

1/1/2025

Pantone's Controversial Pick

Ellen C. Wells



Back in early December, Jen Polanz and I were discussing the imminent announcement of Pantone's 2025 Color of the Year. Half-jokingly, I said I wouldn't be surprised if it was black (it's been that kind of year, ya know?). I was, however, completely surprised that it turned out to be brown. Or I should say Mocha Mousse.

Pantone calls it "a warming brown imbued with an inherent richness that nurtures with its suggestion of the delectable quality of cacao, chocolate and coffee, appealing to our desire for comfort."

Said Leatrice Eiseman, Executive Director at Pantone, of the color: "Underpinned by our desire for everyday pleasures, PANTONE 17-1230 Mocha Mousse expresses a level of thoughtful indulgence. Sophisticated and lush, yet at the same time an unpretentious classic, PANTONE 17-1230 Mocha Mousse extends our perceptions of the browns from being humble and grounded to embrace aspirational and luxe."

Laurie Pressman, the organization's VP, had this to say: "For Pantone Color of the Year 2025, we look to a mellow brown hue whose inherent richness and sensorial and comforting warmth extends further into our desire for comfort, and the indulgence of simple pleasures that we can gift and share with others."

Of all the years I've been following Pantone's Color of the Year announcements, this is my least favorite. By far. But it doesn't matter what I think about it, does it? It matters what the "gen pop" thinks. And it looks like there are lovers and haters of it out there. The New York Times' style editors are mixed on the color and the folks on Reddit are calling it "Sad Beige."

Speaking of beige, Formica Corporation sent out a newsletter shortly before Pantone's announcement that listed the company's Beige Trends for 2025. Perhaps society is indeed in store for a "mellow brown" year. **GP**