

COLOR FOR ALL AND ALL FOR COLOR

By **CHERYL VAN TUYL JIVIDEN**
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Mary Dewalt sets the bar high for wow factor. It's the standard she delivers for the work she and her team create at Mary Dewalt Design Group based in Austin. Focusing exclusively on model home design, the award-winning interior design group works with national and privately held volume home builders.

"It's a designers' dream come true — it can sometimes take a homeowner years to incorporate a whole house design. Working with builders on model homes allows us the ability to do the entire home at one time, all from scratch with a complete vision," says Dewalt.

Though asked weekly, she declines private client work, but there have been the rare exceptions — such as the case with Laura Lund and her home in the Mueller community. A busy professional who travels often, she also does burlesque. "She's a showgirl with a big personality and spunk and en-

tertains a lot. I wanted that to be reflected in her home."

Starting with Laura's favorite color, turquoise, Dewalt and Director of Design, Craig Dorman, set about injecting it throughout the décor. "The style of the home is modern farmhouse so we went in that direction with whitewashed light oak floors and white walls with integrated touches of color throughout." Laura approved the finishes for counters and tiles but the rest of the home was without client influence. "She wanted it to be model home beautiful, ready for move-in and she wanted to be surprised."

Dewalt, who holds a Master in Residential Marketing designation and is a certified instructor of IRM III, Lifestyle Design and Merchandising, has some design tenants she abides to. "I like every room to have a pop of color, an exclamation mark." Selecting pieces like the turquoise credenza from the Bassett Furniture HGTV Home Collection brought the favored color into the living room. Color-blocked ceiling-to-floor curtains add repetition of turquoise along with a neutral gray. The yellow accent table was inspired by the painted stripes in the hallway which leads to the custom-made turquoise barn door that slides open to reveal a dog spa and shower. It's one of Dewalt's favorite color techniques. "I like when there is a clear view from the front door through to the back of the home. We will often paint that wall a color to really create a focal point that's unexpected."

Color is a design element Dewalt embraces and values. "Color is important as it creates the mood for the entire home and is fundamental to home design." As an industry leader in the field of model home merchandising, Dewalt often uses color to make model homes memorable. "The repetition of color is one way to create memory points for buyers. We want our client's models to stand out from the competition."

For home décor, she recommends picking a color that you like and colors that you love to wear — not what is trendy.



She also advises to get a good six samples of accent paints to try out. You can also pull colors from fabrics. "When you've found your colors, build that repetition with paint, window coverings, pillows, rugs and chairs. Don't use them for major upholstery pieces because it will be expensive to change if you want to switch things up."

If pronounced color isn't your style, you can still have a dynamic look. "The biggest thing is contrast. You can go with all beige or white, but do different color depths. It will make it more interesting and dramatic." ❖

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