

INTERIOR DECORATING » TART CITRUS

Extreme green for spring



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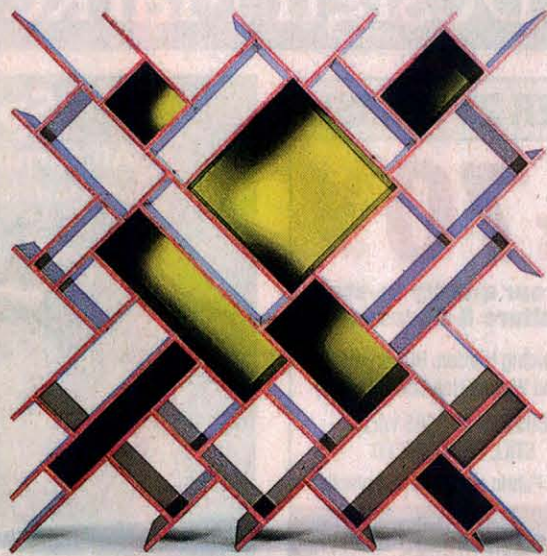
This season's liveliest new accent colour is a snappy yellow-green that I like to call "that which makes the dogs bark." The name was coined by French anthropologist Dominique Zahan in his 1972 essay "Colour Symbolism in Black Africa." Zahan wrote about the colour of new grass that appears in tropical regions at the time of year known as spring gap, a period when food supplies are depleted and new crops have not yet ripened. It's a time when man and beast are hungry and the dogs bark their complaint.

Closer to home, this tart citrus, the colour of new growth, can be found in the Toronto furniture store Hollace Cluny, where owner Susan Fowlie gives it a more prosaic name: Benjamin Moore's Citron 2024-30. She uses it in the store as a bold accent, a band of green-yellow that encircles the room extending from the back wall in an unstoppable trajectory, over one end of the sales counter and across the floor, making a path to the front window where it goes up and back onto the ceiling. As it goes, it shows off its versatility, mingling well with wood, rope and stone materials in the front window and various colourful ceramic collections.

Fowlie, who admits to being conservative with colour on furniture, also tried it on a pair of Cocoa chairs; they sold almost immediately. Everyone who comes into the store enthuses over the colour and



From a wall in the home of Toronto architect Janna Levitt, above, to designer Nauris Kalinauskas's funky Quad bookshelf, below, bright citrus green is the accent colour du jour. Quad bookshelf, \$1,999 through Generate (www.gnr8.biz).



takes delight in how it's used. Now, what she calls "my citron" is turning up at design shows around North America.

At the Hospitality and Design Expo in Las Vegas recently, California interior designer and colour consultant Denise Turner (www.colorturners.com) noted that "yellow-green was the primary green for accents. Many times it was used ... with oranges and pinks." At K\BIS, a major kitchen and bath show in Chicago, yellow-green was the key accent colour used to add pop to many booths.

Leanna McCormack, product developer for the American packaging company Mead-Westvaco, says: "I saw it in Paris applied to designer clothes and footwear, like a pair of Marc Jacobs shoes in Colette.

They were fabulous!" Another colleague noticed that it was the thread colour adding zing to men's tweed suits in Europe.

The eye-popping accent colour has turned up as one of Cover Girl's newest eye shadows and goes by the name Lime Alive 425. And window-covering manufacturer Hunter-Douglas plans to introduce a yellow-green roller blind into its next collection.

But it can be a tricky act to pull off. Janna Levitt of Toronto-based Levitt Goodman Architects admits that yellow-green isn't the easiest hue to nail down. It took a year and several tries to find her version of that-which-makes-the-dogs-bark green for an accent wall in the light-filled main space of her home. She fi-

nally settled on Benjamin Moore's Eve Green 2024-20, which was, as she puts it, "punchy without frying the eyes."

It complemented a large purple-black painting on the accent wall and balanced the orange tones of the Douglas fir in the room. To her surprise, what didn't work with it was the existing white on the other walls, so she repainted them a matte beige with no red in it (Benjamin Moore's Vanilla Milkshake OC 59).

Like Fowlie, Levitt prefers to use the colour sparingly because it does have a "big personality." She advises others to test it first because even the sheen affects its impact. Going from a matte finish to eggshell brought hers to life.

Shelley Kirsch of Toronto's Shelley Kirsch Interior Design is another convert. She used a punchy yellow-green on a bathroom door in a client's predominantly white cottage hallway. For another client's new condo, she used a more muted palette of yellow-greens: Benjamin Moore's Timothy Straw 2149-40 in wide horizontal bands on the living room walls and its lighter version, White Marigold 2149-60, for the ceiling. "It has lots of personality," Kirsch says, "but in a mellow way. And it opens up the light and looks different all the time." Most of all, she says, "it screams happy."

I, too, have a band of citrus. Mine runs down a wall in my lime-green studio. I like it so much that I think I'm ready to expand it to the whole wall. It can be my "nature-neutral," one that I find goes with any colour. And unlike most pastels, it works year-round. By next season, though, its name should become "that which makes the heart sing."

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Going green

Freshen up your decor using any one of these vibrant citrus shades:

- » General Paint Freeride CLV 1137A
- » Benjamin Moore Citron 20024-30
- » Benjamin Moore Eve Green 2024-20
- » Pratt and Lambert Serpentine POR 1620-000

And if the above colours seem a little too fresh for your taste, these more subdued hues will still add a splash of spring:

- » Farrow and Ball Churlish Green
- » Benjamin Moore Timothy Straw #2149-40 with White Marigold #2149-60 for ceiling and trim.