

# redefining the blues

BY CANDICE MUTSCHLER

There are literally millions of colors. Many mammals, including humans, can perceive the full spectrum, while bees can see ultraviolet colors invisible to the human eye. And research shows that dogs, once believed to see only in black and white, may actually be able to distinguish subtle differences in shades of blue. Could it be that canines have a favorite color?

People do. It's blue. In fact, it's Crayola's number one color. Sixteen of Crayola's top 50 colors are some shade of blue. Aquamarine, indigo, cornflower, denim. The colors mimic the ocean and the sky, evoke tranquility and trust, even honor our favorite pair of pants.

Perplexing then, how blue got tagged as the sad color, because today's blues are anything but gloomy.

## BRING ON THE BLUES

In his book, *Living Color*, feng shui master Lin Yun explains how colors can influence our lives. "From ancient times to present, the colors of nature have provided a calming and invigorating stimulus to our bodies and minds, enhancing our emotions, speech and nervous systems." He insists color arrangement and selection should not be taken lightly—especially in the home. "The colors we paint our homes and work spaces affect our ch'i [energy]. Certain colors depress us, relax us, or stimulate us."

Yun says the best shades for a home's interior are light blue or light green. "These are relaxing colors that help the occupants shift from the stress and stimuli of work and the outside world to a more peaceful and nurturing setting." Sounds reasonable. After all, who doesn't feel calmer when gazing at a powder-blue

sky or turquoise sea? And hospitals' use of blue has not gone unnoticed as a color that promotes healing.

But like others who subscribe to the ancient Chinese principles of feng shui, Yun believes color can also be used as a tool to improve health, inspire creativity—even attract good fortune. "Color can help adjust and resolve a number of personality flaws to improve our ch'i and thus our lives," he says. There is certainly some truth to that. One color known as "drunk-tank pink" is used in prisons to calm inmates. But back to blue.

## TRUE BLUE MEANINGS

Studies show that people from different cultures associate certain colors with similar emotions or concepts. Blue is nearly unanimously associated with peace. Perhaps that's why Boeing Commercial Airplanes chose blue as a predominant color in its aircraft interior design.

Shelly Zundell, a senior manager with Teague, an industrial design firm that consults with Boeing on airplane interiors, says color psychology plays an important role in developing the overall look of their aircraft. "The idea is to give airplanes a more residential feeling, with relaxing colors and restful designs," she says.



The Aviano in Silverwood, Lakewood Ranch Golf & Country Club

Home interior designers agree that blue is an ideal choice for residences. "Fresh and almost ethereal, blue promotes a feeling of peace—quite welcome in today's world," says Joseph Gianguzzo, owner of Joseph Gianguzzo Interiors and an interior decorator for Every Last Detail in Lakewood Ranch. With more than 2,000 wallpaper books, the latest in window coverings and an impressive selection of fabrics in the shop, Gianguzzo can help clients enrich their living spaces with color, which is precisely what he's routinely commissioned to do. "What I've found in Lakewood Ranch is that people are very forward thinking in terms of design. Clients here are not so apprehensive about color."

That's good news for those homebuilders who have ventured into the wild blue yonder, in terms of vibrant interior design.

### SPINNING THE COLOR WHEEL

While most builders play it safe and stick to neutral tones, others select a palette filled with reds, brights and blues. Pruett Builders took a lovely risk in its Del Mar II model in the Lakewood Ranch Golf & Country Club. "We were trying to make a statement with the design to show people what you can do from an interior standpoint," says Brian Pruett, whose design team strategically incorporated blue tones throughout the home. "It's a great color and the model proved it."

The blue tones also work remarkably well with wood, which the builder used extensively on the floor, ceiling and walls. "What we created is what I call coastal casual," Pruett says. "The idea is that it's casual enough to live in, but at the same time, has a feel of timelessness." The use of blue helped create that feeling. "It is a soothing blue, a relaxing blue...very livable, very workable."

Designers at Neal Communities were even more adventurous in the interior design of the Aviano model in Silverwood in The Country Club. Cobalt blue tile and boldly striped walls render the kitchen the most cheerful room in the house.

Offering a completely different experience, the Bar Harbor model by Whitehall Quality Homes in The Country Club's Miramar village used a much softer shade of blue in its master bedroom. Paired with chocolate brown—a popular combination—the soothing tone is perfect for a place of rest.

### THE COLOR CURE

In the blue spectrum alone, there are countless shades, from pale pastel to vivid aqua to deep midnight, and each evokes a different physiological or emotional response. Using color with confidence is the fastest way to alter a home's ambiance. Whatever the space, there's a color to suit the room's purpose, a hue to enhance the mood. "Colors can and do speak to our innermost desires," says Gianguzzo.

Perhaps the desire for wisdom, healing, serenity or peace can best be cured by a lingering case of the blues.



The Bar Harbor by Whitehall Quality Homes in Miramar, Lakewood Ranch Golf & Country Club