Kati's Current Staging Paint Colors

Sixteen colors that hold up, and the two tests that tell you which ones are yours.

Kati Spaniak Truth in Real Estate® Updated September 2026

Paint is the cheapest thing you can change and the thing that changes the most. It is also the thing people get wrong.

Your first showing is online, and buyers move fast. Put yourself in the chair of a buyer who is already at the top of their budget. They open your listing, they see red walls, or purple, or a green dining room, and before they have finished scrolling they have started doing math on what it costs to repaint the whole house. That number comes off their offer. Sometimes it stops them from booking a showing at all.

Every color in this guide is a neutral. That is on purpose.

"But won't my buyers want to pick their own color?" No. Not if you use one of these. They may do an accent wall somewhere down the road, but a house painted in these colors reads as move-in ready, and move-in ready is what they are paying for.

These are not trend colors. They are the ones that stay true whether you are selling in six weeks, six months, or six years. Most of them are a variation of **greige**, which is exactly what it sounds like: gray and beige together. The flat cool gray that every flipper used for a decade is done, and it is done for a reason. It has no warmth in it, and warmth is the whole job when somebody walks into your house.

About the color blocks in this guide. They are approximations. Screens lie about color and home printers lie about color, and the difference between two of these grays is smaller than the error. Use the blocks to narrow it down to two or three. Use the sample test on the last page to actually choose.

WORKSHEET ONE

Read your house before you read the colors

Five minutes with a pen, and it narrows sixteen colors down to about five.

Here is the mistake I watch people make. They fall in love with a color on a screen, paint the whole house, and then it fights with everything already in the room. Your floors, your tile, your counters, your trim: those all lean warm or lean cool, and you are not replacing them. **The paint has to come to them, not the other way around.**

So before you look at a single swatch, go room to room and write down what you actually have. Warm means it leans yellow, gold, red, orange, or brown. Cool means it leans blue, gray, or stark. If you genuinely cannot tell, put it in neutral and move on.

WHAT IS ALREADY IN YOUR HOUSE

WHAT	WHAT YOU HAVE	WARM, COOL, OR NEUTRAL
Example: kitchen counters	*Cream granite, gold flecks*	*Warm*
Main floor flooring		
Carpet		
Kitchen counters		
Kitchen cabinets		
Backsplash and tile		
Bathroom tile		
Trim, doors, railings		
Fireplace, brick, stone		
Big furniture that is staying		

Now count the column on the right. Which way does your house lean?

Circle one: **WARM** · **COOL** · **MIXED, and I am going to follow the biggest things on the list**

If it is mixed, which two things are the most expensive to change and therefore win?

_____

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> *If your house leans warm, you want a warm color. I see people buy gray carpet, put a cool gray on the walls above warm oak trim they are not replacing, and then wonder why the whole room looks off. Nothing is wrong with any*

THE LIST

The sixteen

Benjamin Moore and Sherwin-Williams. Take the brand and the code to the store, not the name alone.

THE WHITES

COLOR	TONE	WHERE IT WORKS
White Dove Benjamin Moore OC-17	Warm	My favorite, and the one I recommend most for trim. Also a beautiful wall color. If you have warmth in your tile and you are thinking about painting cabinets white, this is the one.
Chantilly Lace Benjamin Moore OC-65	Cool	A bright, crisp, clean white. Trim, ceilings, and modern spaces. Leans cool, so match it to a house that leans cool.
Alabaster Sherwin-Williams SW 7008	Warm	A warm off white that brings a real sense of calm. Bedrooms, bathrooms, kitchens. A very popular choice and an easy one to live with.
Paper White Benjamin Moore OC-55	Cool	A cool, modern white with gray undertones. Good for minimal interiors and small spaces like bathrooms.

THE WARM GRAYS AND GREIGES

COLOR	TONE	WHERE IT WORKS
Revere Pewter Benjamin Moore HC-172	Warm	One of my go-to colors for years. The most popular warm gray there is, with slight green undertones. Open floor plans and living rooms, and it works in traditional and modern houses both.
Colonnade Gray Sherwin-Williams SW 7641	Warm	A warm gray with beige undertones. Versatile in kitchens and living rooms. A good pick if you want a little color rather than a stark white.
Balboa Mist Benjamin Moore OC-27	Warm	A warm light gray with a soft, tranquil feel. Best in bedrooms and foyers.
Agreeable Gray Sherwin-Williams SW 7029	Warm	A genuine favorite for a lot of people, and for good reason. A warm gray that works in just about any space in the house.
Edgecomb Gray Benjamin Moore HC-173	Warm	Another one I have recommended for years. Soft, inviting, and warm, with a little more color in it than a white.

