

test-drive eco paints

These conscientious colors are virtually free of nasty, fume-producing VOCs*. We tested a dozen brands for coverage, odor and color, and found four high performers.

Eco-Spec semigloss
in *Linen White*
\$34.49/GALLON,
BENJAMINMOORE
.COM FOR STORES

Eco-Spec ✓✓✓✓✓

A superb all-around paint. The sweetish-smelling semigloss and eggshell finishes provide a highly durable, washable surface—ideal for a kid's room. The only drawback: no dark, saturated tints (which have a higher VOC content). Color chips are available through Benjamin Moore retailers.

Semigloss in *Utah Sky* \$34.49/GALLON, BENJAMINMOORE.COM FOR STORES

Yolo Colorhouse ✓✓✓✓✓

This product has an excellent consistency, pleasant finger-paint-like odor and zero VOCs. It comes in only 40 colors, but all of them are earthy and gorgeous, and the company offers poster-size color swatches (\$4.99 each).

Satin in *Water.05* \$35/GALLON, YOLOCOLORHOUSE.COM

Horizon ✓✓✓✓✓

It has a not-so-faint ammonia odor that lingers in your nose (still better-smelling than many regular paints). The coverage is fantastic, however, and the paint wipes easily off brushes. Color chips available through roddapaint.com.

Satin in *Althorp Park* \$24.49/GALLON, RODDAPAIN.COM

Safecoat ✓✓✓✓✓

Good consistency and application, but the paint separates in the can (eco paints have different binding agents than regular ones). It's not a huge deal; you'll just have to mix it more often. Zero VOCs means it's especially gentle for those with chemical sensitivities, but the pastel shades are a bit hospital-y. Samples (from \$3) available through sampledepartment.com.

Flat enamel in *Aged Bronze* \$35/GALLON, SAFECOATPAINT.COM FOR STORES

*Conventional paints release low-level toxic and headache-inducing emissions called volatile organic compounds (VOCs) for years after application.

YES, YOU CAN... install a showerhead

If you've got a wrench and 15 minutes, it's an easy upgrade. Protect the finish on the shower stem by covering the jaws of your adjustable wrench with duct tape, and then gently twist off the old head. Before attaching the new head, wrap Teflon tape clockwise around the stem's threads a few times to prevent leaks in the connection. Next, use the wrench to screw on the showerhead over the taped threads, taking care not to overtighten (stop when you feel resistance). Voilà—it's spa time.

"Bancroft" multifunction \$82.45 KOHLER.COM FOR STORES



good to know camouflage switch plates

Three great options that fade into the woodwork.



transparent

Inconspicuous clear plastic lets patterned wallpaper or a whimsical paint job shine through. *Creative Accents* \$2.89 MARKETEXPO.COM



mirrored

This sleek glass number disappears on a reflective wall. *Beveled-edge* \$8.95 GRACIOUS HOME (800) 338-7809



paintable wood

A decor-friendly model that can adapt to any room color. *Oak* \$19.99 GRACIOUS HOME (800) 338-7809