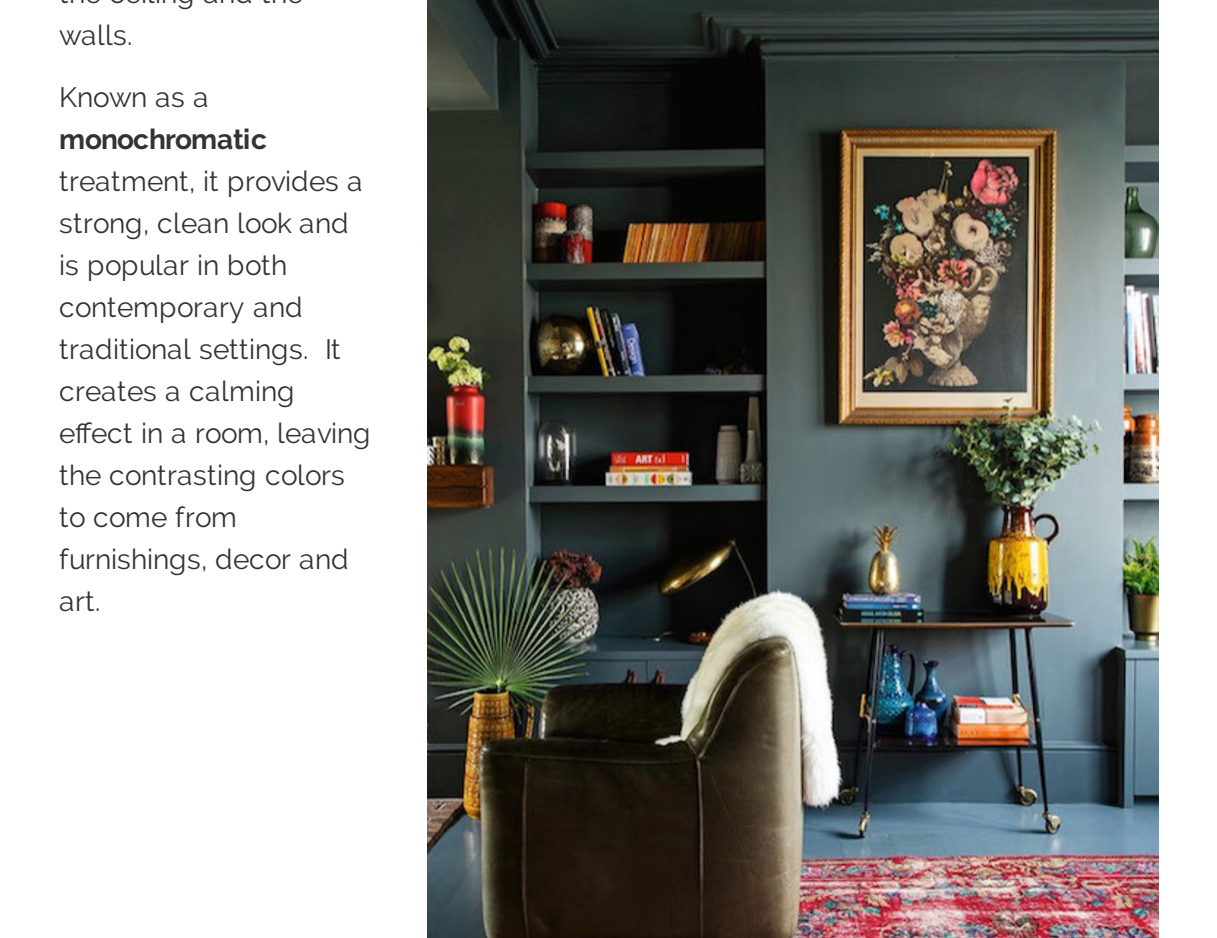
Narrow hallways can appear tunnel-like. Make them look longer and more intentional by painting the end wall a darker shade than the side walls, as in the photo to the left.

The same principle applies in a rectangular room you want to look more square.

• • •

To create the illusion of more height, use a subtler contrast between the wall color, crown molding and ceiling. You become less aware of where the wall ends and ceiling begins. Remember, however, when you do this you tend to lose some of the impact of your crown molding.

Graduating color is another way to trick the eye. Use ever lighter tones as you move from the wall to the crown molding and finally up to the ceiling, creating a soft, elongated effect, as shown in the photo below.



And, don't forget that the ceiling is one of the largest visual planes in a room. Experiment with colors other than white to add balance and visual interest.