THE COOL GRAYS

For houses with gray in the floors, or cooler, more modern furniture. If you have warm bases, these are the ones to skip.

COLOR	TONE	WHERE IT WORKS
Classic Gray Benjamin Moore OC-23	Cool	A cool light gray that still holds a little warmth. A great option for small spaces and bedrooms.
Repose Gray Sherwin-Williams SW 7015	Cool	A cool gray with a little blue in the undertones. Good in bedrooms and bathrooms.
Silver Chain Benjamin Moore 1472	Cool	A cool medium gray with subtle blue overtones. Perfect for dining rooms and living spaces where you want a serene, modern feel.
Stonington Gray Benjamin Moore HC-170	Cool	A true gray with blue overtones. I have recommended this one for years. Best in kitchens, dining rooms and offices, where it gives a sleek, polished look.
Gray Owl Benjamin Moore OC-52	Cool	A light cool gray with blue and some green undertones. If you really want to go gray, this is a strong one. Fresh in bathrooms and bedrooms.

TWO UNIQUE NEUTRALS

COLOR	TONE	WHERE IT WORKS
Moonshine Benjamin Moore 2140-60	Cool	A cool light gray with a hint of green in it. Airy and refreshing in bedrooms and bathrooms.
Accessible Beige Sherwin-Williams SW 7036	Warm	A slight beige with gray undertones. This is the color on my own walls, and it is the reason I am so insistent about testing. See the next page.

WORKSHEET TWO

Test it on your wall before you buy a gallon

The step almost everybody skips, and the one that saves you from repainting.

My whole house was painted one color when we moved in: Accessible Beige. One color, one house. And it looks like a different color in every single room. In some rooms it pulls warmer than I would like. In others it reads almost gray. Same paint, same house, same day.

That is not a flaw in the color. That is what light does. Every room has different windows facing different directions, different bulbs, different floors bouncing light back up at the wall. **A two-inch chip under fluorescent lights at the paint store tells you almost nothing.**

So do this instead. Get the large peel-and-stick samples, the ones that are roughly a foot square. Several companies sell them and any of them will do. Stick them on the actual wall in the actual room, and leave them there for a couple of days. Then look at them three times:

- **In the morning.** Light is cooler and bluer early.
- **In the afternoon.** Warmer and more yellow, and much stronger on the sunny side of the house.
- **At night, under your own lights.** This is the one people forget, and it is the one that matters most, because it is when you are home and when most evening showings happen.

Move the same sample from room to room before you commit. If you love it in the living room and it turns on you in the bedroom, better to find that out now.

YOUR SAMPLE TEST

COLOR	ROOM	MORNING	AFTERNOON	AT NIGHT	KEEP OR CUT
Example: Revere Pewter	*Living room*	*Good*	*Too green*	*Fine*	*Cut*

The color I am painting, and the trim color going with it:

_____

_____

> *The worst outcome here is not picking a color you are unsure about. It is painting an entire house and realizing in three rooms that you got it wrong. A few dollars of samples and two days of looking at them is the cheapest insurance in this whole process.*

ONE MORE THING

Not sure your house even needs painting?

That is a fair question, and the honest answer depends on your house, not on a rule. Some homes need every wall done. Some need one room and a magic eraser on the scuff marks. And some sellers are about to spend money on work that will not come back to them at all.

This is the part I actually do. You tell me about your house and where you are in all of this, and **I go find you the agent**: a local agent I have vetted and approved myself, who will walk your house and tell you the truth about what needs doing and, just as often, what does not. It is **free to you, and there is no obligation.** If you are three years out from selling, that is a perfectly good time to ask.

TruthInRealEstate.com

Or call 847.713.1556. If you would rather just send me a photo of your living room and ask what you would actually need to do, do that. It is a real question and it deserves a real answer.

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