

Diary of a renovation

The fourth installment following the renovation of Dunedin style meister **TAMSIN COOPER's** family home

Can we update our kitchen using only Resene paint, magnets and a little winter craft? This is my vision - to take our tired kitchen lean-to from its odd combination of 1970s tongue-in-groove ceiling, faded wooden windowsills and contemporary fittings and give it a more cohesive up-to-date look!

Our house was built around 1880, but our current kitchen is not original. It was added to the house in the '70s by a previous owner (to whom, I might add, I'm eternally grateful). If they hadn't had the foresight to build this kitchen, we would have been cooking in what is now the bathroom and bathing under the stairs - the original bath was somehow squeezed under the staircase. I have no idea how this worked and Luke, my six-foot-something husband, would certainly have found the arrangement challenging.

I love being in our kitchen - it has the most wonderful outlook over the garden (that is, if I ignore the ever-encroaching weeds which can make me feel quite panicky if I dwell on them). The current view features the fiery leaves of our Japanese maple and an impressive stand of cabbage trees that are at least 80 years old and home to wood pigeons who love to feast on their berries.

The other day I scooted out the kitchen door to fill the bird feeder, after spotting three hungry tui looking for sugar water. They haven't returned yet, but I'm sure they will when it gets really cold.

From the kitchen window you can also spy our three black-and-white chooks pecking around their run - or disappearing into the nearby trees to roost with a riot of joyful cackles if we forget to turn them in for the night!

The kitchen is an odd combination of 1970s tongue-and-groove, faded windowsills and modern fittings

Expert tips for using magnetic paint:

- Resene Magnetic Magic Base Coating is made using iron oxides – so the paint is very heavy for its volume. You'll need to apply several coats of paint and stir it a lot between coats otherwise the iron filings sink to the bottom of the tin.
- Because of the paint's thickness, it's best to use it to cover a delineated area such as an entire wall.
- Prepare and prime the surface and apply Resene Magnetic Magic Base Coating in smooth coats by brush, high-solids roller sleeve or spray. (Using a roller will give it a slight orange-peel effect.)
- You don't need to sand between coats, but you must apply two or more coats to get a sufficiently thick finish. The smoother and thicker the final surface, the stronger the magnetic effect will be.
- Once dry, check your magnets hold, and add extra coats if necessary for a stronger magnetic effect.
- Finish with two topcoats in your favourite colour, using Resene SpaceCote Low Sheen Waterborne Enamel.

Walls: Resene Carefree
Door: Resene Lusta-Glo Black



Resene Blackboard Paint

Beyond our garden is Jubilee Park, which is full of huge old oaks, ash trees, Douglas firs and poplars, all planted around the time our house was built, and stretching for acres. I stand at the kitchen sink dreaming we live on a country estate! It sounds idyllic, but no property is perfect, and the downside to all this is that we get absolutely no sun from now until spring.

Now comes an exercise in hunkering down for the looming winter and turning the house into a cosy and welcoming retreat during the cold, dark months.

Refreshing the kitchen with a lick of fresh paint and rearranging my treasures will be a cost-effective step towards this – and will help cheer me up immensely! We're planning to turn a corner of the kitchen near the back door into a more attractive and practical area. Up till now it's been a little neglected as it's literally behind the back door. It is one of those areas that probably only I notice.

I love the philosophy of only using objects that are practical or beautiful (better if they're both) and I believe the smallest, most neglected space can be improved and hopefully even produce the odd sigh of satisfaction.

