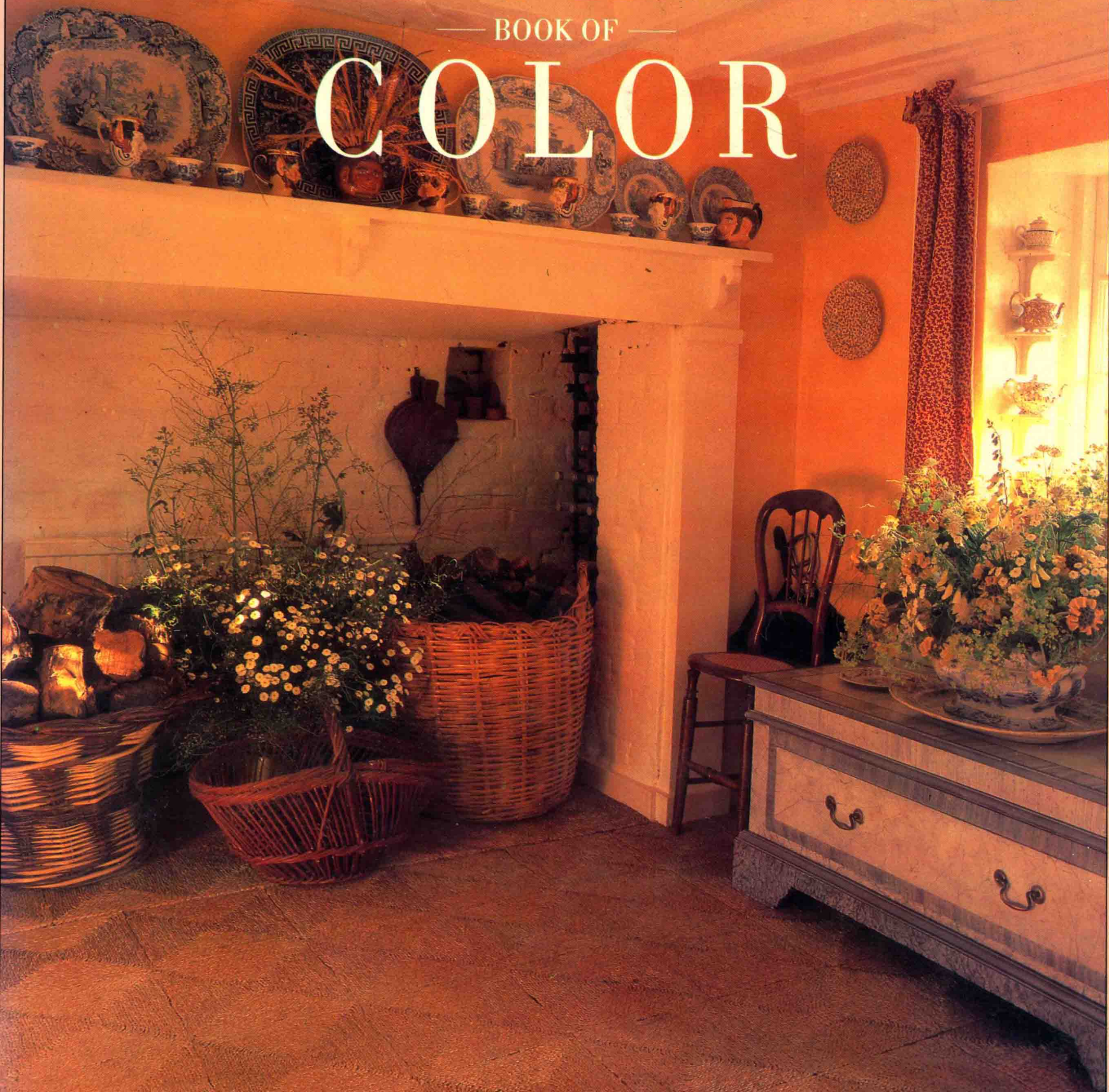


*The*  
**MARY GILLIATT**

— BOOK OF —

**COLOR**



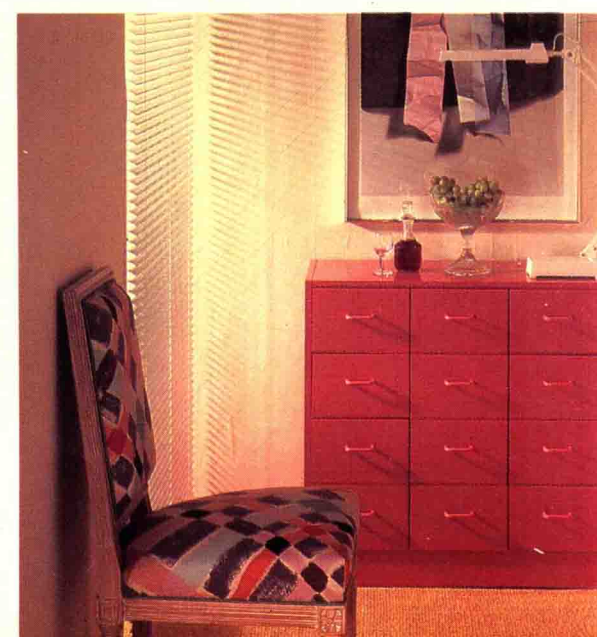


THE MARY GILLIATT  
**BOOK**  
OF  
**COLOR**



LITTLE, BROWN AND COMPANY  
BOSTON TORONTO





Copyright © 1985 by Octopus Books Limited

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced in any form or by any electronic or mechanical means including information storage and retrieval systems without permission in writing from the publisher except by a reviewer who may quote brief passages in a review.

Library of Congress Catalog Card No. 85-50699

First American Edition

ISBN 0-316-31379-3

Published simultaneously in Canada  
by Little, Brown & Company (Canada) Limited  
Printed and Bound in Hong Kong





---

# CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	6
<hr/>	
YELLOW	10
<hr/>	
GREEN	26
<hr/>	
BLUE	42
<hr/>	
RED	58
<hr/>	
NEUTRALS	76
<hr/>	
BLACK & WHITE	94
<hr/>	
DATA FILE: Walls	110
Windows	114
Floors	118
Glossary	120
<hr/>	
INDEX	123

---



THE MARY GILLIATT  
**BOOK OF COLOR**







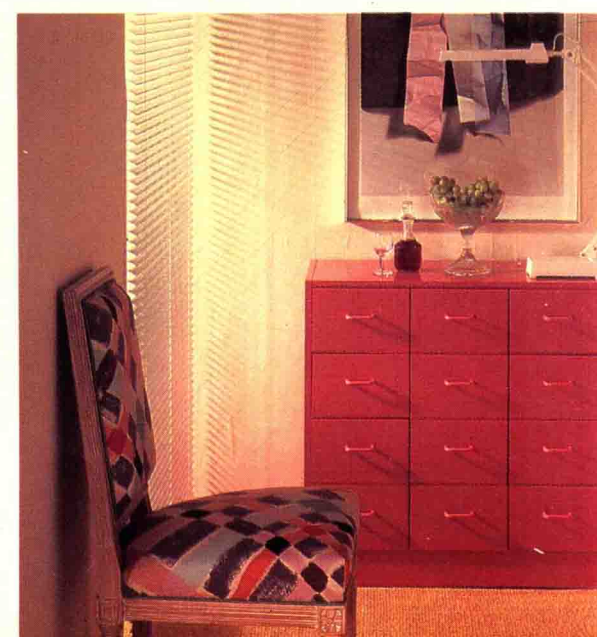


THE MARY GILLIATT  
**BOOK  
OF  
COLOR**



LITTLE, BROWN AND COMPANY  
BOSTON TORONTO





Copyright © 1985 by Octopus Books Limited

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced in any form or by any electronic or mechanical means including information storage and retrieval systems without permission in writing from the publisher except by a reviewer who may quote brief passages in a review.

Library of Congress Catalog Card No. 85-50699

First American Edition

ISBN 0-316-31379-3

Published simultaneously in Canada  
by Little, Brown & Company (Canada) Limited  
Printed and Bound in Hong Kong





---

# CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	6
<hr/>	
YELLOW	10
<hr/>	
GREEN	26
<hr/>	
BLUE	42
<hr/>	
RED	58
<hr/>	
NEUTRALS	76
<hr/>	
BLACK & WHITE	94
<hr/>	
DATA FILE: Walls	110
Windows	114
Floors	118
Glossary	120
<hr/>	
INDEX	123

---



# INTRODUCTION

*Colour is the most malleable, the most exciting, the most immediately noticeable and the least expensive element in decorating. Different combinations of colours can make the same room seem welcoming or impersonal, warm or cool, restful or stimulating, harmonious or jarring. Moreover, the choice of colours we make when decorating is both central to our own moods and to the impression our home will make on other people.*

