



Purple Rain

With the racing recession on everyone's mind, hues for this Spring-Summer are a little subdued, but dramatic nonetheless. Purple is back, says Latika Khosla.

PHOTOGRAPHS: COURTESY THE AUTHOR



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The year 2009 will see conciliation between excess and a more sensible way of living in uncertain times. Colour always reflects a socio-economic mood. When times are good and optimistic, there is a wonderland of colour to draw inspiration from. When things are not so sure, as a knee-jerk reaction, people choose to be conservative and careful with colour. I say knee-jerk because living in uninspiring, mundane environments soon tells upon the soul. The human spirit, ever so buoyant, will crave for a way to work colour into their living spaces.

One of the top trends for this Spring-Summer season is purple, the colour we get from mixing blue and red, two polar opposites. It has been hot and in fashion

since Fall, and is now a mainstay colour for interior decor surfaces and accents. After a long time there has been this return to decorating with an unabashed purple and all shades of mauve, plum and violet.

Purple makes an appearance when there is a great do-or-die spirit, and one is willing to challenge all established rules of good taste and order. In the 80s, it had a high-season in fashion and interiors; along with shoulder pads, and black and gold elements. However, in appeasement to the times, this spring purple appears in softer modes.

The colour can create a gamut of moods... from spaces that are pure and innocent to those that are extravagant and seductive. Here are four ways to play with purple...

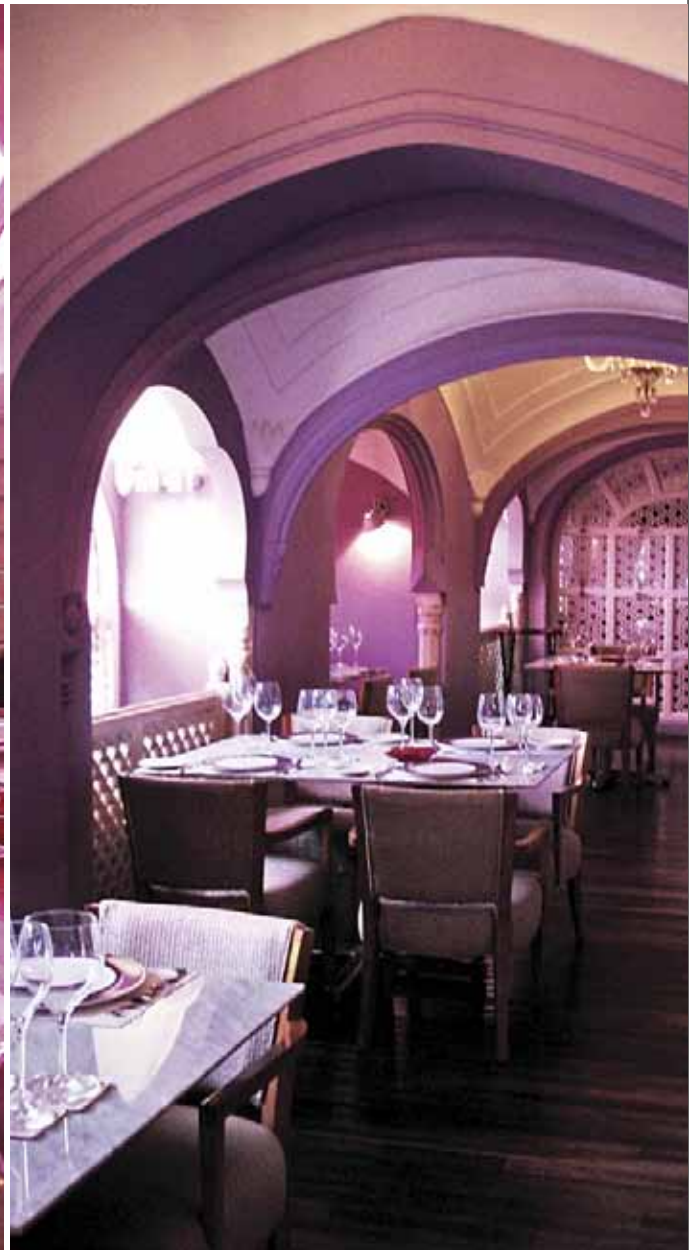
In modern mode, with white

There is nothing cooler than combining this shade with creamy white for a colonial colour accent. It is a great colour combination for creating light-filled spaces that are elegant and moody. With the right play of materials and accents, the space can make old-world elegance take on new-age sophistication.

A case in point is the specialty restaurant at the Taj Jaimahal palace in Jaipur. The interiors, done in a style that can only be described as India modern, display a courageous play with the colour. Strong lavender on the walls combines with lilac and plum to create an impression of unusual depth.

Use this idea at home for a dining space, a bedroom setting or a languorous verandah. To contain the strong colour, use white as dominant colour to absorb its effect. So, all window frames and doors that interact with light should be painted white. The floor is grounded in dark wood to anchor the floating space.

A purple plus creamy white setting also calls for the ephemeral use of light-reflecting materials such as glass and beaded accents in the accessories. It is important to use light bulbs that simulate daylight to make this colour rendition ring true even at night.





Cooled down, with greyed-out browns and greys

According to the Color Marketing Group (CMG) forecast, complex neutrals satisfy our urge for classic colours in an economically-challenged time. They also bridge the area between black, which seems harsh, and brown which doesn't seem strong enough. A greyed-out violet works equally well as an accent or a neutral. The grey-violet lends itself to an ambience that can be thought of as extravagant. Typically, intimate spaces at home or coffee shops, and tiny boutique stores and restaurants can use this as a decorating device.

Though the colours may seem muted, it is the contrast of textures that brings the newness this spring. Textures of raw wood and rough, hewn stone are the backdrop for shimmering ceramic mosaic tiles. The dark stains of wenge have given over to natural wood finishes and pale flooring and furniture. Handcrafted cushions in crewel work and graphic posters, and lace-like tracery on fabrics, all hint at embracing a natural beauty.



On the 'plummier' side, with bright accents

Oranges, turquoises and teals, reds, and yellows... Hues we've seen from faraway countries, now seem very near. These colours are combined with purple and mauve in products and accessories.

There is renewed focus on handcrafted products resulting in searching out items, personal discoveries, for the home. The whole world is a bazaar and there is incredible inspiration to juxtapose colours.

Purples can be combined with bright accents in small doses with multi-coloured accessories. Table settings are a great experimental ground to play with bold colour. Ceramics and glass tableware in mix-and-match colours are already a precursor to a celebration. Deep rich hues of cobalt, red, orange and purple share the same table space. Buy at least two to four units in the same colour. This can then be a practical set when entertaining in smaller groups.





The return of mauve

When it came in vogue in France in 1890, mauve was named for what it was considered — ‘mauvais’, a ‘bad’ colour. The new year brings back this old colour, and we love all the expressions of it. In its mildest form, it is muted and dusted with gold or bronze with patina accents for a look that is meant to be romantic and reminiscent.

More edge, is when we move into mauve madness and repeat the colour in clusters and multiples. Pile up a bunch of photo-frames and mirrors in the same colour. Change all the cushions to hues from purple to blue. Paint a wall a passionate purple. Cover a sofa in violet velvet. And then, be really bad! Get yourself a set of lampshades in mauve, for an instant fashion fix.

Come on, plunge into purple! 