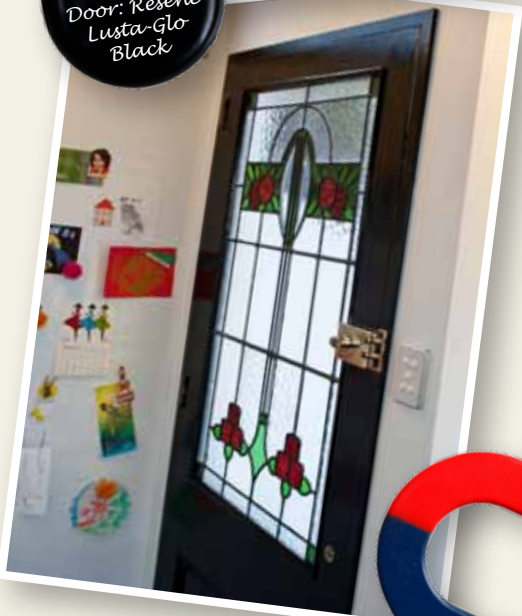
In this corner we've decided to get

a little contemporary and turn one entire wall into a magnetic noticeboard and another into a painted blackboard. I'd love to update the pantry but the budget won't quite stretch at this stage. At present the top of this cupboard is a hodge-podge of old vintage trays, the last remaining bottles of elderflower champagne and a large glass battery case I use as a vase. More jumble than visual masterpiece!

The magnetic noticeboard is a response to two years of family photos, kids' artwork, invites, chores charts and school notices falling off the fridge. I've been trying to think of a noticeboard solution for ages and was thrilled to discover that Resene's range includes a fabulous magnetic paint that works as an undercoat for any coloured paint you choose. Then I had the idea of crafting my own magnets to use on the board, so I've spent the last few evenings in front of the open fire making coloured pom-poms to fashion into cheery magnets. I'm also recycling some of my old brooch designs into magnets for the wall.

If truth be told, I've become just a tiny bit obsessed with this simple craft project and so I called Magnets NZ (www.magnets.co.nz) to get the lowdown. What a helpful company! After a 20-minute conversation I had a source secured, plus I knew a lot more about magnets than I ever thought I would.

After telling my mother and sister





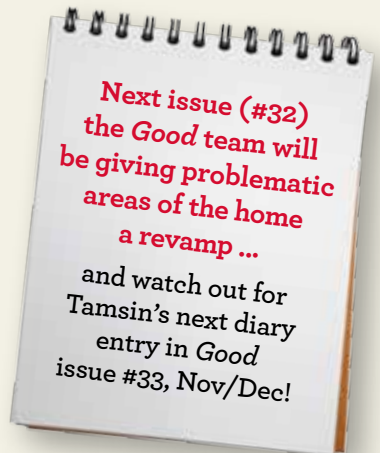
Emily about this project on Mother's Day, Mum reminded me of old magnetic story boards, which inspired me to recycle some retro books into magnetic pictures for Louis to play with. I've used strip magnets, heavy card and Mod Podge glue to make these. It was fabulous timing as there was a huge 24-hour book sale on to raise money for the local Regent Theatre, and I picked up a great stack of old books. School and church fairs are also a brilliant place to find old books for craft projects like this one.

The top of the pantry is a handy storage area, but I also want it to look attractive, so I decided it would be the perfect place to store my pumpkins and collection of old baskets. I needed to create some height visually, so I stacked the baskets up high with the pumpkins in front. There's something so cosy about pumpkins and their colours are stunning - funnily enough they also match the pom-poms! Of course I'll have to redo the display once we've eaten the pumpkins. Perhaps it will mean new magnet designs in the coming months?

Repainting the ceiling really gave the

kitchen a new lease of life. We used Resene Waterborne Smooth Surface Sealer as a base coat on the varnished wood, followed by Resene Quick Dry Waterborne Primer and Resene SpaceCote Flat for a fresh, white finish.

I'm now looking forward to spending many winter evenings in here cooking up fabulous feasts, rearranging my magnetic wall and gazing out the kitchen window daydreaming!



**Next issue (#32)
the Good team will
be giving problematic
areas of the home
a revamp ...**

**and watch out for
Tamsin's next diary
entry in Good
issue #33, Nov/Dec!**

A letter arrived the other day for a previous owner, addressed to 'Fern Cottage'. The name is certainly apt as we have an abundance of ferns lining the garden paths and spilling down the banks. There's even some beautiful ponga by the stream. I'm wondering if we should adopt the name! *Do you have a name for your house or do you like the idea of naming houses? And what do you think of Fern Cottage as a name? Head to www.good.net.nz/tamsin to have your say.*