



WHICH WHITE?

MODULE THREE

Threebirds
RENOVATIONS



WHICH WHITE?



By Erin

It's no secret we love using white paint on our houses – inside and outside. We also love white furniture, white flowers and white homewares. Is this a problem? We don't think so. Because creating a 'white-out' is probably the quickest and easiest way route to making any room feel fresh, open and airy.

If you're not knocking through walls or adding windows, white paint lightens and brightens faster than almost anything else you can do. Another plus is that it makes the styling process easier because it gives you a crisp, blank canvas to work with. We really feel you can't go wrong with white.

If you're new to choosing white paint (I was when we started Three Birds), you might be surprised to learn that there are thousands of white paints to choose from. No exaggeration – there are literally THOUSANDS.

We always get messages on social media asking us "which white?", so we know this question causes one of the biggest headaches for people. And I get it. Whenever Bonnie looks at swatches of white paint, she can see the differences between them straight-off. But for such a long time all white paints looked the same to me. I honestly had no idea what she was talking about when she'd point out their different tones.

But after she showed me how to look at them in a slightly different way, I started to understand what she was on about. So if you can't spot the differences between different white paints instantly, trust me, take heart, there's a light at the end of the tunnel for you – and it's a white one!

Choosing the right white is something we know a lot about, so this topic includes some of our best tips and tricks. We're going to help make this choice easier for you.

Here are some straightforward steps to help you select that perfect white.





CHOOSE YOUR WHITE LAST

LET'S KICK THINGS OFF WITH OUR BIGGEST AND BEST TIP WHEN IT COMES TO CHOOSING THE PERFECT WHITE: CHOOSE IT LAST. AND BY LAST, I MEAN AFTER YOU'VE CHOSEN THE COLOUR SCHEME THAT'S GOING TO BRING YOUR VISION BOARD TO LIFE. YOU'VE JUST COVERED COLOUR WITH LANA IN THE PREVIOUS LESSON, AND ONCE YOU'VE MADE SOME DECISIONS ON THAT FRONT, YOU'LL FIND IT MUCH EASIER TO PICK A WHITE THAT COMPLEMENTS YOUR SELECTION PERFECTLY. IF YOUR ROOM IS ALREADY WHITE (OR A NEUTRAL COLOUR) AND YOU HAVE NO INTENTION OF REPAINTING IT, THAT'S FINE. BUT IT'S STILL A GOOD IDEA TO UNDERSTAND THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE WHITE YOU'RE WORKING WITH AND THE COLOURS YOU'VE CHOSEN - JUST TO MAKE SURE THEY'LL WORK TOGETHER.

Step 1 CREATE YOUR SAMPLE TRAY

The sample tray you are going to create is going to bring your vision board to life. To do this, you'll want to source samples of the things that you want in the actual room and put them in this tray. This includes things like fabric swatches, coloured paint chips or cards, tiles, handles or knobs, or pieces of timber that reflect the colours, shapes and tones in your vision board. The goal is to be able to touch, feel and work with the vision board so it's crucial that you have REAL samples in front of you. That's when you'll be able to see the true colours and textures next to each other and get a feel for how they're going to work together.

Personally, I love this step because once I look at a sample tray it's so much easier to understand where we are going with our design. Once you have this sample tray, choosing the right shade of white will be so much easier. Colours should never be selected in isolation. You have to select them TOGETHER as a group.



Step 2

CREATE A LIST OF WHITES TO TRY

WARM WHITES

Warm whites often carry subtle peach, pink, or yellow undertones. These variations are great for bringing a relaxed warmth into your home, and they can help soften spaces that don't get a lot of sun.



COOL WHITES

Cool whites are great for adding a fresh, modern or contemporary edge to a space. They often carry blue or grey undertones, which is useful if the room gets a lot of bright sunlight and you want to tone that down a bit. These colours are softer on the eye and will give you a feeling of spaciousness.



When you're compiling the list of whites to try it's a good idea to include a couple of warm whites and a couple of cool whites so you can see how different they look side-by-side, and when they're next to your other colours. But don't go overboard; you want five whites max. Any more and it's just going to get confusing.

