

August
2026

Livingetc

LOOKING forward

PROJECTS TO PLAN FROM YOUR SUNLOUNGER

● EXTENSIONS ● OUTDOOR UPGRADES
● KITCHEN ISLANDS ● PINK SCHEMES



‘People want change – I’ve got the colour for that!’

Designer Manuela Hamilford is starting a colour revolution – a subtle shift that makes an impactful difference, as she tells editor Pip Rich

PIP RICH Your work has always veered towards the more neutral end of the colour spectrum, but I’ve noticed that – along with the rest of the design world – your palette seems to be changing and new colours are creeping in. Why do you think that is?

MANUELA HAMILFORD You’re right! I would say that muted colours are still very me, and I still think that everyone wants nothing more than to be curled up in a cream-coloured bouclé armchair because that feels like a way design can be a safety net. But there is definitely a new sense of positivity in the air, and of us wanting bolder and brighter colours to reflect that. So where I’d have used ochre in the past, now I’m going yellow. Pink becomes fuchsia, burgundy becomes mauve, olive is turning into acid green. My palette is still not one that would be called bold, but it’s certainly a little stronger.

PR What is the effect of this tonal shift on the way our homes feel?

MH It means that even the most pared-back palettes can seem a little more fun and inviting. Dialling up the saturation just a little makes a big difference. In my own home, I’ve got an olive green sofa, but I’ve started adding brighter scatter cushions covered in fabric from Pierre Frey in modern floral patterns. The flowers are fuchsia,



yellow and acid green, but the background to them is a shade of putty, so that keeps the overall feeling of softness.

PR Do you think accessories are the easiest way to update your palette?

MH Yes, for sure! Cushions, but also artworks – people are being so much braver with the art they’re choosing now. Bigger pieces, more abstract, brighter colours. If you’re scared of colour, then this is a way to take you out of your comfort zone and have a little fun. It’s worth noting that for all of this, the wall colours I’m choosing remain pretty neutral on the whole: off-whites, greys and soft greens.

PR You’re not tempted to do an acid green feature wall?!

MH Oh God, no! I’m not sure I’d be ready to commit to anything like that, while accent furniture and accessories are easier to layer on top of a blanker canvas.

PR So, how do you piece your schemes together?

MH I’m always ensuring that anything big is in a shade you won’t get tired of. Say you went for a bright blue sofa... well, chances are you’d be sick of it in a couple of years. But it’s easier to live with a bright blue cushion or artwork or rug because, on the whole, that feels like something that is simpler to change. Quite often, just knowing that you can swap it out means that you don’t need to. I’m also only going to be using warmer tones, which feel safer, more like a hug, and allow your eyes to rest.

PR Are there any particular paint shades you’re using often at present?

MH We do a lot of Farrow & Ball’s Studio Green, which is not quite turquoise but has a bit more blue in it than we’d have used in the past. It gives the room a pop. Pair that with a slubby linen sofa cushion in the same colour and it’s a wow moment. Classic but liveable. A phrase I’d also use for a mauve bathroom I did recently that had pink tiles. Now, that was very bold, for me, but so wonderful for the eyes and the soul.

PR That’s the second time you’ve mentioned mauve, a shade I’m not used to designers talking about. Could it be the next big hue?!

MH It just might be! Mauve is like an olive green: it can go between fun and grown-up and works well with neutral tones. I wouldn’t use it on a big scale, but pair it with a mushroom sofa in a living room and the combination is just great. Yes, this is the palette for the rest of 2026.

hamilforddesign.com

Manuela says that art choice is a place where colours are becoming bolder, even in the most neutral schemes. Artwork by Aron Kroes in a scheme by Hamilford Design

