



Oamaru Opera House

Oamaru

 Resene Broadway

The Oamaru Opera House was officially opened on October 7, 1907 and remains largely in its original condition, having been restored in 2010, winning a NZIA Heritage award.

The foyer café was originally proposed as an independent business however in 2013 the owner/operator decided to close its operation and the Opera House saw an opportunity to run this as part of its portfolio. When looking at the café under a review it was recognised that it was attracting a very small segment of the local market and that there was an opportunity to attract more of the business community for meetings, functions and live music events.

Design Federation was engaged to come up with a refreshed new look that would be more attractive to the business community.

The concept was to retain opulence and sophistication with a refreshed palette that is sympathetic to both the heritage and functionality of the space. As part of the refresh Design Federation looked at ways the interiors could engage the community more, whether from the street or within the space.

The key component of the refresh was a new colour palette, which was developed under the Resene Heritage colour range. The combination of greys and whites brought a more contemporary and dramatic feel to the space while still retaining its traditional charm. The space has become more eclectic in its look and feel giving the Opera House more scope with the development of its interiors in the future and the attraction of events that target different markets within the community.

As part of the interior strategy Design Federation wanted the café to be more interactive and engaged with the community outside and therefore removed the large drapery in the space to connect potential customers walking by with the café. High tables and stools were positioned at the windows to show the life within the building from the street. As part of this, the removal of the drapery meant that more natural light flowed into the space giving a brighter and more open feel that complemented the new darker palette.

To bring more drama to the space, large black chandeliers replaced the more traditional lighting. Large ottoman that were used in other areas of the building were re-upholstered with hardwearing white faux leather to give people another seating option when waiting for takeaway



Client: Oamaru Opera House www.oamaruoperahouse.co.nz
Electrician: Paul Hore, PH Electrical
Interior Designer: Annabel Berry, Design Federation www.designfederation.co.nz
Painting contractor: A1 Painters
Upholsterer: Murray Frew
Wallpaper installer: Dave Gresham



coffees or lunches. As part of this they were positioned to maximise viewing of the large artworks in the space. Occasional chairs were also upholstered in a range of velvet fabrics to complement the opulence and colour palette on the walls.

Alongside the interior changes, marketing material was brought to life within black ornate frames on the walls and historical pictures of the Opera House through the times were also included.

The outcome of the design is that it has brought new life to the interior to provide a multi-use venue that is attractive to clients for meetings, functions and corporate events.

The Opera House believe the outcome of the refresh has seen a dramatic increase in engagement from the local community. As part of their marketing going forward

they will be showcasing the cafe for conferences, live music and business functions.

The timeless colour palette was taken from the Resene Heritage chart and inspired by design movements in English country manors where spaces are given a more contemporary feel while maintaining a view to their heritage.

At the entry a soft grey of **Resene SpaceCote Low Sheen in Resene Quarter Stack** was used to ensure the entrance was both bright and sophisticated.

The cream walls in the café were replaced with a dark **Resene Double Stack** colour palette to bring more drama to the space. The darker wall colour highlighted the major artworks from the Colin Wheeler collection, which dominate the two main walls of the area.

The bar area maintained its black theme which complemented the grey and white tones. Large beams on the ceilings were painted in **Resene Double Mondo** to complement the **Resene Half Stack** ceilings. While this palette is quite neutral the use of complementary dark grey and white provides the dramatic backdrop for a range of events and functions within the space.

The key challenge with the space was to ensure that the interiors not only complemented the heritage nature of the building but also met public approval. Changes had to be subtle and in keeping with the original intention of the building while giving the Opera House more business development options in the future.

