

Denver's Gray Era Is Ending, and 2026's Color of the Year Picks Prove It, Painting Company Says

Sherwin-Williams and Benjamin Moore both named warm, earth-toned Colors of the Year for 2026 — and Harmony Painting says the shift is already visible in Denver.

DENVER, CO, UNITED STATES, August 21, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- For much of the last decade, every other home renovation followed the same formula. White walls. Gray exteriors. Black accents. Clean, minimal, and supposedly timeless.

That decade is over, and the paint industry's own forecasts now say so.



Warm, earth-toned exteriors are returning to Denver historic neighborhoods as Sherwin-Williams and Benjamin Moore name warm neutrals their 2026 Colors of the Year.

Sherwin-Williams named Universal Khaki SW 6150 its 2026 Color of the Year, a midtone warm neutral whose name traces to a Persian word meaning dust or earth. Benjamin Moore named Silhouette AF-655, described by the company as a mix of rich espresso hues with subtle notes of charcoal. Neither is a cool gray. Both sit in the warm, earthen family that dominated Denver's housing stock a century before gray arrived.

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Spencer Melfi, CEO, Harmony Painting

Harmony Painting, a [Denver-based residential and commercial painting company](#), says the shift showed up on Front Range streets before it showed up in the forecasts.

"It's been interesting to watch," said Spencer Melfi, CEO of Harmony Painting. "For years, homeowners wanted

everything lighter, brighter, and gray. Today, more people are looking for warmth, personality, and colors that feel connected to the character of their home."

What the company sees in the field tracks closely with what the manufacturers published. The deep greens appearing in Baker have a direct counterpart in Benjamin Moore's Narragansett Green, part of its eight-color Color Trends 2026 palette. The warm creams spreading through Platt Park mirror the creamy whites that builder-industry reporting now recommends in place of stark white. The earthy tones going up alongside Denver's brick homes parallel Southwest Pottery, another color in Benjamin Moore's 2026 palette.

Warm neutrals are paint colors built on brown, taupe, clay, or greige undertones rather than blue or black ones — the difference between a beige that reads cozy and a gray that reads sterile. The distinction has become the central line in residential color selection.

The manufacturers' own color leadership framed 2026 in those terms. Andrea Magno, director of color marketing and design at Benjamin Moore, cited "the growing interest in the brown color family" when the company announced Silhouette in October 2025. Sue Wadden, director of color marketing at Sherwin-Williams, said of Universal Khaki that "understated and hardworking, warmer neutrals like Universal Khaki blend seamlessly with their counterparts and provide a foundation that sets the tone for an entire design."

Builder-focused trend analysis has been more direct still. A 2026 paint color guide published for home builders advises avoiding high-contrast grays, which it describes as declining in popularity, and states that warm minimalism is expected to replace cool gray dominance. On exteriors, it lists warm charcoal replacing blue-toned gray, creamy whites replacing stark white, and earthy green siding among the year's defining moves.

For Denver, the return to warmth is partly a return to origin. The city has protected its architectural inheritance since ratifying its Landmark Preservation Ordinance in 1967, and more than 300 individual landmarks and nearly 50 historic districts have been designated since. Harmony Painting says the palettes now trending tend to sit more comfortably on that housing stock than the grays of the 2010s did.

"The homes that seem to age the most gracefully usually aren't chasing what's fashionable," Melfi said. "They're choosing colors that belong to the architecture. When the color fits the house, it tends to feel timeless."

Color selection is only half the decision in Colorado. At 5,280 feet, Denver's thinner atmosphere means more ultraviolet exposure than most of the country, which fades and dries exterior finishes faster. Hail season runs from mid-April through mid-September, and the exterior painting window closes in October before freeze-thaw cycles begin. Deep and saturated colors in particular depend on product selection and pigment quality to hold their tone through that combination, which is why Harmony Painting treats the coating specification as being as consequential as the color chip.

The company provides [exterior painting for Denver homes](#), interior painting, cabinet refinishing, and drywall repair, and is an [EPA Lead-Safe Certified Firm](#), a credential that applies to the pre-1978 homes filling many of the neighborhoods where the color shift is most visible.

Homeowners weighing a change can get pricing without a sales visit through the company's instant online estimator.

The gray era is not ending because gray stopped working. It is ending because homeowners stopped asking for a house that looks like everyone else's.

About Harmony Painting

Harmony Painting is a Denver-based residential and commercial painting company serving Denver and the Front Range since 2011. The company provides interior and exterior painting, cabinet painting and refinishing, drywall repair, commercial and multifamily painting, and specialty coatings. Harmony Painting is an EPA Lead-Safe Certified Firm (NAT-F341962-1), is accredited by the Better Business Bureau, uses in-house crews rather than subcontractors, and holds a 4.9-star rating across more than 255 customer reviews. The company is based in the Platt Park neighborhood at 2008 S Corona St, Denver, CO 80210, and serves Denver, Lakewood, Arvada, Littleton, Englewood, Aurora, Centennial, Highlands Ranch, Thornton, Westminster, and Castle Rock.

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