TO GET YOU STARTED, CHECK OUT 'POPULAR WHITES' IN YOUR WORKBOOK TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE DIFFERENT WHITES AND TO FIGURE OUT WHICH ONES MIGHT SUIT YOUR PROJECT.

'VIVID WHITE' BY DULUX IS A VERY POPULAR WHITE AND THAT COULD BE BECAUSE IT'S TECHNICALLY NEITHER COOL NOR WARM - IT'S NEUTRAL! IT HAS NO UNDERTONE, SO IT'S AN ULTRA-PURE WHITE THAT IS PERFECT FOR CREATING A CLEAN, CONTEMPORARY LOOK. IT'S CRISP AND FRESH.



Step 3

COMPARE YOUR PHYSICAL SAMPLES

Grab some sample pots of your chosen whites and paint a large piece of paper or cardboard for each one. Once dry, do a second coat. You always have to do two coats because a paint's true colour won't show up properly with one. Some brands, like Dulux, will let you order A4 sample swatches from their website, so you can do that if you prefer.



DON'T FORGET TO WRITE THE NAME OF EACH PAINT AT THE TOP OF THE SWATCH AS YOU GO SO YOU KNOW THE NAME OF YOUR FAVOURITE ONE.

Put the swatches next to each other – that's the only way to see the difference between them. Hopefully, you should be able to notice warmer undertones versus cooler undertones.

We're going to add the sample tray to the mix at this point, so put those swatches next to it. You should be able to see that some of the whites make the elements on your sample tray look better than others. Go with your gut instinct and remove your least-favourite whites to create a shortlist of just THREE whites.



Step 4

PAINT YOUR TOP 3 WHITES ON YOUR WALL

Now you're going to paint a large swatch (at least 30 x 30 cm) of your top-three whites on a wall. Ideally, on a wall in the room you're planning to paint as that's going to give you the most accurate read on how it's going to look with the light in that particular space.

Paint them close together so you can easily compare. Do two coats, wait for the paint to dry completely and don't forget to label the swatches so you know which paint is which.

Once they dry, all will be revealed and their differences and nuances will be on show. Have a look at your white swatches in the morning, afternoon and at night because there will be subtle changes in the way they look depending on the time of day and the light in the room.

Hold your sample tray up to each of the white swatches on the wall. Is there one white that makes your sample tray look amazing? Ask a friend or your partner to hold the sample tray up so you can stand back and evaluate it from a distance.



Make your decision and never look back!





TIME TO BUY THAT PAINT!

Heading out to buy your favourite paint? We've got a few more tips for you.

1. DON'T MIX AND MATCH

You don't want to risk mixing your chosen colour with a different paint brand as it can turn out a slightly different colour. So, if you choose a Dulux colour, it needs to go into a Dulux paint to guarantee you get the exact colour you chose.

2. USE THE SAME WHITE ON ALL SURFACES

This is something we're big on at Three Birds. When we decide on a white for a space, we paint the walls, ceilings, cornices, doors, window trims and skirting boards the same shade of white. This avoids having different undertones in different whites highlighted. And yes, we even tint our ceiling paint to match our wall colour. Hey, it makes the painting job a whole lot easier when you don't have to cut in around the edges.

3. CHOOSE THE RIGHT PAINT TYPE

Even though we suggest you use the same white on all surfaces, we're not suggesting you use the same type of paint. You definitely need to choose the right paint type for each surface. In terms of the finishes we like, it's hard to go wrong with low sheen on your walls, flat ceiling paint for the ceiling and semi-gloss on all the woodwork.

WE'LL GO INTO MORE DETAIL ABOUT THIS IN YOUR WORKBOOK, IN A SECTION CALLED "WHICH PAINT", SO MAKE SURE YOU READ THAT.





If you're still stuck when it comes to choosing your dream white, keep your eyes open for inspiration because you're bound to stumble across one you love. If you're visiting a friend's house or a café and love the colour of their walls, ask them which white they used and then add that to your list of paints to try. No shame in that!



So there you have it!

The wonderful world of white paint – stripped bare. If you have any questions, jump on the Facebook group as white paint is always a popular topic.





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