GRADUS

Colour & Contrast

A design guide for the use of Gradus products incorporating light reflectance values (LRVs)



August 2018

Introduction

This leaflet provides information about colour and contrast within the built environment and why it is important to provide a colour contrast between different surfaces for people with a visual impairment.

Details from research that has been undertaken into colour and contrast are included, in addition to recommendations from the latest legislation and guidelines, what light reflectance values (LRVs) are, why they are important and what the implications are for Gradus products.

Colour coded sheets for Gradus products are also available, detailing the LRV of each colour within the range.

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Colour & Contrast — Design Guidelines:

Improving access to buildings for all users in line with the Equality Act 2010 is fundamental and specifiers are using as many tools as possible to ensure that buildings are designed or refurbished in order to create an inclusive environment.

Studies, including Project Rainbow (a research project carried out by Reading University in conjunction with the Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB), The Guide Dogs for the Blind Association (GDBA) and ICI Paints) identified the importance of colour and contrast in improving the built environment for visually impaired people.

Project Rainbow identified that colour and contrast can provide designers with a mechanism for highlighting critical surfaces and special features and can provide the basis for wayfinding for visually impaired people.

Project Rainbow states that:

Critical Surfaces: Identified as large areas of an interior that form the impression of shape, space and proximity when scanned by a visually impaired person, i.e. floors, walls, ceilings, stairs and doors. Project Rainbow continues to inform that 'navigating through a building is much easier if these areas are colour contrasted' and expands on specific details:

Patterns: 'In general, some critical surfaces may be covered in a subtle pattern or striped finish, but highly contrasting colours in irregular, busy or geometric patterns are very unhelpful and should be avoided. If a pattern is used on a critical surface it is the colour that occupies the largest proportion of the area which is the most important.'

Reflective Finishes: 'On critical surfaces, the use of highly reflective shiny surfaces can cause considerable confusion for visually impaired and fully sighted people. Such finishes should always be used with caution, and wherever possible, matt or mid sheen finishes are recommended. This will also allow for the full benefit of colour differentiation to be realised.'

Two Colours Used: 'On critical surfaces where two colours are to be used...the upper part of the wall should be sufficiently different from the ceiling colour and the lower wall should be sufficiently different from the colours used for the floor.'

Patterns: patterned carpet and no stair edgings - looks like a ramp





Reflective finishes: flooring should not be shiny - looks like puddles of water





Two colours: panelling same colour as floor makes the room look bigger than it actually is





Colour & Contrast — Design Guidelines:

Special Features: Identified as areas that need to be highlighted to allow a building to be used effectively by visually impaired people, i.e. stair edgings, handrails and door opening furniture.

'Special features are additional areas, smaller that critical features, that need to be highlighted to allow the building to be used more easily by visually impaired people. Such features include sanitary ware, handrails, door handles, finger plates, switches, socket outlets, and stair nosing etc, all of which should be contrasted against the background against which they will be seen. Smaller items such as these will need a greater colour difference from their surroundings in order to be identified.'

Trim: 'Special attention is needed to those items used in an internal environment to improve the decorative appeal and overall finish of an interior. Such items, which include coving, skirting, architrave, dado rail etc, should be decorated in colours used on larger critical surfaces.'

Special features: stair edgings different colour and luminance to flooring to define step edges







Overall environment: good contrast between floor and wall and handrail and wall



BS 8300-2:2018 and The Building Regulations 2010: Approved Document M

British Standard BS 8300-2:2018 states that light reflectance values (LRVs) are used to assess visual contrast using the method of measurement detailed in BS 8493:2008+A1:2010. Approved Document M (ADM) directly refers to colour and contrast in the definitions section, stating:

'Contrast visually, when used to indicate the visual perception of one element of the building, or fitting within the building, against another means that the difference in light reflectance value between the two surfaces is greater than 30 points.'

Approved Document M (ADM) then refers to Colour, Contrast & Perception – Design Guidance for Internal Built Environments, Reading University (Project Rainbow).

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Source: Building Regulations - Access to and use of buildings - Approved Document M - 2004 Edition Crown Copyright material is reproduced with the permission of the Controller of HMSO and the Queen's Printer for Scotland.

Light Reflectance Values (LRVs) explained

The 'Colour Contrast & Perception' document produced by Reading University uses light reflectance values (LRVs) to measure colour and contrast in products/surfaces and determines whether or not a suitable contrast has been achieved between surfaces.

