



# iconic inspiration

Inspired by a style icon's paint range, this soothing villa interior is a beautiful yet unpretentious home for a busy family.

When Morri Alexander looked at the Karen Walker Paints range from Resene, she knew she had to have it in her own home. She had always admired the fashion designer as a style icon, and the launch of her paint range coincided with the renovation of the Alexanders' Auckland villa.

"I just loved the colours. They all work so well together and have that lovely muddled look," says Morri. >

**Left** The back living area is the family's favourite space, opening out to a terrace and pool.

**Above** The exterior colour scheme is in Resene Foggy Grey double strength with Resene Armadillo trims, on advice from designer Peta Tearle.

words Sharon Newey  
pictures Frances Oliver







**Above** The front living room is more of a winter room, painted in Resene Quarter Tapa. The coffee table was ordered online from Taranaki.

**Above right** The wide hallway was one reason the Alexanders bought the house and has often been used as an extra play space for the boys. The extra high French doors bring light from the living room.

**Opposite** White-painted furniture dominates the dining area, while the funky metal chairs were bought off TradeMe.

**Did you know?** When painting inside consider using Resene Zylone Sheen VOC Free – it is free of unwanted volatile organic compounds, which gives you better indoor air quality.

- Resene Black White
- Resene Ecru White
- Resene Quarter Tapa

The main colour used is Resene Ecru White, which Morri loves for its ability to change with the light and season. “At the back of the house it’s light and fresh, but gets moodier, the further forward you go.” At some times of the day it has a strong green undertone, which Morri particularly likes.

Resene Black White has been used on all of the trims for definition. It looks particularly good against the dark-stained timber floor.

Other colours used in the house are Resene Taupe Grey double strength in son Tom’s room and Resene Quarter Tapa in the front living room. Even the exterior weatherboards are inspired by the Karen Walker Paints range – Resene Foggy Grey double strength. The exterior trims are Resene Armadillo.

Morri and her husband Pete bought the villa in 2002 and embarked on renovations a couple of years later. A dingy rear lean-to was rebuilt as the dining area. A double garage was added beside the house and slightly lower, providing the perfect space above for a new master bedroom, ensuite and small computer station.

Architectural designer Greg Clode designed the extensions: “He was fantastic and came up with some innovative solutions,” says Morri.

The couple had considered adding a second storey to the house but would have had to lower the soaring villa ceilings, “which would have been a crime”. >



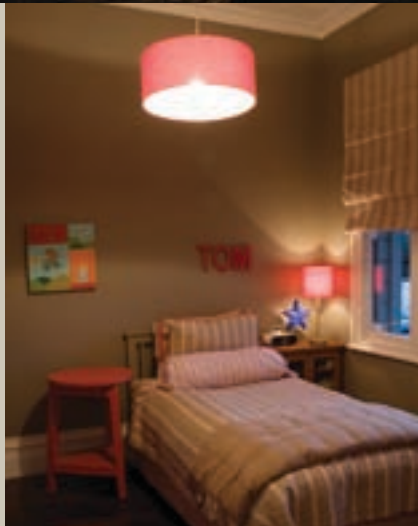
“At the back of the house it’s light and fresh, but gets moodier, the further forward you go,” Morri says of Resene Ecu White.



**Above** The family bathroom vanity caters perfectly for the two boys, with twin basins, mirrors and drawers.

**Right** Eldest son Tom chose Resene Taupe Grey double strength for his room – on careful guidance from his mother!

**Opposite** The butler's sink and traditional taps, from In Residence, were a non-negotiable for Morri in a kitchen designed by Neville Barnett of AQS. The cabinets are Resene Ecu White.



You have to modernise the basic structure and services “otherwise it’s all looks and no comfort.”

The house’s traditional layout was largely unchanged, as are the decorative details like the board-and-batten ceilings, deep skirting boards and tiled cast iron fireplaces. “Those are the sorts of things that give these old houses their charm,” says Morri.

