



on paper

Craftsman Ben Masters is part of a retro revival of Resene wallpapers.



Top right: Each Mason paper is screen printed in sections by hand.

Above left: Ben Masters, creator of hand-printed wallpapers, with a Bamboo design from the Mason collection using Resene Rangoon Green and metallic paints Resene Pioneer and Resene Pure Pewter.

Above: Getting ready to print using Resene Resolution Blue.

The work of William Mason, arguably the most important wallpaper designer and manufacturer in local history, is being brought back to life in a small Wairarapa wine village. Boutique wallpaper producer PaperHands has been commissioned by Resene to recreate Mason designs in a new edition of his famous patterns.

Napier-born, London-trained textile designer Mason was living in Wellington in the 1950s, teaching art and exhibiting at local galleries. He and his wife Maureen began producing hand-printed textiles, then wallpapers which were snapped up by homeowners renovating old villas. By 1965, now working from Carterton, their work adorned the walls of our embassies worldwide as well as the New Zealand suite in the Hong Kong Hilton hotel. Today, examples are held in prominent galleries and museums.

Printing wallpaper is an ancient art. Originally printed by blocks made from fruit tree wood it superseded the previous means of decorating walls – hanging plain paper and illustrating it when in situ. The hand-block method lasted until the early 1800s when the mechanised 'surface printing press' was invented and used for large runs of a particular design. By the 1950s the screen printing technique became more widespread which enabled small runs again. This is the process we are most familiar with today.

Wallpaper has been a part of the Resene story since the company bought Mason Prints in 1974. The business came complete with the Marion Street

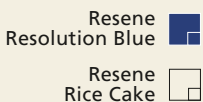
building in Wellington which housed the wallpaper showroom and subsequently became the first Resene retail store.

Martinborough-based PaperHands was formed in 2009 by Ben and Helen Masters in the age-old Kiwi tradition of DIY when the couple couldn't find a suitable product for a renovation project at their own home. They are still the only commercial hand-screeners of wallpaper in the country.

"We felt very much alone in the beginning, with no-one to fall back on," Ben says. "It was a long process setting up and there was a fair bit of trial and error along the way." But with the help of local trades, as well as specialists in other centres, they were soon producing distinctive decorative papers.

When PaperHands was approached by Resene for the Mason project, Ben could not have been more excited. "We based our original concept on the way the Masons worked so getting access to the old 'positives', which hadn't been looked at for 25 years, was a real treat." Around 20 of the positives were in good enough condition to use, from which eight formed the final selection. While the resulting sample book features pre-selected Resene colour combinations, customers are welcome to specify their own preferences using any Resene colour.

Using paints instead of inks has meant altering their production methods slightly but the process is fundamentally the same. Ben is quick to recognise the relationship PaperHands has with long-time Resene



The luxe look returns

Wallpaper continues in popularity across a variety of looks and styles, but luxury papers are in particular demand, according to experts from Resene.

Chosen to make a statement in any room, these decadent wallpapers use a variety of textures and sheens as well as metallic finishes and even beads and sand. Some are embossed, some look like suede or have backgrounds that mimic handmade paper. Others look hand-painted while others use bold oversized motifs and designs.

Often seen as feature walls behind beds, to define dining areas or in living rooms, luxury wallpapers are also being used as a bolder statement in a full room – think powder rooms, ensuites and entranceways.


Aside from the wonderful recreated Mason papers (below is the Poppy design), other popular designs include overblown painterly florals, botanic and tropical designs, and eye-catching murals made possible by modern printing techniques.

Resene ColorShops have a full range of wallpapers, whatever style you are looking for, and the collections are continually updated to respond to current fashions. You can even design your own wallpaper using the Resene WallPrint service, www.resene.com/wallprint.



Resene
Good As Gold 

supplier Aspiring Walls who import the specialist blank papers. The printing, trimming and distribution process then takes place back in Martinborough, just a few country miles from Carterton, full circle from where the Mason Prints wallpaper story really began half a century ago. **H**

 View the Mason Handcrafted Wallpaper collection at your local Resene ColorShop (selected stores only) or view online at www.resene.com/mason.

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