*In short, colour is extremely important in decoration, but the trouble is that a very great number of people have a hard time developing the confidence to use it properly. I am particularly aware of this because I conduct a series of design seminars or clinics in both the United States and Britain, and the questions I get asked over and over are invariably about colour schemes, where to get started and how.*

*Some rare individuals can carry a colour around in their heads and match it absolutely. They look at a room and know instantly what will suit it. Most of us, however, have to work at developing colour sense, and the way to do so is really to look at any pleasurable combinations we see and to analyze the make-up of colours within that image in a conscious way.*

*For a start, almost anything that pleases you visually can be converted into the basis of a*









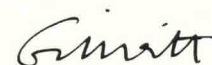
*decorative scheme if you keep the colours in just about the same proportions and translate them into carpet, walls, window treatments and accessories. Most rural scenes, for example, contain innumerable shades of green, harmoniously blended with accents provided by bright splashes of colour from flowers, berries or crops. Similarly, an old-fashioned rose garden can show how to make successful blends of pinks, yellows and peaches, creating a scheme of equal tones against a green background. Or take the build-up of colours in any Mediterranean village.*

*The Impressionists, particularly Vincent Van Gogh, have much to teach us about observing colour. They developed the habit of almost always describing everything they saw in the minutest breakdown of tones and shades. Van Gogh's letters are full of descriptions. For example, in a letter to John Russell, an Australian painter, he wrote of a picture by Monet '... a landscape with red sunset and a group of dark fir trees by the sea side. The red sun casts an orange or blood-red reflection on the blue trees and the ground. I wish I could see them'.*

*Interestingly, Van Gogh and his fellow Impressionists had been deeply influenced by the theories of a Monsieur M.E. Chevreul, manager of the great Gobelins tapestry factory in France. Chevreul had observed that two differently*

*coloured threads appeared to have a single colour when seen from a distance. Following on from this discovery, he delved into the whole theory of colour and eventually wrote The Principles of Harmony and Contrast of Colours, which has remained a leading textbook on the subject ever since.*

*In this book, I have tried to put Chevreul's principles into practice by first discussing each colour in an emotive way, conjuring up and analyzing the visions that a particular colour evokes. Then I have divided that colour into all its various shades, discussing which other colours best complement them, when and how the colour can be used as an accent or be accented, and, finally, how it goes with equal tones – dark, bright, pastel and so on – of other colours. In his work, Chevreul notes that once certain rules have been absorbed, painters use colours to better effect, and I must say just from writing this particular book I have learnt to look at scenes with his rulings in mind and to appreciate how right he is. The rules which apply to painting should be just as true of decoration, as this book sets out to show.*





## SHADES AND CONTRASTS

The glowing autumnal colours of a forest with the soft sunlight filtering through the sparse foliage are so rich, yet serene, that they seem ideal for the purposes of interior design. The shades of golden yellows and browns of the leaves, the muted greens of the grass and shrubs, and the mauve light in the distance blend harmoniously and are contrasted by the dark, greenish-grey trunks. It is easy to imagine these colours translated into floors, walls and soft furnishings. Whatever the composition, the result is certain to be warm and inviting.



## ACCENT

A sunny cornfield gently moving in the wind is evocative of peace and tranquility as well as being pleasing to the eye. The appearance of a bright scarlet poppy, the ultimate accent, makes the scene zing with life. In much the same way a vase full of red tulips in a predominantly green room would invigorate the whole scheme. The same effect could be created with a red print or *objet d'art*, or with red piping on a sofa. Because red is such a strong, dominant colour, it acts particularly well as an accent in schemes that are in themselves more restful.



## EQUAL TONES

A beautiful sunny beach on a tropical island brings to mind a very different juxtaposition of colours compared to those of a more northern landscape. Here, the bleached sand, the turquoise water and the blue sky are all in perfect harmony, none being more dominant than the others in terms of setting the scene. The palm trees add life and interest to the whole in much the same way as a foliage plant would indoors. The picture conjures up visions of a modern clean-lined interior, where pattern is kept to a minimum and the interaction of the colours is the main theme: a potentially striking scheme.





