



**Raised Steaks**  
This tenderizing marinade is probably already in your pantry **D6**

# OFF DUTY

**Dig a Pony**  
Dan Neil revs up a crowd-pleasing hot rod, the Mustang Dark Horse **D10**



FASHION | FOOD | DESIGN | TRAVEL | GEAR

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

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Saturday/Sunday, August 19 - 20, 2023 | **D1**

**EASY DOES IT** In New York's Hudson Valley, a 2022 project designed by Ward and Gray steers clear of retro clichés by weaving in natural accents of green, gold and ochre.



READ MCKENDREE/BSA (LIVING ROOM); GE (ARCHIVAL AD)

## Harvest Gold... Again?!

Infamous '70s colors like avocado and almond deserve another look, say pros, and fresh takes on the earthy, soulful hues bring them right up to date.

BY CHRISTINA POLETTO

**R**EMEMBER “avocado green” and “harvest gold”? If you were born before the Reagan administration, chances are your early years provided an overdose.

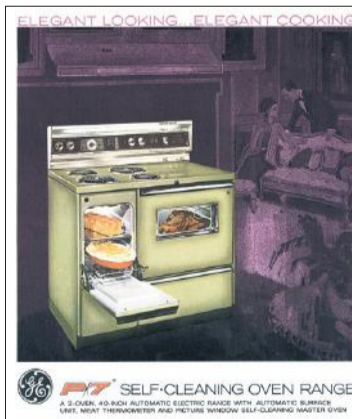
Throughout the 1970s, these ubiquitous hues covered everything from station wagons to shag carpets—which is why by the time the minimalist new millennium rolled around, they'd become design shorthand for suburban, cringy and dated.

So it was with some surprise—and a little bit of horror—that in the last few years, décor-watchers of a certain age started noticing the notorious palette making inroads in interiors again. And

if the Instagram scrolls of tastemaker designers like Kelly Wearstler and Muriel Brandolini are any hint, it's time we primed for shades of olive, amber and saffron.

Aghast? It's understandable. For decades, stereotypical '70s tropes—from Naugahyde loungers to plush conversation pits—have been the butt of jokes, not objects of desire. But before you say “no thanks” to another helping of pea-tinted interiors, rest assured that contemporary designers render this throwback palette in ways that feel measured and mature, not outmoded. Think less “That '70s Show” and more Joni Mitchell in Laurel Canyon.

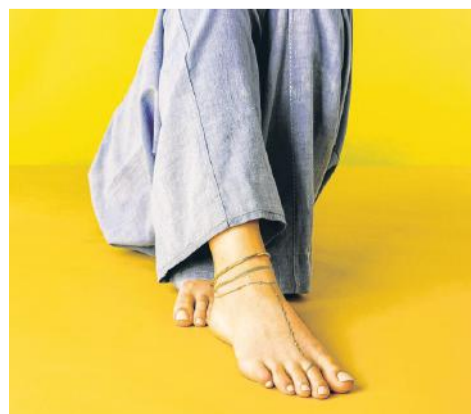
The tranquilizing properties of these colors may also be just what *Please turn to page D8*



**ELEGANT LOOKING. ELEGANT COOKING.**  
GE SELF-CLEANING OVEN RANGE  
A 5.0 CU. FT. OVEN WITH MULTISTAGE ELECTRIC RANGE WITH AUTOMATIC BURNERS. SEE NEXT THIRDSUMMER AND PICTURE WINDOW SELF-CLEANING WATER OVEN.

◀ The height of kitchen style, circa 1970: GE's 'elegant' self-cleaning oven in avocado green.

## Inside



### FEET OF DERRING-DO

Adventurous accessorizers are taking their piggies to the jewelry market **D2**



### ICE, ICE, BAMBINO

An Italian frozen dessert that's as impressive as it is easy to make **D7**



### FAIR-WEATHER FAIRWAYS

Scottish-style courses and muted winds draw smart golfers to Oregon each fall **D4**



### DISPENSING FORMALITIES

Fashion-minded men are slipping dressy pieces into their casual outfits **D3**

# DESIGN & DECORATING

## Hot Hues of the '70s, Remixed and Reimagined



In designer Meghan Eisenberg's bathroom, *Homage*, a vegetal green by Portola Paints, creates a cocooning effect.

