



colour consultant

With thousands of shades to choose from in paint – let alone all the other materials that make up your house – you can easily become paralysed by choice when it comes to picking the ideal scheme.

Perhaps the safe palette you've seen in every showhome turns out to feel 'not me'. Or perhaps you turn into a kid in a candy store and go wild with an allsorts assembly of colours, which then looks too disjointed. Whichever applies, help is at hand. Colour consultants can pin down your preferences for an overall result that suits your house, budget and lifestyle.

Firstly, decide how much help you need. Some colour experts focus just on colour and paints, while others will work through a whole scheme, including fabrics and flooring, right down to the accessories on the shelf. Some architects will also develop colour schemes for you (and yes, they will branch out beyond designer whites), while suppliers may offer consultancy services too.

Resene
Miss Hussey 

Choose well

A flick through the classifieds will not give you much sense of whether a particular designer will suit you. Personal recommendations are a better way to go. Ask around friends or colleagues who have had work done. If you like something you see – at a showhome, in a store, at your hairdresser's or in a café – ask the owner who did it. And when you look through local magazines, make a note of designers whose work (or own home) appeals.

Before you call the consultant, ask your contact not just about how happy they were with the finished job, but also about how they worked together, how well they felt listened to, and whether they would work with the person again.

Working style

When you call your consultant for the first time, ask about how they operate. How do they charge? Some do an initial introduction or an in-store consultation for free, then charge to come to your house; some charge a one-off fee; others an open-ended hourly rate; others a percentage on materials or tradespeople. Will they present more than one idea for you to choose from? How much back and forth do they expect? How long does this generally take?

Smart brief

Consultants don't work well in a vacuum. The clearer you are about your brief, the better they can meet your needs. Start a scrapbook of ideas that appeal to you – magazine clippings, favourite pieces of china, a shell, a leaf, a garment you love. Be explicit about your budget. Do you want to prepare a whole house scheme, but will be undertaking it in stages as money allows? Do you want to look just at a particular room, or do you want help with an exterior look? Be clear about what cannot be changed (existing flooring or furniture, for example), about your likes and dislikes and about your timeframe.

“Colour is too scary, I think I'll just stick to white.”

Roll your sleeves up

After briefing, a consultant will come back to you with a scheme or two. This may include swatches of paints, flooring, cabinets and other materials, with pieces in approximate proportion to the way they will be used in your home – big pieces of flooring, for example, with tiny chips for an accent pillow. This is partnership time. Be very clear about what you like and don't like, and listen to how this might be resolved. Your consultant has seen what works and doesn't work, but they should also be taking your thoughts on board.

Happy customers


Be sure all the people who will have to live in the space feel included. Your partner or children may prefer not to discuss every paint chip, but might like to have a final OK. A good consultant is skilled at hearing everyone and finding a satisfactory middle ground. [H](#)

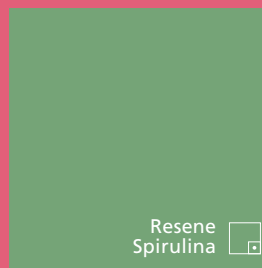
For colour ideas view the inspiration Gallery at Resene ColorShops or the Using Colour section at www.resene.co.nz/homeown/use-colour/usecolour.htm; the Decorating inspiration Gallery at www.resene.co.nz/homeown/decorating-inspirations/index.htm or previous Habitat stories www.resene.co.nz/homeown/habitat/habitat.htm on the Resene website.



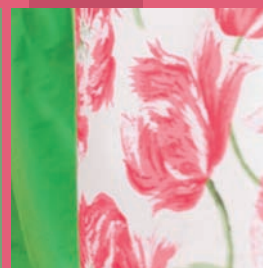
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The Resene website lists hundreds of trade professionals, including colour consultants. Visit resene.co.nz and click on the Do It Yourself then the Find-A-Professional links.

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