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Sophisticated spice tones
Smart schemes in paprika, nutmeg & turmeric
Nutmeg

Delicious deep browns envelop a room to create a temptingly intimate and handsome setting.

Booms in their deeper, most decolurant tones are seeing a return to fashion. Rather than forming part of a neutral scheme full of beige and cream, dark, somber browns are being used as the hero colours, contrasted with a crisp white for chic effect. Used impetuously, these hues create a captivating effect, wrapping walls in comfortingcolours. Such warm browns that are not grey or muddy-looking – some may even have a reddish-purple undertone which is rather lovely. Textures will help elevate booms and underline them. Velvets and silks naturally maximise their regal qualities, whilst glossy lacquer and highly polished finishes inject a modern flourish.

Dark wood furniture will obviously work well in a brown scheme, however, pale-painted pieces and bold upholstery will shine against such a backdrop.

Dramatic impact

A bright, light colour seems the natural choice for an entrance hall or staircase as they are spaces that are often lacking in plentiful natural light. However, this deep brown paint covering walls, woodwork and the stairs (above right) shows how a dark colour can work surprisingly well. The subdued, comforting use of brown by Dutch Stone looks smart – contrasting woodwork would spoil this look completely – and daring scarlet red creates drama and contrast, dressing the me up the stairs and into the house. This 'room' has been painted but a floral carpet runner would create a similar impact. In the entrance, using tiles that pack out both the spicy red and the brown would be a practical and pretty choice.

Though this limited palette of red and brown works wonderfully, a dash of colour could be added in the form of a statement piece, perhaps a chair in a turquoise yellow, to keep the spicy palette coherent. Other additions such as coat hooks and wall lights would work well in antique bronze finishes so as not to create too much contrast.

Chic contrast

This bedroom (above) by Paolo Moschino for Nicholas Haslam showcases the smart combination of rich browns with crisp white. An airy room here would just create too much noise – the high contrast gives a polished look, yet it is also immensely inviting. The textured grasscloth wallcovering helps to give the colour some character and will look too flat when used as a block colour over a large surface area.

Though much of the room is simply brown and white – even down to the furniture which is either antique or painted – there are a few blue accents which add a subtle layer of colour and draw the eye, but do not steal focus from the brown and white. Just two or three pieces in blue is enough, the lamps, rug and dressing table stand provide this here. For a different look, recombine with white lamps and a blue bench or stool at the foot of the bed.

The furniture here is classically elegant, but a contemporary air could be added, if desired, with more streamlined pieces albeit still in a dark brownstone finish.

PAINT SWATCHES OPPOSITE TOP LEFT FROM LEFT

- Chocolate, £24.95 for 750 Emulsion, Edward Bulmer Natural Paint
- Warm Mid Brown, £11 for 2.5l Matt Emulsion, Villeroy & Bosch
- Porcelain Brown, £64 for 2.5l Perfect Matt Emulsion, Designers Guild

OPPOSITE, FROM TOP

- Brass Oyster Letter wall light, £645, Etcetera
- Portaforma Frosted Dark Amber cotton cushion, £25, Anna Johnson
- Linen and wool mix fabric, £86 per metre, Etcetera

- Blueberry gold umbrella stand, £150, The Furniture Shop
- Blueberry chair, £140, The Furniture Shop