

Ask Jane!

She has all the answers



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CONFIDENTIAL

After 25 years of working in the design industry I've learned as much from clients and suppliers as I have through trial and error.

It's all part of the practice of design — you're always practicing hoping one day you'll get it right! Here are some answers to recent design or décor questions.

Dear Jane:

What's the best window covering in a bathroom? I have mini blinds and they look dusty and gross.

Dear Dusty:

Windows in a bathroom attract moisture and can make any window covering look awful. My first suggestion is to get vinyl shutters. You can flip them up to open or down to close and they're water proof and easy to clean.

Unlike the old vinyl, they do not turn yellow over time. They also come in multiple colours, try black or charcoal if you don't like white.

You can also do customizable window shutter shapes.

A second option is a flat roller screen in plastic. The only downside is it is either open or closed and for many that means leaving the blind down the whole time.

Dear Jane:

I have an older sofa and love seat in my living room, should I replace them with a sectional?

Dear Over The Loveseat:

People have gotten away from two seater sofas, or love seats for a good reason. Only one person usually ends up in it and if you get two in it, they're both uncomfortable.

The key to a good sectional is seat sizing. You want all the seats to be the same size on each side. If you are a more formal family or entertain in a more formal way, a sectional may be too casual because it means people's legs touch as they get closer to the corner — not the most comfortable experience.

In that case I suggest multiple single chairs. But if you are more casual, and like to snuggle and put your feet up invest in a sectional.

Dear Jane,

Is matchy-matchy a bad thing?

Dear 1980s:

Please don't come back. You were too coordinated and everything looked like it came from a set. The way to break up with the past is to add extra throw pillows and accent pieces.

If your style is more polished get something rough-hewn, like wood, or industrial style so it doesn't feel matchy, or change your area rug to a different style in colours that coordinate but don't match.

Dear Jane:

The brick exterior of our house is chocolate brown, the roof is black, what colour should I paint the garage door and shutters?

Dear Painting Outside the Box:

First, for best results, don't paint outside until the temperature is above 10 degrees Celsius. Second, taupe is a good choice to go with dark browns for the trim. But don't just do the trim around the garage door, like piping, blend it in.

Garage doors already stand out if they're at the front of the house, they



Your lighting fixture should be at least the same length as the sink.

don't need more attention. I would paint the shutters black, like the roof, or a deeper brown than the brick for a more contemporary look.

Dear Jane:

What size should the lighting fixture be over a bathroom vanity. Ours is 40" (over 3 feet) and has a vessel (raised sink) 15".

Dear Fixated:

Your fixture over sink should be at least the size of the sink (two headed,



The best window covering for a bathroom are vinyl shutters.

wall mounted fixture lights) but can go up to 30". Make sure it's slightly less wide than the vanity, you don't want it to go beyond as it will look out of proportion.

Send your design and décor questions (with photos) to dearjane@janelockhart.com.

— Jane Lockhart is a celebrity designer, TV personality and leading expert in the world of design. Visit www.janelockhart.com.

You name it, grey does it

DIANNE DANIEL

Special to Postmedia Network

It's easy to put grey to work in the kitchen, says designer

Modern kitchens are going grey but that's not cause for alarm. Done right, a grey-themed space is both relaxing and exciting, and a far cry from the doldrums. There are so many ways to do it right, the trend can be mind-boggling.

"It's kind of hard to mess it up when you're going with grey," says Sandra Mendes, senior designer at Mississauga, Ont.-based AyA Kitchens.

"It's the most versatile shade you could choose. It goes well with white. It goes well with black. It goes well with beige and wood finishes."

Grey cabinetry is increasing in popularity, from light shades that border on white all the way to deep charcoal tones that look black. The reason? Grey is such an adaptable backdrop, you can do just about anything with it. It all depends on the atmosphere you aim to create, she says.

Light shades of grey are better suited to smaller rooms with less natural daylight, whereas deeper greys create a more dramatic, luxurious look in large, spacious kitchens with high ceilings and plenty of light.

You can choose all grey cabinets,



A hot trend for 2019 is to pair any grey — regardless of the shade — with natural, light wood colours such as oak, maple, rye or honey.

go grey on the lower and white or wood grain on the upper or vice versa, or pair medium grey cabinets with a deeper grey, midnight blue or wood centre island.

A hot trend for 2019 is to pair

any grey — regardless of the shade — with natural, light wood colours such as oak, maple, rye or honey, says Mendes. "Grey can look very flat so when you're pairing it with a wood texture, it really adds that bit of

warmth to it," she says.

The combinations of grey, white and beige (or taupe) that work together are endless. White cupboards and grey marble-like countertops work well with a knotty light

wood flooring; medium grey cupboards and smooth white counters go with darker grain wood flooring; and, lower grey cabinets paired with upper white cabinets and wood grain counters work with a dark grey wood floor, for example.

The only caveat, says Mendes, is to be wary of undertones. "You need to be a little bit careful because each grey has its own undertone," she says. "Some can be greyer, some can be more blue, some more black or brown. It's definitely a good idea to put all of your samples together and make sure there's some sort of cohesion."

Hardware selection is just as flexible in a grey kitchen. Any shade of grey cupboard suits a myriad of choices, from matte black, gold, or brass hardware, to polished nickel or chrome — a choice Mendes says she's intent on bringing back into the fold.

"That's the benefit of the white, grey and beige colour palette. You can really accent it with almost any hardware," she says. "I've been pushing for chrome. It sounds dated but it adds that brightness."

It seems no matter what style of kitchen you're after — from coastal to elegant to sleek — grey fits the bill. "I think because it's so neutral, it has more of a timeless quality than other colours," says Mendes.