The study concluded that visually impaired people may be unable to perceive some or all colours. However, many people with a visual impairment can perceive light and dark and, therefore, LRVs are a suitable method to measure contrast.

Reflectance is the proportion of light that a surface reflects compared to the amount of light that falls on the surface. An LRV is a value given to a surface to denote the amount of light reflected.

LRVs are marked on a scale of 1 to 100 depending on the percentage of light reflected. Dark, matt and/or textured surfaces absorb a large amount of light and, therefore, have low reflectance values. On the other hand, light, glossy and/or smooth surfaces reflect the majority of light that falls on them and have high reflectance values.

For example, a colour with an LRV of 60 (which means it reflects 60% of the light that falls on it) will reflect more light than that of a colour with an LRV of 30.

Light reflectance scale



In order to achieve a suitable contrast between different surfaces, Project Rainbow and Approved Document M (ADM) recommend that there is at least a 30 point (not 30%) difference in the LRVs of the two surfaces.

How to measure LRVs

The British Standard BS 8493:2008+A1:2010, specifies the method of test to determine the light reflectance value (LRV) of different surfaces of materials, including preparation of specimens in standardised conditions.

Previous to this standard being published, two widely used methods of measurement had been used - the CIE L value (fluorescent light) and the CIE Y value (natural daylight), causing confusion and potentially dangerous specifications. This new standard has adopted the CIE Y value as the single consistent method of measurement for LRVs that is to be used across all industries.

BS 8493:2008+A1:2010 stipulates that a spectrophotometer (apparatus) is used to measure the LRV using CIE Tristimulus Y, Illuminant D65 (natural daylight) and the 10° colorimetric observer. Further to this, the standard details the number of measurements that need to be taken from each specimen, using a measurement grid (see figures 1 and figure 2 below).

The standard states that the results of the LRV measurements shall then be put into a test report.

All relevant Gradus products have been measured using the CIE Y value and a test report is available upon request.

Illustrations based on BS 8493:2008+A1:2010

- Light Reflectance Value (LRV) of a surface - method of test

Figure 1: measurement grid for specimens that do not have a pattern or textured surface i.e. accessories

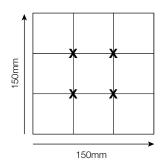
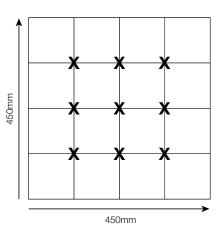


Figure 2: measurement grid for carpets and floorcoverings



LRVs should be considered when specifying:

Flooring Accessories



Stair Edgings

Wall Protection



Dual Rail High Impact Corner Guards Wall Guards Kick Plates

Matting



Primary Barrier Matting Secondary Barrier Matting

Carpets



Carpet

What the colour & contrast guidelines mean for Gradus flooring accessories:

Stair Edgings

Gradus is the market leader in contract flooring accessories and offers the widest choice of product solutions for stairs and floors. Gradus stair edgings help to reduce accidents on stairs by offering increased slip-resistance in both interior and exterior environments. The range of stair edging colours from Gradus allows specifiers and users to achieve colour contrast to the surrounding floorcovering, ensuring the provision of an inclusive environment for all building users.

BS 8300-2:2018: 'Each step nosing should incorporate a durable permanently contrasting continuous material for the full width of the stair on both the tread and the riser to help people who are blind or partially sighted appreciate the extent of the stair and identify individual treads. The contrasting material should extend 50mm to 65mm in width from the front edge of the tread and 30mm to 55mm from the top of the riser, and should contrast visually with the remainder of the tread and riser.'

Approved Document M (ADM): 'All nosings are made apparent by means of a permanently contrasting material 55mm wide on both the tread and the riser.'

Colour, Contrast & Perception (Project Rainbow): 'The nosing of every step in a flight of stairs should be adequately colour or luminance contrasted with the remainder of the step and the floor coverings adjacent to the top and bottom of the flight.'



Gradus skirtings can help define where the floor ends and the wall begins whilst providing a neat, attractive join between the wall and the floor. The wide choice of colours and materials available provides a solution for every environment from healthcare through to commercial office.

BS 8300-2:2018: 'To avoid giving the wrong impression about the size of a room, skirtings should have the same LRV as the wall so that the junction between the skirting and the floor marks the extent of the room.'

Colour, Contrast & Perception (Project Rainbow): 'Skirting should be either decorated the same colour as the wall, the same colour as the floor or, if different to one or the other or both, must be decorated in a colour which highlights even further the junction.'