She has always loved the proportions of villas but believes that you have to modernise the basic structure and services, such as insulation and the correct heating, “otherwise it’s all looks and no comfort,” she laughs.

There are often compromises, for example Morri would rather have taken down the part wall between the dining and sitting areas but it was structurally necessary. The couple also would have liked a high rock wall at the front of the property but zoning requirements disallowed it. Instead, a tall hedge adds privacy and is part of a planting plan by local gardeners Katherine Aitken and Sandra Jones.

Inside, the family bathroom was moved from the sunny west side of the house to the east while a separate shower was sacrificed to make way for a second toilet.

The vanity was made by Neville Barnett of AQS Furniture from a photo Morri showed him. He also designed the traditional-style panel-doored kitchen, finished in Resene Ecu White. “He made it such a low-stress process. Kitchen renovations can get pretty hysterical but he just took the heat right out of it.”

Morri has nothing but praise for the various design professionals involved with the renovation – often a sign that it’s more to do with her attitude as a client. Morri shrugs: “Things go wrong. You can’t get too stressed about it.”

Morri is all passion and no pretensions when it comes to explaining her decorating style. “I just like what I like.” Having lived in England for some years, she developed a taste for the simple pared-back interiors of English and French farmhouses.






She has always loved painted furniture – long before its recent return to fashion – although she likes to mix it up with timber pieces and other colours. Much of it is white but there is a lavender-grey chest of drawers in the guest bedroom and a grey trolley in the family sitting area.


She has gathered most pieces during the years; nothing too fancy or expensive. The funky metal dining chairs are off TradeMe; other pieces are from various stores around Auckland. The hall cabinet once belonged to Morri's grandparents and a painted side table in the dining area was made by her great grandfather. "I like the mix of old and new, and having things that have history."

She likes paler decorating colours because they are simple and easy to live with, are a good backdrop for artworks and allow other elements to be changed around. **H**

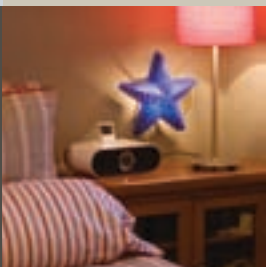



Get the interior look with Resene SpaceCote Low Sheen tinted to Resene Ecru White.

Get the kitchen look with Resene ArmourCat tinted to Resene Ecru White.

Resene Ecru White 

Get the look with Resene SpaceCote Low Sheen tinted to Resene Taupe Grey double strength.



Resene Armadillo 




Get the exterior look with Resene Lumbersider tinted to Resene Foggy Grey double strength.


Trims: Resene Armadillo


Resene Foggy Grey 

Kitchen taps: In Residence


Kitchen: Neville Barnett, AQS Furniture




Resene Taupe Grey 



Sofas: Living Edge

Resene Hot Spot 

Resene Hot Chocolate 

turn the page for alternative looks to the Alexander dining room



- ^ The walls are Triple White Pointer and the trims and ceilings are Resene Half Sea Fog. The ceramic hanging birds are by Bob Steiner and the Chilli pendant light is by Katie Brown, both from Essenze, [www.essenze.co.nz](http://www.essenze.co.nz).

Resene  
Half Sea Fog 

illustration Bruce Bryant



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Jonathon Room Divider,  
8-cube in ebony

Artisans Home  
[www.artisanshome.co.nz](http://www.artisanshome.co.nz)

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Cortica cork tiles in Quicksilver

Cork Concepts  
[www.corksupplies.co.nz](http://www.corksupplies.co.nz)



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Ignite curtains in Charcoal

Resene Curtain Collection  
[www.resene.co.nz/curtains](http://www.resene.co.nz/curtains)



