Liven Up Your Life With Living Coral, Pantone'S 2019 Color Of The Year

The experts weigh in on the hue that "energizes and enlivens with a softer edge"—and how to stay on trend by splashing it into your decor this year.

Emily Clouse
05/01/2019

Every year, after months of drawing influence from nearly every sector of society, art and culture, the Pantone Color Institute deems one worthy hue their official Color of the Year. This year, that color is Living Coral. Pantone strives to make a clear connection between their selection and the current zeitgeist, purporting that color "has always been an integral part of how a culture expresses the attitudes and emotions of the times." And the culture tends to follow suit—artistic and creative industries from fashion designers to makeup companies to florists are influenced by the decision, releasing new products and keeping pace with aesthetic trends for the whole year. Pantone describes Living Coral as "an animating and life-affirming coral hue with a golden undertone that energizes and enlivens with a softer edge." The "vibrant, yet mellow" color aims to "provide comfort and buoyancy in our continually shifting environment." Through Living Coral, the Pantone Institute also points an ever-scrolling finger

toward the internet's inescapable influence in 2019. "In reaction to the onslaught of digital technology and social media increasingly embedding into daily life, we are seeking authentic and immersive experiences that enable connection and intimacy," it writes. "Representing the fusion of modern life, Pantone Living Coral is a nurturing color that appears in our natural surroundings and at the same time, displays a lively presence within social media." Pantone's Color of the Year provides an opportunity for the trend-minded decorator to keep things fresh in their dwelling. And, like the Institute says, Living Coral interior accents simply beg to be 'grammed—right before you log off to get some IRL facetime with a friend out in the fresh air. A versatile hue that plays well with others "Living Coral. Boy, that's a color," laughed Karl Sponholtz, senior designer at Habitar Design and season six runner-up of HGTV's Design Star. "I think it's great that Pantone promotes embracing decorating trends. If you're on that high, I really think it would be exciting to blend it with some colors you wouldn't expect." Sponholtz said that while coral is often paired with teal blues, bright pale greens and even apple greens, he encourages people to think outside the box—or, rather, right next to it on the color wheel. "To let Living Coral shine, pair it with pale pinks, purples or oranges to give it a bit of depth and something unexpected," he said. "If you see a color at sunset and sunrise, it will go well with coral." If you do lean more toward blues and greens, though, Living Coral is built for versatility. "What I like about Living Coral is that it can go with a lot of different things," said Mary Nolte of Kaleidoscope Color Consulting. "In nature, you'll see that coral colored flowers look beautiful with the greenery of their leaves, and even the blues of the sky and water. It all naturally works." Bring Living Coral into your living quarters Before adding any new color to your established decorating scheme, look to your base neutral palette to decide what would best bring the room together. Most homes can be pared down to this blank canvas—as Nolte calls it, "vanilla, no sprinkles"—and if you're already planning to switch things up again in 2020, keep your basics basic. Sponholtz said that most homes have either a pale or deep neutral palette. "If you have pale neutrals, like pale grey carpeting or flooring, start with bringing in pastels," he said. "If you have deep neutrals, like a dark wood stained floor and deeper toned walls, that's where I would add the brighter and deeper colors. They will magnify against a darker palette, but could look messy with paler neutrals." Sponholtz recommended an easy rule of thumb: decorating in segments of 60-30-10. "It's like the colors of a man's suit," he explained. "The jacket and pants are 60%, the shirt is 30%, and the tie is 10%." In the case of interior design, 60% should be that neutral palette consisting of floors, walls, ceiling and big furniture items. 30%—think drapery, window shades, a rug or accent wall—can be a color that winks at coral in a complementary shade. The remaining 10% can consist of Living Coral accessories, like throw blankets, pillows, lamps, candles, vases or even real living, photosynthesizing flowers. "Those accents are things you can even replace seasonally," said Sponholtz. "They're a nice way to jazz things up." Pantone says that Living Coral "embodies our desire for playful expression," after all. "It's remarkable how much of a difference a painting on the wall, a pillow on the sofa or a rug on the floor can make," said Nolte. "Even your appliances, like a KitchenAid mixer, can serve a decorating purpose and add some color." Sponholtz emphasized the function of artwork. "Let the art be the brightest thing in the room, then tone everything else down," he said, adding that many people rely a tad too much on pillows to add color, which makes them an odd focal point. "Always harmonize, and let other things stand out." "The big key is balance, balance, balance," Sponholtz continued. "Dabble color around the room. For every pop of color, put one thing that complements it across the room. Balance your color, texture, fabrics, everything." When it comes to Living Coral, the

"vivifying and effervescent color mesmerizes the eye and mind" most when it's used in a way that is true to yourself. "Anything you select is something you should love," said Nolte. "That's what's most important."