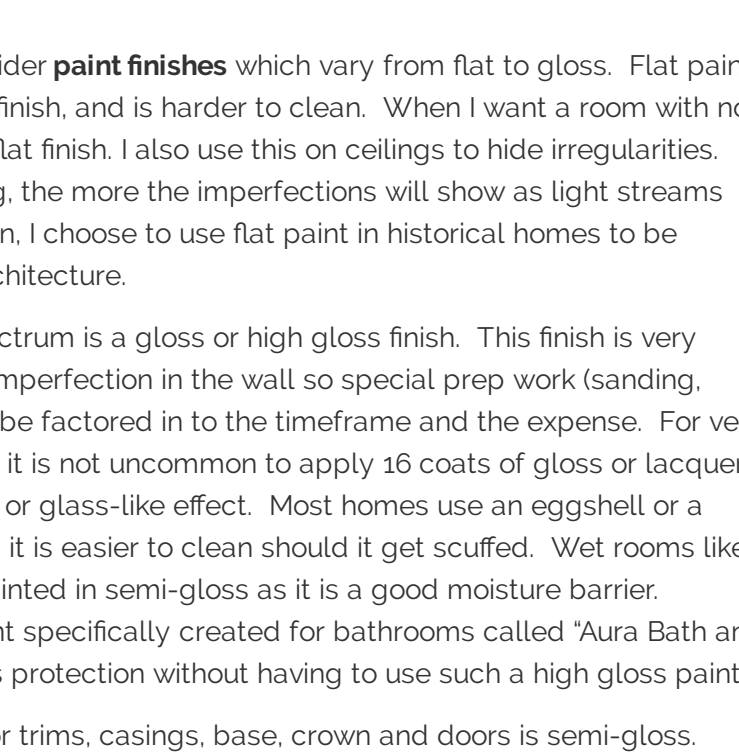


TRIM

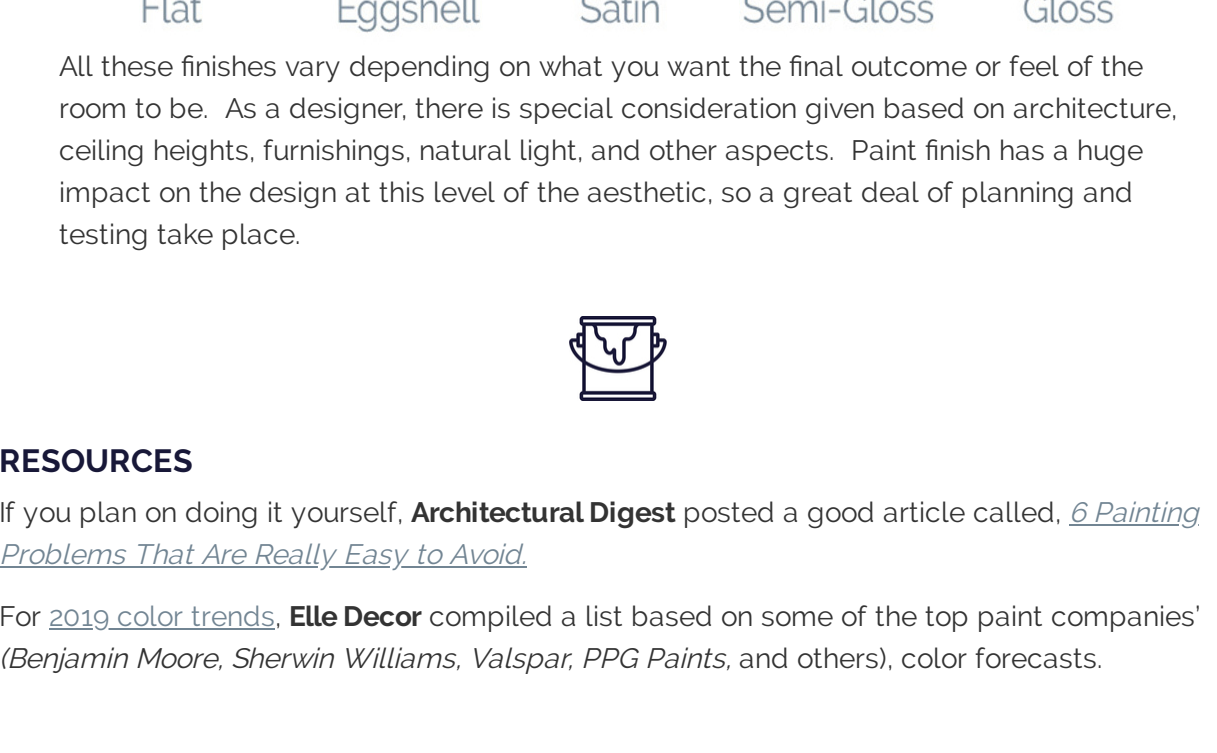
Now to choose the trim color. Will you be painting rich colored walls with white woodwork or lighter walls with a dark trim? **White** is the standard—beautiful and clean—with hundreds of shades to choose from. Your choice here will depend on the amount of contrast you desire. It is also nice to paint base and crown in a contrasting color to the walls. Go deeper with colors from the same palette or another color.