Best practise is considered to be to match the skirting to the wall or floor if height is 100mm or less. If the skirting is over 100mm in height it should match the wall to ensure that the room does not appear larger than it actually is.



Stair Edging



Skirting

What the colour & contrast guidelines mean for Gradus wall protection & matting:

Wall Protection

Gradus Wall Protection systems provide an essential barrier against damage caused to walls, corners and doors by both pedestrian and wheeled traffic. The comprehensive range of products is available in a wide choice of colours to provide suitable contrast with surrounding surface finishes, aiding access around a building for all users.

BS 8300-2:2018:

Design of accessible and inclusive built environment

Explains how to design, build and manage the built environment in an inclusive way.

Projections: 'Columns, ducts and similar full height elements should not project more than 100mm into the access route within a lobby. If such projections are unavoidable, a guard rail or other hazard projection contrasting visually against the background should be provided to guide people who are blind or partially sighted around this type of projection.'

Visual contrast of doors and walls: 'All Internal doors should be identifiable and contrast visually with the surrounding wall and floor finishes, achieving at least 30 points LRV.'

Way-finding: 'Way-finding should use spatial, physical and environmental clues to help people plan and navigate moving from one place to another. Appropriate way-finding clues should be incorporated which could include but are not limited to visual communication e.g. visual clarity in terms of colour and contrast.'

Approved Document M (ADM): 'All door opening furniture contrasts visually with the surface of the door.'

'A handrail should contrast visually with the background against which it is seen, without being highly reflective.'

Colour, Contrast & Perception (Project Rainbow): 'Finger plates and kick plates on doors should be sufficiently different in colour to the door.'

'Handrails should be adequately contrasted with the adjacent wall finish.'

Barrier Matting

Gradus barrier matting provides an effective barrier against dirt and moisture at entrances, access points and circulation areas in all contract environments. All Gradus matting efficiently removes and retains soil and moisture from pedestrian and wheeled traffic to give superior long term performance and reduce slip accidents.

BS 8300-2:2018: 'The ingress of soil and surface moisture to buildings, or their transfer between adjacent internal areas, should be reduced to the lowest practicable level, e.g. through the use of appropriate entrance flooring systems, conforming to BS 7953.'

'Deep pile carpets and coir matting on the surface of the floor or within a matwell should not be used.'

'The LRV of a wall should be 30 points different from that of the ceiling and of the floor.'

Approved Document M (ADM): 'Floor surface materials within the lobby do not impede the movement of wheelchairs e.g. not coir matting, and changes in floor materials do not create a potential trip hazard.'

'The floor surface helps to remove rainwater from shoes and wheelchairs.'

'Where matwells are provided, the surface of the mat is level with the surface of the adjacent floor finish.'

BS 7953:1999: 'The function of the entrance flooring system is to reduce the incidence of slip accidents by reducing the amount of soil and moisture tracked onto hard and resilient floors.

- ... an entrance flooring system should have the following qualities:
- Removal and retention of soil
- Ease of cleaning and maintenance
- Retention of physical characteristics'





Primary barrier matting



Boulevard 6000 secondary barrier matting

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What the colour & contrast guidelines mean for Gradus carpets:

Carpet

Gradus is a manufacturer of premium quality carpet tile and plank, broadloom and impervious backed carpets which excel in terms of functionality, aesthetics and ease of maintenance.

Utilising a range of high performance yarns, Gradus' extensive range of carpets is suitable for a wide variety of contract applications including commercial offices, healthcare and education environments.

There are a number of colour and contrast design guidelines to assist with specifying a suitable floorcovering in order to achieve an inclusive environment in line with Equality Act 2010:

BS 8300-2:2018: 'Floor patterning that could be mistaken for steps, e.g. stripes, should not be used for floors in corridors.'

'Deep pile carpet should not be used on stair treads.'

'Differences in LRV should be used to assess the degree of visual contrast between surfaces such as floors, walls, doors and ceilings and between key fittings/fixtures and surrounding surfaces. The LRV of a wall should be 30 points different from that of the ceiling and of the floor.'

'Large, repeating patterns that incorporate bold contrasting colours or simulate steps should not be used for any floor surface.'

Approved Document M (ADM): 'In order to help people with visual impairment to appreciate the size of a space they have entered, or to find their way around, there should be a visual contrast between the wall and ceiling, and between the wall and floor. Such attention to surface finishes should be coupled with good natural light and artificial lighting design.'

'Floor surface finishes with patterns that could be mistaken for steps or changes in level are avoided.'

