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Bitten by red

Fiery highlight moves beyond hair, speedy sports cars and into your home. But use it sparingly for a big, bold impact, writes **Kathryn Young**.

Red wants to be noticed.

Funky, fresh, fiery and definitely fun, red is showing up in kitchens and dining rooms, entranceways, stairwells and bathrooms, adding punches of drama throughout the home.

Red highlights are clearly not just for hair.

"I think everyone secretly loves red, but they're afraid to use it because it's powerful," says Janise Saikaley, a colour specialist and owner of Uproar Design, which has just moved to 911 Bank St.

Many contenders and winners in the recent housing Awards of Design Excellence went bold and used big splashes of red. Judges were impressed.

Denys Builds Designs won the hotly contested small kitchen category by using red along a wall running from the kitchen into the living room.

Tartan turned to red highlights throughout its Whitney model home in Findlay Creek Village, using broad brush strokes in the dining room to highlight a striking octagonal coffered ceiling.

Deslauriers Custom Cabinets and A. Potvin Kitchen & Bath used red in luxurious kitchens. It also showed up in two noteworthy submissions by Southam Design and Blom Design, including red on support pillars in a basement renovation.

Urban Keios Design won an honourable mention for Barbara Borylo-Gourdie's customized home where the sunny entrance hall and a semi-circular closet are painted in Benjamin Moore's Merlot Red.

"We get a lot of reaction from people," says Ms. Borylo-Gourdie. "We were so happy that we decided to continue on and the red spread to two more walls."

What message does red send? "I think it has a lot to do with the type of red. This is a cheery colour, inviting. Some reds are more sombre and quite calming



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if it's a deep red ... It reflects the sunniness of the area. It feeds on the sunshine," says Ms. Borylo-Gourdie.

Pause for a moment and consider all the meanings and pictures and connotations behind the word and colour red: You can be a redhead with a temper, red-eyed from crying or a red-blooded male. The Red Cross wants your red blood cells.



Red signifies the Liberal Party, communists or the Red Army of Russia. You can be a Red Tory or a redneck. Or both. Taste red wine, red meat, red apples, cabbage or onions, red peppers or Redpath sugar, tomatoes or strawberries. Enjoy red snapper at Red Lobster.

A redcap may carry your bag. Walk on a red carpet and you're important, but if you haven't

Denys Builds Designs, above, won the small kitchen category by using red along a wall running from the kitchen into the living room.

one red cent, you're poor.

Forests boast redwoods, as well as red pine, oak, maple, spruce and willow. Also red foxes, red-winged blackbirds, robin redbreast and red squirrels.

Sit in the red seats at the hockey game, near the red line, or watch for a soccer player to be red-carded. On a red-letter day, your team could be red-hot.



A. Potvin Kitchen & Bath, above, and Blom Design, below, used touches of red in these luxurious kitchens.



"Get yer red-hots!"

Red is the colour of fire, valentines, Santa, stop signs, cardinals, Canada Post mailboxes and the devil (just don't mix up those last two). Take the red-eye flight, drown in red tape or red ink; just don't get caught red-handed in the red-light district. Photographers despise red-eye, but love red ribbons.

In apples, it's wholesome; in bras or lipstick, it's seductive; on cars, it's fast, and on maples in the fall, it's glorious.

You can hail from Red Deer, Alberta, Red Lake, Ontario, or

even the Red Planet if you're a Martian.

Red lights mean stop, red flags mean danger or angry bulls, red alerts put up warnings.

It signifies bloodshed and violence or playful red balloons.

Red permeates Canadian history, from RCMP coats to the maple leaf flag. There was the Red River Rebellion, Red River carts, our own Red Fife wheat and the Red (Senate) Chamber, not to mention Anne of Green Gables' hair and P.E.I. dirt.

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