---

# YELLOW

BRIGHT, HAPPY, SUNNY, WARM,  
GLOWING, LIVELY

*Yellow is the colour of sunlight, gold, sandy beaches, spring flowers and the dazzle of buttercups and dandelions in summer meadows. Equally, it is the colour of glowing fires, autumn sunsets and lighted windows at night; of chrysanthemums, apples and pears and fallen leaves. It is associated with brightness and cheerfulness, warmth and sparkle, although, paradoxically, it is also associated with cowardice and sickness, with the cold clear moon and the remote gleam of the stars. It begins subtly with palest primrose, blonde hair and hay, and ends with the richness of amber, the glow of apricots and the deep tawny ochre of burnt Sienna.*

*Yellow has been used in decoration and in clothes from the earliest times. The Egyptians made a bright yellow from orpiment, a mineral found in their soil, and it was they who first developed the technique of gilding.*

*The Romans used the orange-yellow dye saffron, made from the stigma of the autumnal crocus, for their robes, particularly at marriage ceremonies, where the bride traditionally wore an orange veil and shoes.*

*In medieval times, painters used a brownish-yellow pigment called ochre to deepen other colours. Sienna, an orange-yellow earth pigment containing iron oxide and named after the*









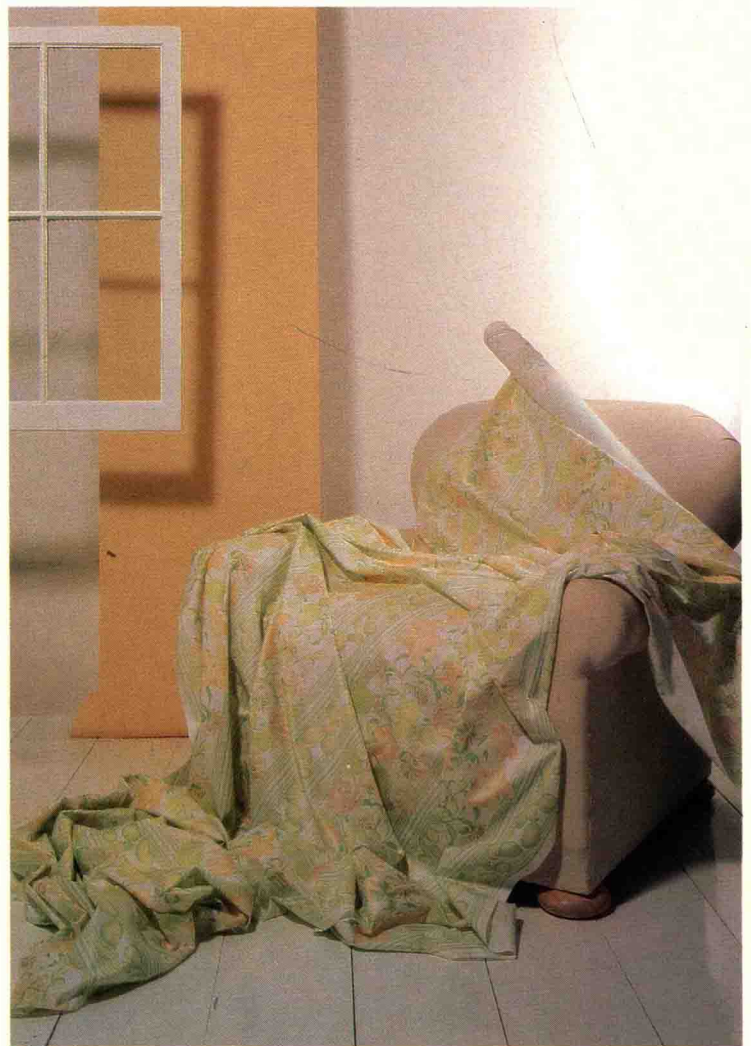
*Italian city of Sienna, was another important component of the medieval painter's palette.*

*The Italian earthenware called maiolica, very popular in the Renaissance period, used deep ochre and bright clear yellows in the biblical or allegorical scenes with which it was painted.*

*Apricot was an immensely fashionable colour in the eighteenth century, brought back to Britain by young aristocrats who had completed their education by making the Grand Tour of Europe, especially if they had extended their travels into India.*

*The lighter yellows and pastel shades tend to look somewhat washed-out under a hot southern sun, and it is in the more temperate climates that these shades come into their own, whether the bright, clear yellow silks which were fashionable for upholstery and furnishing in the Regency period in Britain or the pale yellows used by English water-colourists.*

