Why This Designer Is Steering Clear Of Pantone's 2019 Color Of The Year

And her picks for other hues you should try instead.

HB   BY EMMA BAZILIAN   DEC 7, 2018

PANTONE

Pantone might be going all in on Living Coral, its 2019 pick for Color of the Year, but not everyone in the design community is a fan of this "vivifying and effervescent" hue. Among them: Chicago-based decorator Cari Giannoulias.

"I remember a client asked me for coral once; I couldn't hide my reaction!" she laughs. "I try to stay away from trendy colors like that."

A native Floridian, Giannoulias chalks up her distaste to having grown up surrounded by kitschy, tropical decor. "It's a very specific, genre color. It can really only be used in a beachy setting, and even then, it feels clichéd," she explains. "It's just not very sophisticated."

Try muted mauve for a more livable warm hue.
MICHAEL ROBINSON

But what to do if all the buzz around coral has you feeling in need of a dose of warmth in your home? Giannoulias has suggestions for other options you won't tire of come 2020.

"If you want something more subtle, I'd try a blush or rosé paint," says the designer, who used a muted mauve in the living room of one client's suburban Chicago home. "It looks beautiful with shades of tan, navy and even purple."

And if you're dying to go bright, give persimmon a shot. The saturated reddish-orange "has more depth and just feels richer than coral," Giannoulias says.

Rich persimmon upholstery feels sophisticated, not beachy.
ERIC HAUSMAN