### Ones to Swatch

Design professionals say these retro shades by another name are au courant again.

#### Yellow-Pink

"It's wonderfully earthy and would look amazing in a utility space, like a little washroom. Use it on ceilings and woodwork to make a real impression." —*Laura Stephens, London*

From \$125 a gallon, [LittleGreene.com](http://LittleGreene.com)

#### Pretty Ugly

"I grew up with an avocado refrigerator, oven and stove, but this is more vibrant. Try installing wainscoting and painting only the upper wall." —*Rachel Cannon, Baton Rouge, La.*

From \$75 a gallon, [BackdropHome.com](http://BackdropHome.com)

#### Blanched Almond

"This is great in large spaces where you want something airy but less stark than white. Pair it with wood accents to really lean into the nostalgic vibe." —*Jay Jeffers, San Francisco*

From \$99 a gallon, [BenjaminMoore.com](http://BenjaminMoore.com)

#### Color #170

"Use this limewash paint to make an impact in a small room with east or south exposure, where the bright light plays up the warm tones." —*Ahmad AbouZanat, New York City*

From \$110 a gallon, [JHWallPaints.com](http://JHWallPaints.com)

#### Mink

"Try this dark brown in communal spaces like a den or a daring monochromatic kitchen with lots of windows. It's really a neutral." —*Gil Melott, Chicago*

From \$99 a gallon, [BenjaminMoore.com](http://BenjaminMoore.com)

*Continued from page D1*  
the doctor ordered. In contrast to brazen "Barbiecore" pink and chilly millennial greige, "earth tones provoke feelings of comfort and calm, something very necessary amid the madness of the outside world," said Lauren Wager, a color designer in Columbus, Ohio, and author of the *Palette Perfect* book series. Indeed, according to Montaha Hidefi, a color archaeologist from Ontario, Canada, and vice president of color forecasting at Color Marketing Group, the

interior designer Peter Dunham. While he hasn't fielded requests for a chocolate brown stove just yet, Dunham says in the last two to three years he has seen a big bump in customer response to furnishings featuring these shades.

But whether you find this palette dated or timeless may ultimately be just a matter of mind-set. After all, said New York City designer Ghislaine Viñas, despite its cultural baggage, we're exposed to it every leaf-peeping season. "Really, these are

ors," designer Christie Ward said of the palette of olive, marigold and brown that she and partner Staver Gray deployed in 2022 while designing Wildflower Farms, an Auberge Resort in Gardiner, N.Y. Though the interior gives off throwback vibes, the duo says their inspiration was rooted first in nature—specifically, the shambolic beauty of area meadows—not retro posturing.

Should you want to dip your toes in the swampy side of the color wheel—but still get violent flashbacks of David Carradine playing a Shaolin monk when you envision wall-to-wall burnt orange—Ward and Gray's eco-influenced approach, shown on page D1, may prove instructive. Rather than taking a heavy hand with color, the team uses a framed composition of over-size gunnera leaves by botanical artist Stuart Thornton as a dose of green and an organic focal point. A mix of golds and wood tones on walls and furnishings brings the outdoors in and creates a collected, biophilic look. The resulting room is shot through with warm accents, yet still neutral. "It's moody and subtle as opposed to loud," Gray said.

#### Master Modern Monochrome

True, the last time army green ensembles were en vogue, Donny Osmond was at the top of the charts. But that didn't stop designer Meghan Eisenberg from going all-in on olive during the 2022 renovation of a bath in her family's circa 1950s

home in Mar Vista, Calif. How did she pull off a version that's chic, not kitschy? By forgoing the stereotypical vintage-green toilet-sink-tub combo and leaning on moody paint and hand-cut tile to create a contemporary cocoon instead. Because her goal was an outdoorsy feel, Eisenberg says she prioritized shades that felt toned-down, not oversaturated. In the end, she settled on *Homage*, a lustrous vegetal green by Portola Paints, and on the floor and shower, an equally verdant expanse of evergreen Heath Ceramics tile. The room is definitely a mood, the designer explained, "but [because] you're enveloped in a single color it's very calming."