You may want to use the same color on both the ceiling and the walls.

Known as a **monochromatic** treatment, it provides a strong, clean look and is popular in both contemporary and traditional settings. It creates a calming effect in a room, leaving the contrasting colors to come from furnishings, decor and art.



Dark trim emphasizes light and space and dramatizes millwork and moldings. This style works well if you are using neutral wall colors, creating a contemporary aesthetic.



FINISHES

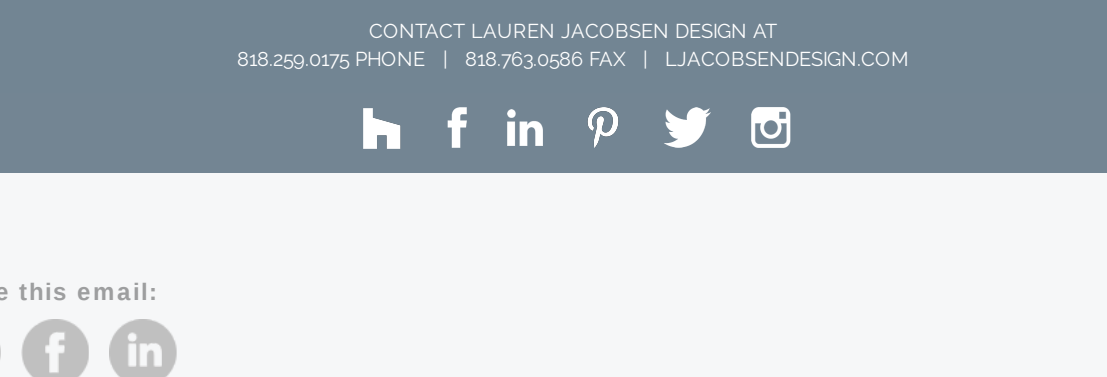
Finally, one must also consider **paint finishes** which vary from flat to gloss. Flat paint has no gloss, has a chalky finish, and is harder to clean. When I want a room with no shine to it, I recommend a flat finish. I also use this on ceilings to hide irregularities.

The more gloss on a ceiling, the more the imperfections will show as light streams across it. Another exception, I choose to use flat paint in historical homes to be authentic to the original architecture.

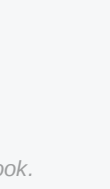
At the other end of the spectrum is a gloss or high gloss finish. This finish is very shiny and will show every imperfection in the wall so special prep work (sanding, patching, etc.) will need to be factored in to the timeframe and the expense. For very reflective walls or a ceiling, it is not uncommon to apply 16 coats of eggshell or lacquer paint to achieve a mirrored or glass-like effect. Most homes use an eggshell or a velvet finish on the walls as it is easier to clean should it get scuffed. Wet rooms like bathrooms are typically painted in semi-gloss as it is a good moisture barrier.

Benjamin Moore has a paint specifically created for bathrooms called "Aura Bath and Spa Paint". This paint gives protection without having to use such a high gloss paint.

The most common finish for trims, casings, base, crown and doors is semi-gloss.



All these finishes vary depending on what you want the final outcome or feel of the room to be. As a designer, there is special consideration given based on architecture, ceiling heights, furnishings, natural light, and other aspects. Paint finish has a huge impact on the design at this level of the aesthetic, so a great deal of planning and testing take place.



RESOURCES

If you plan on doing it yourself, **Architectural Digest** posted a good article called, [6 Painting Problems That Are Really Easy to Avoid](#).

For 2019 **color trends**, **Elle Decor** compiled a list based on some of the top paint companies' (Benjamin Moore, Sherwin Williams, Valspar, PPG Paints, and others), color forecasts.

the better.

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As a **final note**, my strongest recommendation is to use a **top-quality paint**. It will provide better, more even coverage and will last longer, as much as 10 years. Their premium **pigments** and higher-grade **resins** produce a truer color and more durable finish. They also have fewer solvents (like water), making them creamy, not chalky. And like ice cream, the thicker and creamier,

Call or email me if you have any questions about paint or if you'd like a consultation on an upcoming project.

Kind Regards,
Lauren

If you like our newsletter and you want one exclusively sent each month click [here](#) to sign up. We promise no marketing lists, no spammy stuff, just information you can really use. Or if you'd rather control your own destiny for design advice you can check in and read my [blog](#) anytime.

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