What to know about painting a room black

Ellen Sturm Niz
TODAY

Apr. 22, 2016 at 1:09 PM

If you want to make a bold statement in your home, there is nothing more dramatic than a room with black walls. And, surprisingly, it works for a variety of design styles.

Cindy Gold

"As versatile as your favorite L.B.D., black has no limits in decor," says interior designer Windsor Smith, founder of Windsor Smith Home and author of Windsor Smith Homefront: Design for Modern Living. "I've used black walls for Bauhaus-inspired gentleman's rooms, action-packed family rooms, elegant dining spaces and Hamptons cottages."

RELATED: Widow gets a surprise home makeover from strangers — and it's beautiful

Michael Weis

If you want to try black walls in your home, know going in that it's all or nothing, Smith says. "One black wall doesn't cut it," she notes. "Black needs to surround you. It's less a color than an atmosphere."

To make it work, Smith suggests using a bone black finish for walls and gloss for millwork: "You need that kind of contrast — one absorbing and the other reflecting."

Afraid black-painted walls will look depressing? Decorate with the right pieces to elevate the mood, Smith advises. "Dense hues of black show best when combined with furnishings in undertones of red, blue or brown to create warmth and intensity.

There's no better companion for black walls than a rich, warm wood chest or a gilt mirror," she says. "For real excitement add white slip-covered sofas with deep indigo pillows for a look that feels mysterious and sophisticated, without feeling too slick."