

Brightening up your life with heritage paint

By Maggie Calloway

There is no getting around it, painting the exterior of your home is a big job whether you decide to tackle it yourself or hire a contractor. We have all heard of curb appeal, and the quality of the paint job, the colours you choose and where you put each colour can make the difference between a stunning exterior and one that just doesn't work.

If you decide to paint it yourself, know that preparation is 80 per cent of the job. Tedious as it may be, taking the time to prep means your house will look great and the job will last. Make sure the wood is dry. In our climate it pays to wait until we have enjoyed a long string of sunny days, as painting over wet wood creates a world of problems, not the least of which is the new paint forming blisters. If you are painting over old paint, scrape off flakes with a wire brush and clean the surface. If there are bare patches, prime before painting. Check to see what kind of paint was used previously then take advice from the paint store about which paint to use. Buy the best paint you can afford; this is not the time to be frugal. You want your home to look fantastic now and for years to come.

Is there an art in picking paint colours? Heidi Nyline of Warline Painting certainly believes so.

"We have been fortunate to be hired to paint the exteriors of the 'Painted Ladies', the four heritage houses on West 10th (in Vancouver) and you can imagine how jarring it would be to get the colour balance wrong," she says. "The colours are very bright and different on each house; they really make a statement."

We have all agonized over paint colours, especially for the exterior. It's not like making a colour mistake in the dining room which can be remedied in a day. Nyline says the problem is people are trying to make colour choices from a two- by two-inch paint chip,

which is impossible.

"You stand in a paint store and stare at thousands of colours, how are you supposed to put colours together?" Nyline says. "First, take note of everything you can't change; the roof colour and the colour of the stonework, the colour or your window trim if they are vinyl, etc. Next, (look at) the natural surroundings. If you have a ton of trees around the house that green foliage will impact how colour looks on your house. For instance, if you use paint with a red undertone on a north-facing house with lots of trees, in a certain light the house will have a slightly pink look to it. You have to paint large five-foot by five-foot samples of your preferred colour range on (a) board to get the proper impact of that colour on your house."

The moral of this story is take time. Time to do proper prep work, time to properly chose appropriate colours, time to do the best job possible, or hire someone who cares enough to do the same.



Heidi Nyline of Warline Painting believes that there is an art to choosing paint colours, whether they're for Vancouver's "Painted Ladies", left and below, or for a suburban home in need of a new look, below left.

Submitted photos