*Yellow is, of course, a primary colour, along with blue and red which combine to produce purple, the complementary colour to yellow. Like red and orange, it has the effect of advancing surfaces, bringing them closer to the eye. Yellow and orange lie next to each other in the colour wheel and should not be used in equal quantities in a decorative scheme or they will cancel each other out.*



## SHADES AND CONTRASTS

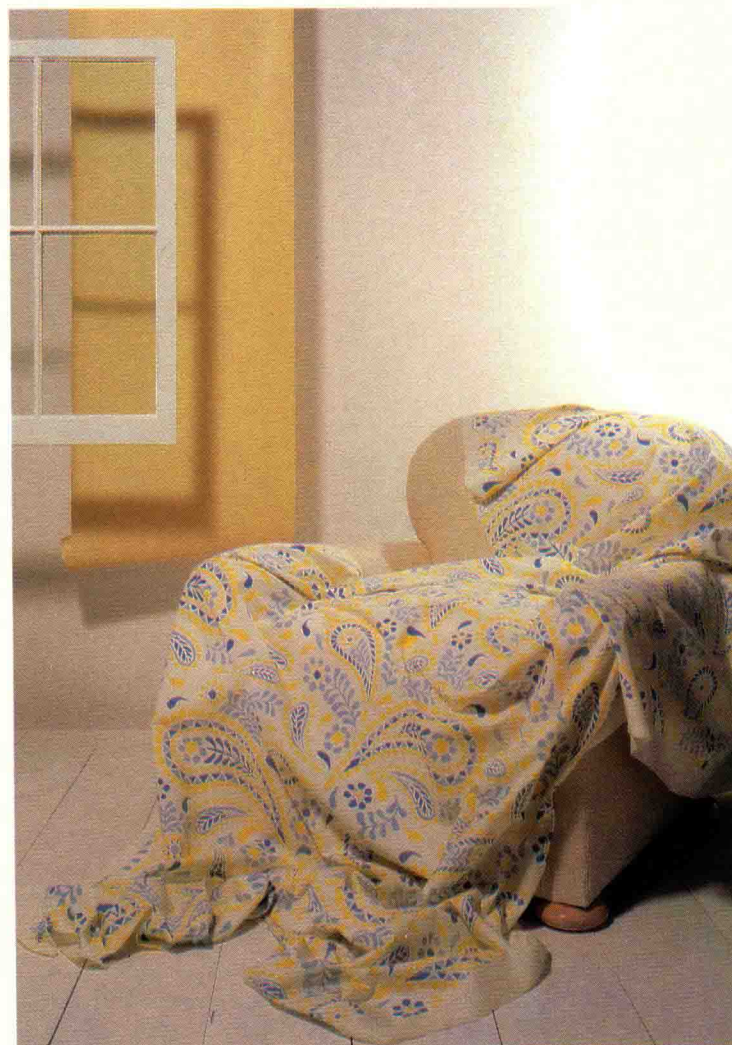
The liveliness of the yellows range from butter to tangerine, blonde hair to saffron, primrose to chrysanthemums. Here, the warm soft yellow of the wallpaper, an instantly cheerful and cheering sunlight colour, is echoed in the cream, pale lemon and peach of the fabric and contrasted quietly by the muted green and more strongly by the bright white. The juxtaposition gives an immediate impression of what a room in these colours would look like: warm and happy, but with a freshness provided by the green and the white. Here are colours which gleam in a sunny room or add warmth to a north-facing setting.





## ACCENT

Yellow accents are instant fresheners, revivers, sharpeners: the zing of lemon; the lift to the spirit at the sight of a yellow sou'wester on a grey and rainy day, or yellow crocuses pushing up through cold, wet grass. In decorating terms, it hardly matters whether the accent is a bunch of flowers, the yellow in a painting or in part of a pattern; the point is that the kind of light given out by even the palest yellow provides a liveliness and focus in just about any kind of space or room scheme you care to think of. Here, yellow is the only colour in an all-white room, where texture has also been used to add interest.



## EQUAL TONES

Whether yellow is used as a pale pastel or in much richer, sharper or darker shades, it equalizes well with other colours in the same tones. Here it is used with blues and holds its own with a certain amount of vigour, as in the natural spring combinations of daffodils and grape hyacinths. The result is fresh and cheerful and would look good in any room, due to the natural balance created by using yellow, an advancing colour, with cool, recessive blue. In a sun-drenched room, the blue would add a welcome hint of coolness, while the yellow would have the reverse effect on a cold room.