Colour, Contrast & Perception (Project Rainbow): 'In general, some critical surfaces may be covered in a subtle pattern or striped finish, but highly contrasting colours in irregular, busy or geometric patterns are very unhelpful and should be avoided. If a pattern is used on a critical surface it is the colour that occupies the largest proportion of the area which is the most important.'



Lafite Connect Design carpet tile



Stratus carpet tile

Colour Coded LRV Sheets and Additional Information

A sheet has been produced for each of the flooring accessories, wall protection, matting and floorcoverings ranges offered by Gradus, depicting all colours within the range and the light reflectance value (LRV), using the Y value method of measurement, which corresponds to each colour. Individual sheets are available from Gradus technical support on 01625 428922.

If you would like additional information or advice on LRVs, how they relate to Gradus products or a copy of a test report, contact Gradus Technical Support on 01625 428922.

How LRVs are measured

These values have been determined with reference to the CIE Tristimulus Y₁₀9 Illuminant D65 and the 10° colorimetric observer, in accordance with BS 8493:2008+A1:2010. The Y co-ordinate represents lightness and extends from 0 (black) to 100 (white) and has been used as a measure of light reflectance values (LRVs).

LRVs for stair edgings - channel colours

PVC-u hardnose - satin finish



PVC-u hardnose - metallic finish



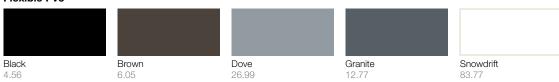
Remaining stair edgings channel colours continued on the next page

How LRVs are measured

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LRVs for stair edgings - channel colours continued

Flexible Pvc





How LRVs are measured

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LRVs for stair edgings - insert colours

Xtra-grip inserts



Interior standard finish



How LRVs are measured

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LRVs for stair edgings - insert colours

Interior grained finish







Brown



Dove



Granite

Standard exterior







Hurricane LRV: 30.43



Sandstorm LRV: 50.77



Tornado LRV: 4.49

Heavy duty exterior



Ash 24.77



Avalanche



Charcoal



Firestorm

How LRVs are measured

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LRVs for stairtile - insert colours









58.38



44.92

How LRVs are measured

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LRV for safety track™



Black

How LRVs are measured

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LRVs for skirtings, capping strips & accessories

Standard



How LRVs are measured

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LRVs for SureProtect Endure®



How LRVs are measured

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LRVs for SureProtect Design®

Woods















Metals & Composites



41.4



051 Composite 16.0



081 Copper 20.9







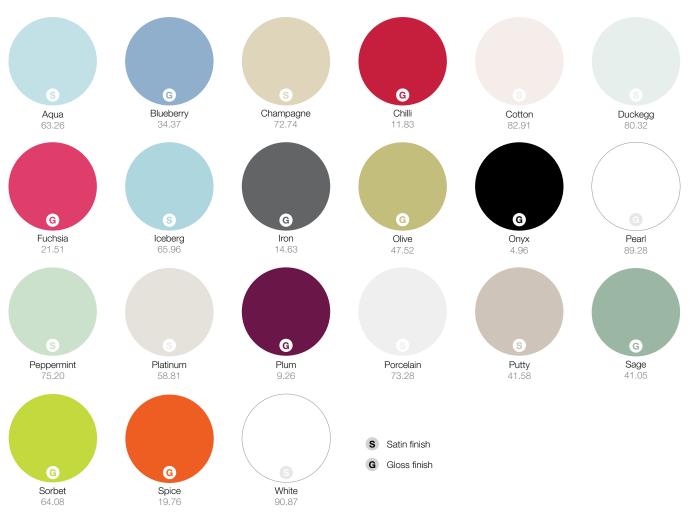


T Textured finish

How LRVs are measured

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LRVs for SureProtect Pure®

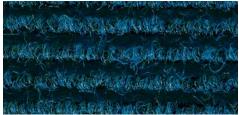


How LRVs are measured

These values have been determined with reference to the CIE Tristimulus Y_{10}^9 Illuminant D65 and the 10° colorimetric observer, in accordance with BS 8493:2008+A1:2010. The Y co-ordinate represents lightness and extends from 0 (black) to 100 (white) and has been used as a measure of light reflectance values (LRVs).