Resene Triple White Pointer

Resene Vindaloo

Resene Half Diesel

Resene Half Sea Fog



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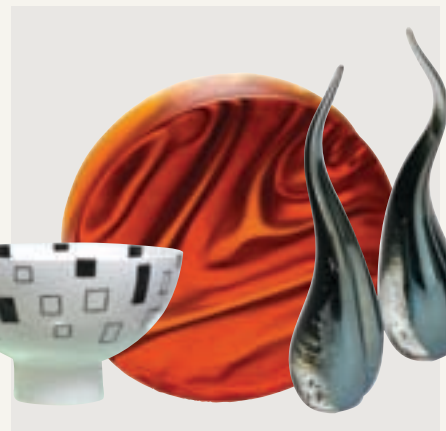
Magneto dining chairs in white  
(used with Riga dining table)

Harvey Norman  
[www.harveynorman.co.nz](http://www.harveynorman.co.nz)

>

Suzannah Bridges Carpay bowl  
Jenny Smith Silk Road Circle  
Katie Brown Seeds

EsSENze  
[www.essenze.co.nz](http://www.essenze.co.nz)



This intimate space has a retro-meets-contemporary look created by the mix of fantastical sculptures on the wall, objects displayed on the shelves and the orange lights suspended above the table. The silver cork floors give a modern feel and echo the splash of silver in the Resene Ignite curtains. Repetition of colour, shape and objects is the perfect way to bring balance to the space. Walls in Resene Triple White Pointer tie the elements together. The scheme has both strength and sensitivity, with boldly patterned curtains and a strongly shaped table contrasting with translucent lights and sculptural accessories.

Angela Fell,  
Resene colour consultant,  
suggests this scheme:

*Angela Fell*

phone 09 259 2736 mobile 0274 463 022 email [angela.fell@resene.co.nz](mailto:angela.fell@resene.co.nz)



# alternative solution



^ The walls are in Resene Double Tuna, the trims are Resene Alabaster and the ceiling is Resene Double Alabaster.


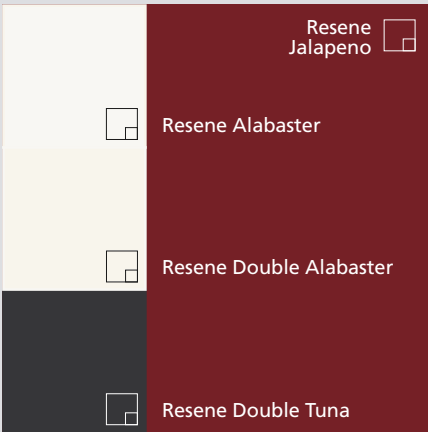
Resene   
White Thunder

illustration Bruce Bryant



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Valentino dining table and chairs  
Milano Furniture  
[www.milanofurniture.com.au](http://www.milanofurniture.com.au)



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Dinosaur Designs - Drop  
Designer Rugs  
[www.designerrugs.com.au](http://www.designerrugs.com.au)  
  
<  
Cupolone light  
Milano Furniture  
[www.milanofurniture.com.au](http://www.milanofurniture.com.au)



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Stark Console side table  
Moore At Home  
[www.mooreathome.com.au](http://www.mooreathome.com.au)  
  
>  
Biba mirror  
Hermon & Hermon  
[www.hermonhermon.com.au](http://www.hermonhermon.com.au)



This beautiful double height dining room is flooded with natural light and leads on to the terrace adjoining the pool. Resene Alabaster trims highlight the strong architectural character of the space and the Resene Double Tuna walls, working as a neutral, gives a sophisticated edge to the room. The red kitchen cabinetry and red accents add a warm yet dramatic touch, while the strong architectural design of the table creates an impressive statement. Use of glass as the tabletop ensures that the room has a light spacious feel and the red dotted rug adds a whimsical touch. The elegant pendant light creates impact and interest without being overpowering.

Fidelma Warner  
and Angela Piper  
of Piper + Warner  
suggest this scheme:

Phone +61 417 689 658 or +61 401 848 701 [www.piperwarner.com.au](http://www.piperwarner.com.au)