ONE HOME 5 COMBOS

By Alyssa Marshall
Images courtesy of MBR Color Expert, Adam Park

If updating your home's exterior is on your to-do list and the choice of color is feeling daunting, we have some information that can help. Typically Google searches render the same tip: home's have three colors - body, trim, and accent, but after that, all bets are off.

So how do you avoid being the house with the accent door that doesn't work? Or the one with the off-putting mustard shutters?

I asked one of our color experts, Adam Park, what he thought the best approach was, and here's what he had to say.
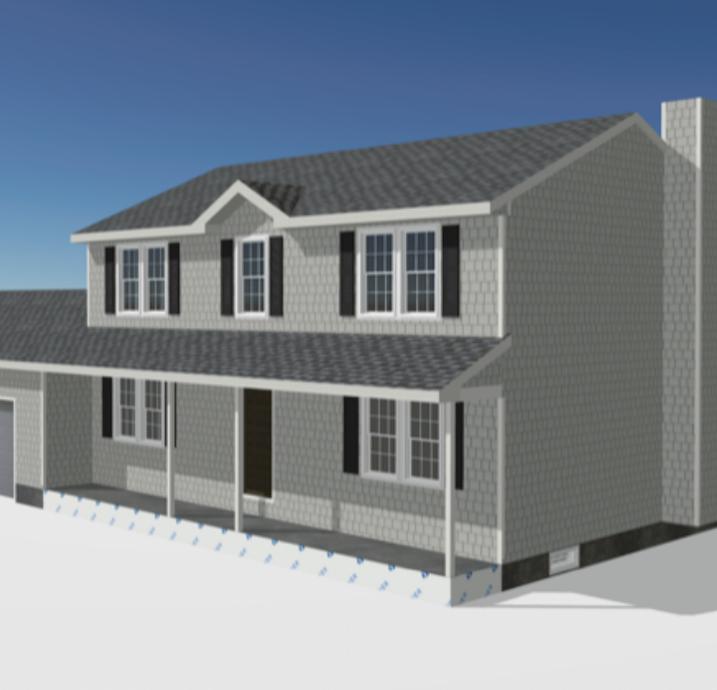
"If my clients aren't replacing their roof, that's the first place to start. The roof is often underestimated when it comes to design considerations, but it is an important part. I like to think of it as the anchor color of the home. So if the roof stays, we base the rest off of the existing color off of that tone."

Typically the rule is warm with warm and cool with cool. This requires a slight understanding of color theory. For example gray is typically considered a neutral, but if it has blue or green undertones it's considered cool, while warm grays will have yellow, red, or brown undertones.

"Color theory can get confusing if you're not familiar with it, but you can look into it online," Adam offered. "Most people have some understanding of this. We use color theory every day when we get dressed."

If the roof is being replaced, Adam suggest thinking about the colors in threes as noted earlier, but keeping the roof in the same family. "When I say family I mean that if you're working in high contrast, let the roof help streamline that combination. If you're into the analogous or monochramatic combinations, let that carry the design through to the roof."

GO AHEAD, TRY THEM ON

Picking the color scheme is a big decision for your exterior. It's a long-term project (hello, commitment issues) and it covers a lot of space, but technology can help.

"Marshall uses a program that will actually let you try different colors (and products) on your home. It's a great tool for homeowners who otherwise can't bring the visual to mind or who are going back and forth between two palettes."

Adam offered to show me the design tool and what a typical color consult with a homeowner would look like.

"I love the texture, color, and overall look of Tando in Pacifica (image 1, page 1). It's sharp with the white trim, so we'll start there." The look is both modern and classic. "Notice how the roof has yellow undertones and the siding has both red and yellow." That's a good example of keeping the look warm throughout. "The white trim works to not only break up the colors, but also to accent design features like the gable and the height of the chimney."

Adam selects a few more color and product combinations to test out and compare. "White and black are a pretty a classic combination. The black roof looks sharp with the black windows and black shutters. In this case, you want the trim to blend in, so it's white on white. I also love this look with clapboard versus cedar styles."

We move back to cedars for the last three color options. Tuscan Olive siding, with a blue roof (no way, I thought - but it works) and cameo trim. Adam even pulls up a real life picture of a home in those exact colors (there are more great examples in the Marshall gallery, if you want take a look).

The last two options are versions of gray palettes. The first is a Victorian gray, while the second is a deep granite. "The roof, trim, and shutters are all the same color," Adam notes, "but you can see how something like the tint of gray can impact the overall look."

Our advice, try it on! "One customer asked for a physical sample and hung it on her house for a bit before deciding. She ended up with the look she loved in the 3D rendering, so the digital versions are definitely a good representation, but it's also important to take your time and use whatever considerations make you feel comfortable. After all, it is a big decision."

Color Combinations

In order of photos as listed above.

- Tando 5" Cedar Shake in Pacifica with white trim and Bark Wood roofing.

- James Hardie Fiber Cement 8" clapboard in White with black windows, black trim, and a Charcoal roof.

- Mastic Cedar Discovery in Tuscan Olive in with Cameo trim and Biscayne Blue roofing shingles.

- Cedar-style composite in Victorian Gray with white trim, black shutters, and a Pewter roof.

- Cedar-style composite in Deep Granite with white trim, black shutters, and a Pewter roof.