#### Don't Pooh-Pooh Brown

If the hyper-bright end of the '70s color spectrum is a bridge too far, shades of dusky sand and velvety chocolate can be a more sophisticated, understated way in. Brown feels like a sexy "palate cleanser to sterile white rooms," said Rachel Cannon, an interior designer based in Baton Rouge, La. Think of it as a warmer sort of minimalism.

Another plus? Sepia shades invite homeyness, said Alexy Kos and Che Huang of London's Child Studio. Case in point: In a recent dining room project, the duo leaned on a palette of chestnut and henna inspired by Yves Saint Laurent's famous wood-paneled Paris salon. Around the maple pedestal table, mahogany bookshelves

hem the space; a subtle wool rug in a gradient of rust tones anchors from below.

#### Exercise Eclecticism

Interiors today invite layers of eras, materials, styles and textures. When harvest gold and avocado last dominated, rooms tended to adhere to a single style. The secret to a refresh: Introduce contrast. For instance, in the recent renovation of a family kitchen in West London, Retrouvius Reclamation and Design employed unexpected salvaged materials to ground a gutsy swath of saffron paint by Belgian brand Emery et Cie. Floating shelves and sleek cabinets hewn from old iroko timbers merge the modern and the antique, and the unique backsplash of raw-cut Italian onyx strikes an earthy-edgy note.

#### Dive Into the Deep End

"Perhaps counterintuitively, I think the way to have these colors not feel jarring is to use more of them," said designer Frances Merrill, of Reath Design in Los Angeles. For the 2022 makeover of a surf trailer in Malibu, she drew on hues that were more woody than watery, with avocado plank floors, multicolored marigold-print wallpaper and plush throw pillows. Balance is still considered—via simple roman shades and a plain cedar ceiling. Yet, more than any strict dos and don'ts, a sense of playfulness rules the day.

### Whether you find this palette dated or timeless may just be a matter of mind-set. Says one designer, 'We call them the ugly-pretty colors.'

last time these hues ruled American homes, on the heels of the Vietnam War, political assassinations and the civil-rights movement, their rise was an emotional response to a turbulent decade. Another factor: the inaugural Earth Day on April 22, 1970, which kicked environmental awareness into high gear—and a thirst for earthier interiors along with it.

Others chalk up the rebound to old-fashioned nostalgia. "I think it's a combo of fetishizing our grandparents' era and realizing that after 20 years of gray, we're living in a cold, detached, technological world," said Los Angeles textile and

simply autumnal hues that work beautifully together," she said.

Don't let names hang you up, either. Bristle at the thought of "avocado green"? Then try Guacamole, which was Glidden's 2022 Color of Year, or Basque Green, a dead-ringer from Sherwin Williams.

Can you dig it? Should you want to drench your walls or just play with pillows, we can help. Here, cutting-edge designers who've embraced '70s shades share case studies and strategies for nailing looks that feel polished, not passé.

#### Use Nature as a Neutral

"We call them the ugly pretty col-

### FEELING GROOVY / CHIC PIECES THAT PUT A CONTEMPORARY SPIN ON THROWBACK SHADES



Creatures of the Night wallpaper, \$433 per roll, [ZakAndFox.com](http://ZakAndFox.com)



King George Sofa in nubby gold, \$6,545, [DanielHouse.club](http://DanielHouse.club)



Silent Vase by Andreas Engesvik (available September 21), from \$55, [Us.Muuto.com](http://Us.Muuto.com)



Maximus Lounge Chair in moss green, \$2,067, [ShopBlytheInteriors.com](http://ShopBlytheInteriors.com)



Pantop Portable Lamp in warm yellow, \$150, [Store.Moma.org](http://Store.Moma.org)

Amber Marbled Square Velvet Cushion, about \$147, [Susi-Bellamy.com](http://Susi-Bellamy.com)



Westwood bench in brown leather, \$1,595, [CocoRepublic.com](http://CocoRepublic.com)