

Pantone says the color purple is ‘in’ for the new year

Ah, the pain we must endure! It looks like the fine folks at Pantone have once again turned their backs on “Barbie pink,” rejecting my favorite as color of the year for 2018. Instead, as we bid adieu to 2017’s “Greenery,” we look to something completely different, “Ultra Violet.” Think purple and what comes to mind? *The Color Purple*, *Purple Rain*, Barney the Purple Dinosaur. . .

Technically, there is a difference between purple and violet, with purple being a mixture of red and blue, while violet is a real color that appears next to red on the spectrum. Historically, royalty and the very wealthy have favored violet clothing and furnishings because they were the ones who could afford the expensive fabric. It wasn’t until after 1856, when William Henry Perkin accidentally made the first synthetic aniline dye (instead of what he was trying to make, synthetic quinine), that most everyone could afford clothing in these hues. And when Queen Victoria wore a deep violet gown six years later, well, the



VINTAGE STYLE

BY BARBARA MILLER BEEM

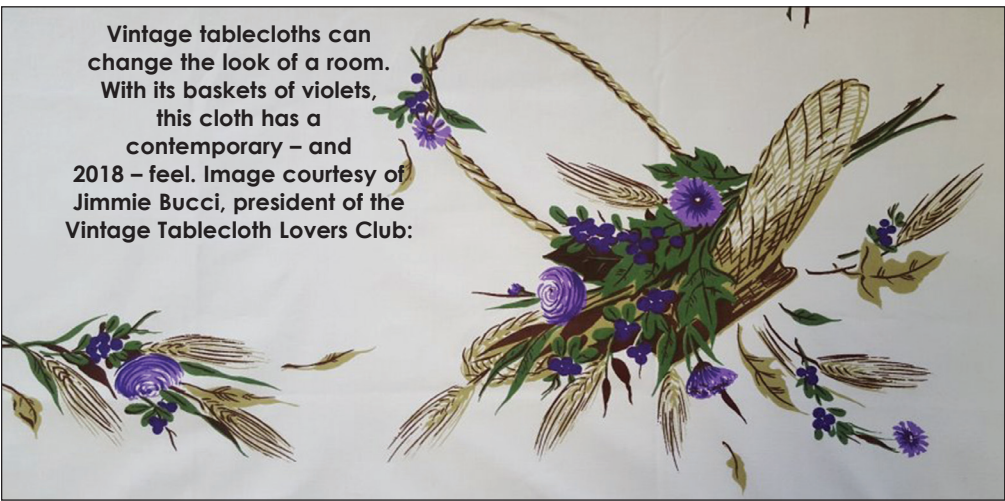
style was set. Fast forward, thinking in terms of crayons, purple appears a bit reddish while violet is bluish.

But enough of that. We’re talking the Color of the Year 2018, and we’re thinking Ultra Violet thoughts here.

In case you’ve forgotten, the Pantone Color Institute, based in New Jersey, is a consulting service that forecasts global color trends, thereby setting the standards for the world of fashion and home decoration. Every spring, a secret panel (I’m available!) goes on retreat and considers the state of things, projecting what color might best capture the mood of Earth’s inhabitants for the following year. Noted Laurie Pressman, the Institute’s vice president, the color is “so much more than ‘what’s trending.’” It is, she believes, “a reflection of what’s needed in our world today.”

Explaining the choice of the blue-based Ultra Violet, Leatrice Eiseman, the Institute’s executive director, noted that it reflects the need for “inventiveness and imagination” in these demanding times. Calling

Left: A traditional china pattern such as “Castles” might be a bit overwhelming, but when used in conjunction with solid-colored chargers, it is perfect for a 2018 tablescape. Image courtesy of Replacements, Ltd.



the hue “nuanced and full of emotion” as it symbolizes “experimentation and non-conformity,” Ultra Violet “suggests the mysteries of the cosmos.”

Take that, Greenery!
I don’t know about you, but I find all of this a bit overwhelming. But the question remains: How do we weave Ultra Violet into a vintage-inspired lifestyle?

It seems to me that color trends, like fashion, are cyclical, maybe on 50-year plans. The last time I can remember that violet (or purple) was a big thing was during the 1960s. I’m not sure what was going on in the 19-teens, although I can imagine Edwardian club furniture in these deep violet hues. And before that. . . well, that would have been Queen Victoria.

Back to this New Year. Even though we might not be painting our walls in “Ultra Violet,” there are quick and easy fixes to blending this new color into our décor without wreaking havoc. More times than not, I think the tabletop presents our best place to gently update the palette of our homes. My suggestion to look new and *moderne*: Combine a traditional violet-trimmed china pattern with newly purchased solid-colored violet chargers, or maybe a mug or colored

piece of stemware. Take a vintage tablecloth with violet designs and couple it with new solid-violet napkins. Or instead of one large centerpiece, bring out diminutive cut-glass vases and fill them with violets. Meanwhile, I remain hopeful that my color makes the cut next year. One more thing: Old calendars that work for this year include those from 1900, 1906, 1917, 1923, 1934, 1945, 1951, 1962, 1973, 1979 and 1990. Looking through this list for an interesting time, my eye goes to the years in the middle of the list. For those who prefer a mid-century décor (and I’m including friends here who wouldn’t think of trading in their short and squat 1950s refrigerators for a stainless-steel model with an icemaker), decorate your kitchen with old paper or linen calendars or calendar plates. For those who save things because you just never know when they might come in handy, this year’s calendars will work again in 2029 and 2035.

Barbara Miller Beem welcomes suggestions or questions about using antiques and collectibles in decorating. You can reach her at bbeem@antiqueweek.com

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