LRVs for Boulevard 1500





Calculus 9.03

Marinus 2.71





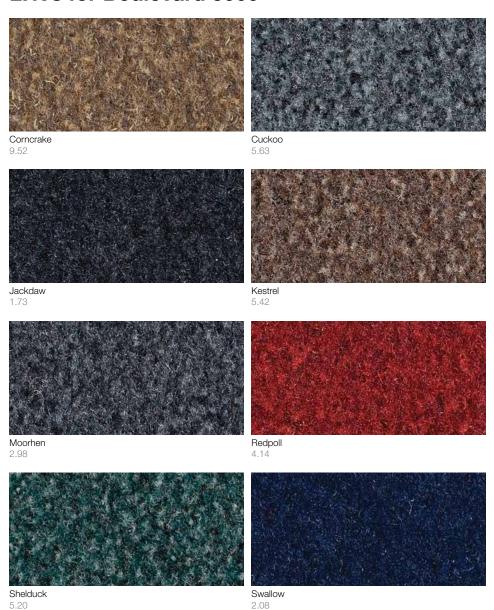
Tempestas 2.14

Terra 10.89

How LRVs are measured

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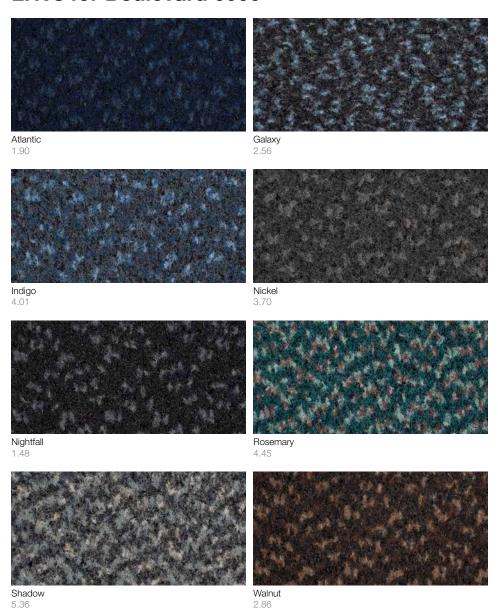
LRVs for Boulevard 5000^{HD}



How LRVs are measured

These values have been determined with reference to the CIE Tristimulus Y₁₀9 Illuminant D65 and the 10° colorimetric observer, in accordance with BS 8493:2008+A1:2010. The Y co-ordinate represents lightness and extends from 0 (black) to 100 (white) and has been used as a measure of light reflectance values (LRVs).

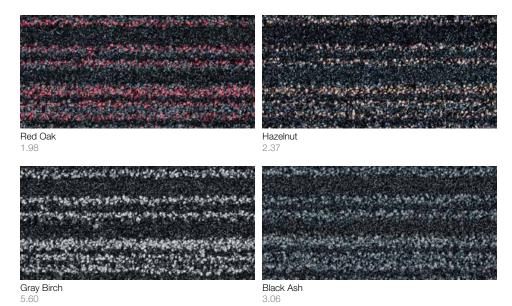
LRVs for Boulevard 6000



How LRVs are measured

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LRVs for Boulevard 7000



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LRVs Boulevard StripeHD





Magpie

Raven 2.48

How LRVs are measured

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How LRVs are measured

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LRVs Bodega GRADUS



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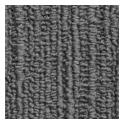


Ironstone LRV 10.02



06709

Himley LRV 3.68



06708 Brunswick LRV 8.12



06711 Tonbridge LRV 4.98

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LRVs Carezone GRADUS



How LRVs are measured

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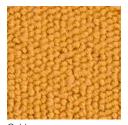
How LRVs are measured

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Please note: Due to the limitations of the printing process, colours within this leaflet should not be relied upon for colour matching.

An accurate colour match can only be achieved by requesting the relevant product sample(s) from Gradus Technical Support on 01625 428922.

Basalt LRV 7.49



LRV 25.24

LRV 24.85

Gold Loop Pile 101 Cut Pile 777



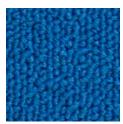
Orange
Loop Pile 102 LRV 16.36
Cut Pile 666 LRV 15.31





