

Making an entrance

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Interiors

Is your front door bold or cautious? Here's our guide to creating the perfect portal – without letting the neighbours down



I am ashamed of my front door – a putrid purple reproduction affair, the house numbers two timid little digits from B&Q. It is only now that the front door has become such a lifestyle statement that I have dared to ask why. “Front doors are symbolic,” photographer Bella Foxwell tells me. She’s a door obsessive. She takes “doorraits”, and posts them on her Instagram account, @thedoorsofdn, and has 69,000 followers. But, oh heavens, symbolic – of what? I am suddenly keen to protect my entrance from Freudian psychoanalysis. “Of new opportunity,” says Foxwell, “and also, of memory. People tell me a particular door reminds them of their childhood home. It’s a portal into another world and, for the curious among us, it’s a joy wondering what lies beyond the bright pink door, or the statement black door framed in colourful flowers.”

You don’t see flowers festooning 10 Downing Street (black, famous, stentorian), but you do see shades of orange, yellow, even Day-Glo green on otherwise traditional entrances boasting Portland stone or Spanish tiled checkerboards. Whatever happened to British reserve, to blending in? “The front door has not been immune to a new trend of ‘look at me’ that we are seeing emerge in all walks of British life,” says designer Monique Tollgard. “In the post-Instagram era a new generation is announcing and sharing its design decisions, asking the wider world to like what we do.”

Asking the wider world is one thing, but do you ask the neighbours? I am told of a petition sent around a leafy neighbourhood after some profligate painted their door luminous yellow. “Repaint!” bayed the signatories.

“Your front door needs to sing to your soul and say something about you to your visitors,” says David Mottershead of Little Greene. But, warns, interior designer Caroline Cobbold, “a lot of people think they will be funny or trendy or different by choosing a whacky colour, but more often than not it doesn’t work. I always use a dark colour, but almost never pure black: a blue-black, a dark blue or an aubergine.”

It turns out there are two kinds of front door: bold and cautious. “A cautious front door is one that doesn’t say look at me,” says Tollgard. “It’s like a silent doorman in a very good suit.” ■

Words GENEVIEVE FOX
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Stockists

- Paints**
Pink Penelope from littlegreene.com
Off-black Rallings from farrow-ball.com
Dark green Hunter Dunn from paintandpaperlibrary.com
Mid-blue Blue Ground from farrow-ball.com



Reclaimed doors

- englishsalvage.co.uk
retrovivious.com

Stone steps

- stone-age.co.uk

Door furniture

- hautedeco.com
danico.co.uk

