

When it comes to colour, experts like François Farion, the interior and colour design manager at Nissan, lend a helping hand. Again, the colour selection for Nissan and Infiniti must be different. "For body colours, Nissan is pretty straight and sometimes daring. You remember the yellow Xterra or the metallic orange Z?"

"It's straight shades with clear directions. For Infiniti, everything is much more nuance; it's more sophisticated. It's using slightly shifting pigments. At first you will see, oh it's another grey. But when you approach, there's a different feel to it. It's a grey with a little hint of maybe purple or green.

"Nissan is more simple and honest. The execution has to serve the purpose of the car. This is why we always refuse, for example, to paint the bumpers of the Xterra because Xterra is supposed to be an off-road vehicle and it has to stay true to its definition and disguising that into a luxury vehicle doesn't make sense.

"For interiors, Infiniti is looking at genuine wood with always a Japanese heritage. A little bit of magic and mystery is really a part of Infiniti. There's always a bit of a surprise and something different from a typical German execution, which is expected, always perfect, but a little bit boring at the same time."

So what's the hottest colour in cars? According to Farion, blues are hot; greens are not. "Greens were 23 per cent in the nineties and they're less than 3 per cent now. They're almost nothing."

But colour tastes vary depending on many external factors. "In any crisis, everybody says people default to silver. It actually didn't happen this time. What happened was people were defaulting to black or white. Silver is still okay, but it's not really doing great in [North America].

"People still choose bright colours for small, compact cars. We still have very good sales of bright colours for the Versa or Cube in North America. But for the other cars, any time there is a down in the market people default back to the neutrals."

*Excerpt from "From the Drawing Board to the Road"
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