



## home grown

The story of New Zealand's own paint company which turns 65 this year.

**R**esene was started in 1946 by an Eastbourne builder, Ted Nightingale, who needed an alkali-resistant paint to cover his concrete buildings.

There was nothing available at the time, so in typical Kiwi style he developed his own – in a cement mixer in his garage! In response to demand from other builders, Ted commenced producing his paint on a commercial basis under the brand name Stipplecote.

As well as Stipplecote, Ted manufactured a range of admixtures, such as No Bond and Curecrete, which are still around today. The initial garage production facility was superseded by a factory in an old stable in Tinakori Road, Wellington, later that year.

In 1951, Ted Nightingale launched the first waterborne paint in New Zealand under the brand name Resene - a name derived from the main ingredient of paint, resin. The move to a new larger factory was followed by a period of innovation.

Waterborne paints had a very slow start. The marketplace was cautious and had difficulty

understanding that a waterborne paint would not wash off the walls with water. It was only after a massive sales effort, including demonstrations run in shop windows, that waterborne paint sales really took off.

Resene's perseverance paid off with a period of rapid expansion during the late 1950s and early 1960s. As the emphasis shifted away from cement-based paints towards waterborne paints, the company name was changed to Resene Paints Ltd in 1977.

Several key decisions followed that in hindsight proved pivotal. The first was to increase factory space by shifting to Gough Street in Seaview, Lower Hutt, where the company remained for 25 years before shifting to its current location in Naenae, Lower Hutt in 1992.

The second and probably most crucial decision was to completely overhaul the company's marketing. In a huge gamble, Resene decided to risk alienating the industry's traditional sales outlets by sidestepping them in favour of using its

own staff to sell directly to the trade.

In 1970, Resene employed a sales manager and set about opening branches throughout New Zealand. Initially each branch consisted of a warehouse and a sales representative who drove around calling on tradespeople.

Resene initially focused on the professional market in Wellington and then rolled this strategy out to focus on towns like those in the Hawkes Bay – areas where the big companies were less focused. Only once Resene had established itself in most smaller areas, did Resene increase its focus on Auckland.

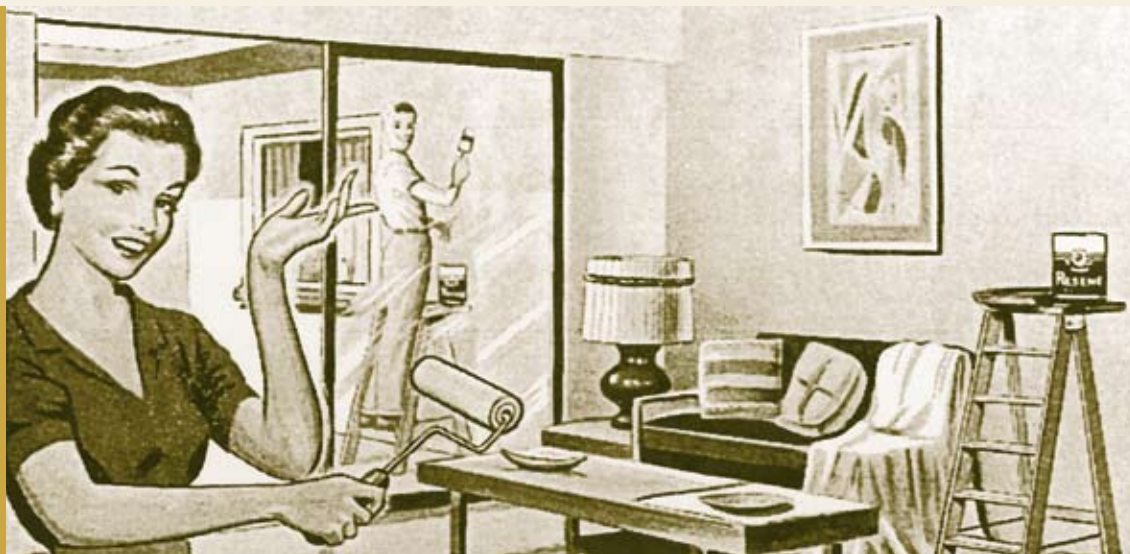
In between calls to tradespeople, the Resene sales representatives called on the architectural profession, Government departments and local bodies. Many began to specify Resene paints on contracts.

In 1972, Tony Nightingale, Ted's son, took over the operation of the company (today, it's run by Tony's son Nick). 1975 saw the launch of the first of a national chain of retail stores. This move occurred almost by accident. Tony

**Top** Resene founder Ted Nightingale.

**Right** An illustration from an early advertisement for Resene waterborne paints.

Resene Buttery White   
Resene Fleetwood





**Above** A series of early advertisements showing the benefits of innovative Resene waterborne paints.

**Below** An early Resene colour chart and an early advertisement for Resene Stipplecote, screen-printed on tin.

bought a wallpaper company that happened to own a store in Marion Street, Wellington. It was at this site that the first store, originally called the Marion Street paint shop, was established. Following overwhelming success, the ColorShop concept was conceived and duplicated in other regions.

Despite this foray into retail, the mainstay of Resene's business has continued to be specifiers and professional painters who demand a high quality paint that is easy to apply, a wide range of colours and a high level of service and problem solving ability from the paint manufacturer.

Resene also built itself a reputation as the colour leader, with a number of firsts:

- In 1969 Resene set up a new system of colour, the British Standard Specification colour range (BS2660 range), which provided a range of strong colours at a time when we were used to pastels. The stronger BS4800 range followed in 1973. The launch of the BS5252 colour range in 1976 was a world first.
- Resene pioneered the development of coloured paint bases, where previously only white was used.
- Resene was the first company to offer a full range of testpots in 1981.
- In 1985, the Total Colour Multi-Finish System was launched, an extensive range of colours with interlinked tinting systems for both interior and exterior.
- Resene delivered virtual painting with the launch of Resene EzyPaint in 1999, available on CD or as a free download from the Resene website ([www.resene.com](http://www.resene.com)).
- In 1999, the first of the Resene fashion fandecks, The Range 2000, was released showcasing fashion colours for the coming years.

Throughout this time, Resene has also been known as a leader in the development of environmentally friendlier products from the basic innovation of Resene waterborne paints to the removal of lead from decorative paints in the late 1960s well ahead of other manufacturers. To reinforce this position, Resene joined the Environmental Choice programme in 1996.

In 2004 Resene introduced the Resene PaintWise paint and paint packaging recovery programme, the first comprehensive paint and paint packaging product stewardship programme in this part of the world.

Resene produces both decorative and protective coatings for residential, commercial and industrial needs. Protective coatings technology was first purchased in 1977 from Giant Products. In 1999 Resene developed and released its own range of engineered coating systems.

Resene also has a presence in both Fiji, servicing the South Pacific market, and Australia. Closer to home, the Resene Group also includes Altex Coatings Ltd, a Tauranga based manufacturer of marine, industrial and protective coatings, Resene Automotive and Performance Coatings, and Rockcote Resene Systems, providing cladding systems. Resene also exports paint and colour technology to offshore markets. Since 1946 Resene has certainly learnt plenty about its products and customers.

With many decades of experience under its belt, and three generations of the Nightingale family keeping the momentum going, Resene has shown that kiwi ingenuity can win through delivering innovative and high quality durable products, colours and services to a range of customers.

Based on history, Resene's future is guaranteed to be just as colourful an adventure! **H**

