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PANTONE, renowned authority on colour, recently collaborated with a popular British tea brand, to develop a new colour reminiscent of the naturally-occurring blues found in nature. They named the colour “Natural Optimism”.

Natural Optimism is described as “an airy and weightless blue shade with an undertone of sunny yellow warmth that uniquely conveys this feeling of delight”, explains Pantone Colour Institute vice-president Laurie Pressman.

Psychologically, blue has long been associated with confidence, serenity, spirituality and peace. An inaccurate balance of blues however, can have a more negative effect on our emotions – hence the saying “feeling blue”. Bringing in the right blue tones, or some at least into the home or office, is said to be able to help us find calm amid the chaos that is part and parcel of life and the world around us.

THE RIGHT BLUES

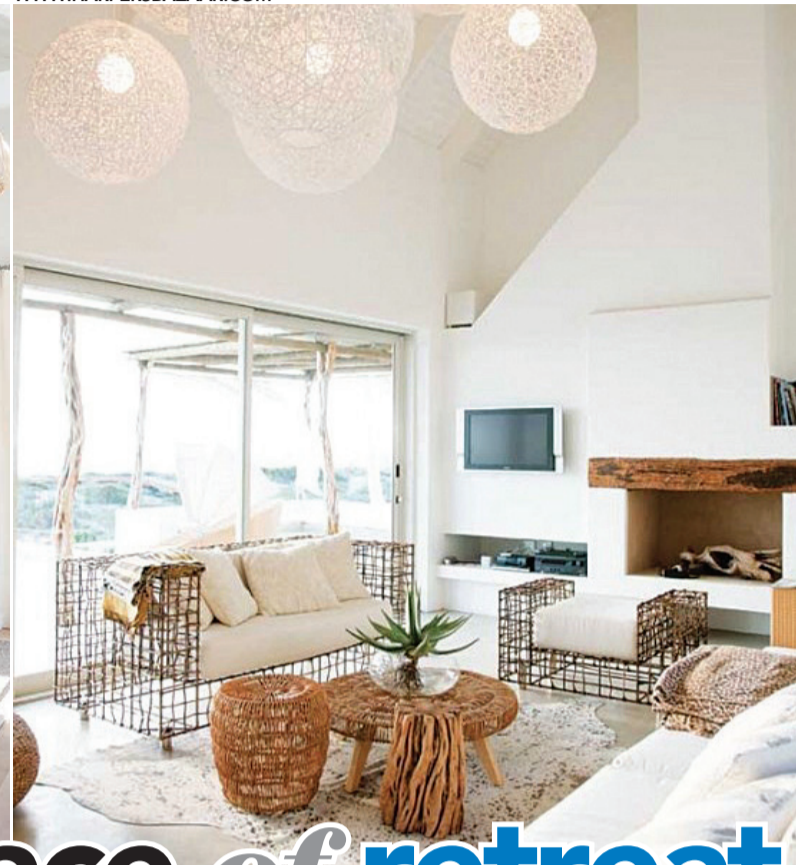
According to architectural paint and exterior wood care products supplier Behr, there are three palette types for paint, which are “Confident, Composed and Comfortable”. Each palette serves as a guide for homeowners of varying personalities. In their prediction of paint colours in trend for 2017, various shades of blue pop up in each of the three palettes.

Confident Dusky Blue

In the Confident palette there is “Dusky Blue”, a saturated and bright colour that captures attention and enlivens spaces. For a sporty edge, it is recommended to be paired with dark greys on anchor pieces of furniture such as the bed, thrown in with bright orange and spicy red accents. For an element of fun and adventure, Behr suggests using citrus-toned yellow and orange accents instead.

Composed Polished Aqua

The Composed palette on the other hand is made up of deep, earthy tones and rich jewel shades that are evocative of traditional grandeur. Still, these can be given a contemporary touch when paired



Home ... a place *of* retreat

> Putting calm into the home space

with greys, black or white. Behr uses “Polished Aqua” for a dining room’s walls, pairing it with natural wood and metal accents throughout the room. A dark blue entryway complemented the colour and proved that multiple shades of blue can dress the walls of a room without being too overwhelming.

Comfy Peek-a-Blue

Last, but not the least is Behr’s Comfortable palette featuring the ideal colours for a soft and tranquil look, perfect for small spaces and rooms with minimal lighting. With a light blue like “Peek-a-Blue”, neutral hues on the floor and furniture easily make the walls the focal point of the room. And when paired with bright accents of yellow, orange or bold green, a light blue-walled room is given a boost of energy, subtly

emanating the same positive vibes and feel among the occupants.

COASTAL DREAM

It may come across as a little odd for a country like Malaysia, with our white sandy beaches and easy-to-reach beaches that sea-front homes are not a trend. Houses that face the sea usually take inspiration from natural colours and more often than not, take in textures of the beach into the home. Most importantly, these sea-front homes are the perfect place to escape to, especially when city life gets a little too hectic.

While some may claim that it is the sound of the waves that attract a calm, there is no denying that beach-inspired homes are commonly uncluttered or distressed, wear white shiplap walls, while other homes don light shades of blue or plain-white wall paint. Whether plain white or light, both give the home the same airy, open feel of the beach. Match these “innocent” shades with large white-panelled windows along with glass doors to allow sunlight to stream in, and you get yourself that sun-on-your-skin feeling indoors as well as out.

Natural textures are abundant within most homes. Kitchen countertops and cabinets, dining tables and coffee tables in light or honey-hued wood add a touch of raw yet warmth to an otherwise sterile white room. Alternatively, look for wooden furniture pieces in reclaimed wood, ideal for a rustic look. Large picnic baskets, which are reminiscent of summer picnics can also be used as storage bins to go under beds, on the side of settees on the floor or on shelves and at patios.



Use pastel or neutral colours on furniture pieces to complement the white or blue walls. Sofas with pleated skirts are a favourite in coastal-inspired homes. For a more Malaysian touch, the writer suggests getting armchairs made of rattan and using cushions in tropical prints or pastel hues.

For finishing touches, bring in leafy plants to freshen up the air indoors. Create centrepieces with glass vases filled with sand and seashells, which make perfect

decoration on the dining table or console by the entrance. Stringing pendant lights are a fun way to light up the home using natural textures that fit right into a coastal-inspired home. Rugs are also a great way to define space in an open-plan home. Often seen are flat-woven rugs that blend in with the coastal theme, often found in ocean-inspired homes painted blue or in natural hues.

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