



Beautiful Décor's Inc.

Denise Britti
denise@beautifuldecors.com

tel: 336.480.7330 • fax: 336.794.7488



beautifuldecors.com

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Beige, boring?



Clients & Friends

Are neutrals boring? Real estate agents instruct sellers to paint rooms *neutral*, referring to an unexciting beige, so that buyers won't be distracted by the walls. The truth is that unless you are referring to TRJE neutrals (see below), there are millions of what we in design refer to as "Complex Neutrals" and they can be as interesting in color and tone as the pure colors are. Even more so in my opinion. The most compelling neutrals are ones that are best described as "-ish."

"The walls were blue-ish but I couldn't be sure."

Perfect, that's a complex neutral! But how can blue be neutral? Keep scrolling to get a quick lesson in what complex neutrals are and how you can use them in your home.

Then I had to share the best little software app since sliced bread.

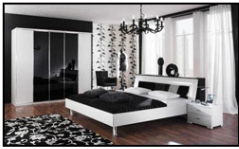
Many thanks to the designers and homeowners who post their interiors on the internet so that I can provide these wonderful examples below. Except for one - that's mine! :-)

"Welcome new clients to my regular newsletter and thank you for trusting me with your home" - Denise

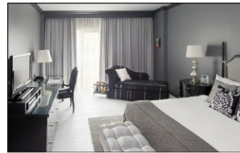
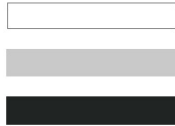
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Black, White and Gray All Over

The true neutrals as defined by the experts are white, black and the range of grays derived from mixing various amounts of black and white. These grays are colorless and lifeless, without any character. While I think the photos are fun to look at, I don't know that I could live in a room of true neutrals.



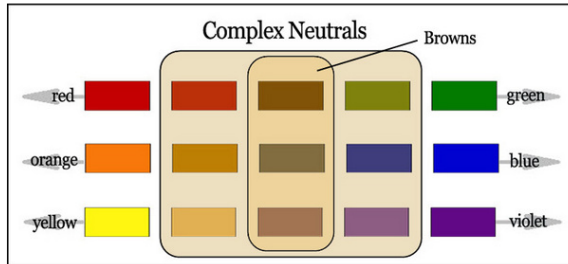
True Neutrals



Complex Neutrals

Experts found that if you take a color and mix increasing amounts of its complement (red/green, blue/orange, yellow/violet in these examples below) you will create an "off" version of the starting color (the complex neutral) and then eventually a brown. *You were wondering where those were hiding on the color wheel, weren't you!* When you take pure red and continue to add small amounts of green, you first create a red that's a bit muddy, then eventually a brown and then, when the scales have tipped so that more green exists in the mix, a muddy green. While I only illustrate 5 steps here, it's actually a continuum of thousands of colors. Those colors in the broad middle can be thought of as the complex neutrals while the browns are more in the center (equal portions of the complements mixed and not identifiable as one pure color or the other).

Browns are contained in ALL colors, not just one, and they can be either cool or warm. So if you were wondering why some browns (like furniture stains) look better with some fabric colors over others, it's because the brown has undertones. It may be a warm brown—heavy on the red, yellow, or orange, or a cool brown—heavy on the blue, violet, or green.

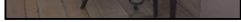


Not So Boring Neutrals!

So the next time you walk into the paint store, do not go up to the counter and ask for a neutral to paint your room. You may just get beige—boring beige—but more likely they'll look at you blankly not knowing where to begin.



Here's another EXCELLENT example of a neutral interior (and not just because it's [from my](#)...)

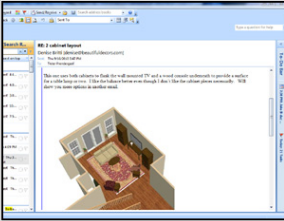


[P&L \(LUSH\),](#) is it gray? blue? green?

Love this one too! It's almost gray but with a violet undertone to it. The frame in the center forces you to see it one way over the other - a great characteristic of complex neutrals!

Green-ish brown or brown-ish green? Just love this complex neutral!

There must be a stiff upward breeze. Get a load of the light fixtures!



Snagit® by TechSMITH

Someone introduced this app to me last year and I use it at least 20 to 30 times a day. [Snagit by Techsmith](#) is a terrific screen-grabbing program that allows me to send my clients images of what I'm researching online or drawing in CAD, store electronic receipts (or anything sent to me by email) so I don't have to print them out, add arrows and other highlighting features to draw attention to details in family photos, the list goes on and on. If you can see it on your screen, you can grab it and make it your own. You can try Snagit for 30 days free and then buy for \$49.99. It's fabulous and has saved me countless hours. A picture says it all!

I snagged this picture of an email I sent this week in which I pasted a CAD image snagged by Snagit. er...you get the point.



Beautiful Rooms
... You will LOVE coming home to.