Green
Loop Pile 104 LRV 18.50
Cut Pile 444 LRV 18.10



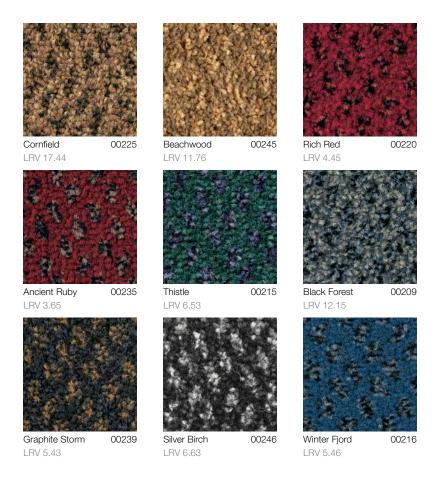


Blue
Loop Pile 106 LRV 4.93
Cut Pile 222 LRV 4.56

How LRVs are measured

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LRVs Genus GRADUS



How LRVs are measured

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LRVs Lafite GRADUS

LRVs Lafite - Plains



How LRVs are measured

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LRVs Lafite GRADUS

LRVs Lafite - Stripes







Maronne 06811 LRV 8.63



Lyon LRV 8.88

How LRVs are measured

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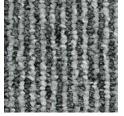
LRVs Lafite Connect - Plains



How LRVs are measured

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LRVs Lafite Connect - Stripes



LCS13 LRV 15.49



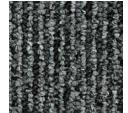
LCS15 LRV 13.70



LCS17 LRV 9.19



LCS19 LRV 7.55



LCS14 LRV 6.96



LCS16 LRV 8.48



LCS18 LRV 8.16



LCS20 LRV 5.19

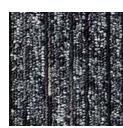
LRVs Lafite Connect - Space



LCSPACE28 LRV 10.24



LRV 7.84



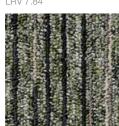
LCSPACE30 LRV 8.36



LCSPACE31 LRV 3.90



LCSPACE32 LRV 9.30



LCSPACE33 LRV 8.02

How LRVs are measured

These values have been determined with reference to the CIE Tristimulus Y₁₀9 Illuminant D65 and the 10° colorimetric observer, in accordance with BS 8493:2008+A1:2010. The Y co-ordinate represents lightness and extends from 0 (black) to 100 (white) and has been used as a measure of light reflectance values (LRVs).

LRVs Latour² GRADUS

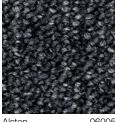


How LRVs are measured

These values have been determined with reference to the CIE Tristimulus Y₁₀9 Illuminant D65 and the 10° colorimetric observer, in accordance with BS 8493:2008+A1:2010. The Y co-ordinate represents lightness and extends from 0 (black) to 100 (white) and has been used as a measure of light reflectance values (LRVs).

LRVs Latour - Stripes





Alston 0600 LRV 6.45

How LRVs are measured

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LRVs Predator GRADUS

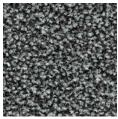


How LRVs are measured

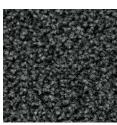
These values have been determined with reference to the CIE Tristimulus Y₁₀9 Illuminant D65 and the 10° colorimetric observer, in accordance with BS 8493:2008+A1:2010. The Y co-ordinate represents lightness and extends from 0 (black) to 100 (white) and has been used as a measure of light reflectance values (LRVs).



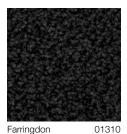




Euston 01314 LRV 9.12



Westminster 01315 LRV 5.61



Farringdon LRV 1.80

These values have been determined with reference to the CIE Tristimulus Y₁₀9 Illuminant D65 and the 10° colorimetric observer, in accordance with BS 8493:2008+A1:2010. The Y co-ordinate represents lightness and extends from 0 (black) to 100 (white) and has been used as a measure of light reflectance values (LRVs).





How LRVs are measured

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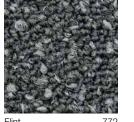
LRVs Stratus GRADUS



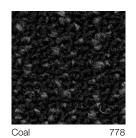
How LRVs are measured

These values have been determined with reference to the CIE Tristimulus Y₁₀9 Illuminant D65 and the 10° colorimetric observer, in accordance with BS 8493:2008+A1:2010. The Y co-ordinate represents lightness and extends from 0 (black) to 100 (white) and has been used as a measure of light reflectance values (LRVs).

LRVs Streetwise Design - Originals







LRV 1.95





Slate LRV 8.12

Clay LRV 14.42

LRV 5.34

LRVs Streetwise Design - Brights



LRV 4.08







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How LRVs are measured

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How LRVs are measured

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GRADUS LRVs Volnay



Natural Straw 00318 LRV 21.68



Camouflage 00314 LRV 5.26



Azurite Blue 00322 LRV 2.84



Charcoal LRV 2.75

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