

# Planes, trains & automobiles

As long as it's got wheels and an engine there's a place for it in this Havelock North home where everyone's mad about motors – especially 13-month-old Bryn Murrell

By **Vanessa Johnson** Photography **Paul McCredie**

Last year Anita Murrell, a volunteer firefighter and her husband Nathan, a police officer, were renting their Hawkes Bay home when baby Bryn arrived on 6 March. They planned to buy a house when the time was right but that idea was fast-tracked when they spied a property with potential.

"We made an offer out of the blue and never expected it to be accepted." Anita explains. "You could say we ended up buying our first home by accident. It was really six months too soon, which was a stretch financially, but worth it."

Becoming homeowners meant Anita could create a special bedroom for the couple's first child. "When you rent you can only really change the look of a room by putting up pictures and changing curtains," she says. But their home purchase had left the couple with little to spend on renovations. So when Anita saw Resene's Dream Room competition advertised in *Little Treasures*, she heard opportunity knocking if she could get her design plans finished on time.

"I think my entry must have arrived the day before deadline," she

remembers. "I was finishing the design by hand at work when one of my colleagues came up with the idea of having the sign-writing plane spell out Bryn's name on the wall."

There was never a question about the room's theme. "Nathan and I are really into vehicles, especially if they have flashing lights," she laughs. "I've been in the Havelock North Volunteer Fire Brigade for almost eight years and I'm a senior firefighter. Nathan was in the brigade too until Bryn came along then he resigned because we can't both go to calls any more – and he gets enough lights and sirens at work anyway! Bryn loves his cars too. He already runs them along the floor and makes car sounds."

Add to that Anita and Nathan's love of motorsport and a gift of four transport-themed canvases from a family friend, and they were off to their local Resene ColorShop.

After the excitement of winning, the Murrells faced another challenging deadline. They had to finish Bryn's bedroom by the end of January. "It's difficult for police officers to get time off work during January but Nathan managed to get a week's leave." Anita

works at the Hawke's Bay Regional Council as a Community Engagement Co-ordinator so the Christmas holidays were a quiet time for her. However, being diagnosed and treated for Post Natal Depression meant she had to dig deep to find the energy. But once the paint and rollers arrived, Anita felt keen to get started.

"We moved Bryn's cot into the spare room and worked on his bedroom mostly at night. During the day he went to pre-school sometimes for a few hours."

First to go was the carpet, which revealed Matai floorboards. The Murrells used Resene Aquaclear waterborne urethane varnish to seal these and give them a clear finish throughout the house. Anita chose Resene Wham (blue) and Resene Snap (green) on the walls to create the horizon effect of sky meeting land as a backdrop for Bryn's groovy collection of wall magnets. (See the tips section.)

You can almost hear the plane's engine 'vroom' as you look at Bryn's sign written name on the adjacent wall. Anita found a company on Facebook called Vinyl Hive who made it as a



wall decal, but finding a curtain maker proved more difficult.

“Everyone was closed over the Christmas break. In the end Spotlight were great. We chose their Candy Stripe fabric and had it made up with block-out backing.”

The white units with blue drawers are from The Warehouse and the change table is from [www.mocka.co.nz](http://www.mocka.co.nz). Anita used a cardboard storage box on the change table shelf from Dog’s Breakfast for more storage and the cot is borrowed from a friend. The aeroplane mobile is made by one of the mums in Anita’s coffee group and the helicopter light fitting was a TradeMe purchase. “I used Resene testpots to give it a brighter look. I did the same with the aeroplane coat rack behind the door.”

After spending their summer break

redecorating, Anita and Nathan have now completed one room in their new home and Anita describes it as an ‘oasis of design inspiration’. “Sometimes I go in there when the idea of doing up the rest of the house overwhelms me, and it reminds me that I can do this. I can come up with an idea and see it all the way through to a successful conclusion.”

Anita believes that the project may have had a positive impact on more than just the house. “The room makeover certainly helped in giving me a project to focus on and the creative outlet and sense of accomplishment was fantastic for my emotional wellbeing.”

These days when Anita hears the fire siren, she has to think twice before jumping in the car. But, if Nathan’s home and Bryn’s tucked in, there’s no stopping the pull of those flashing lights. 



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## Tips and tricks



### Decal magnets

Stick adhesive wall decals onto magnetic backing, then cut around the outside of the decal to create funky wall magnets. These can be stuck to walls painted with Resene Magnetic Magic. Anita used Resene’s Flying High decal series and the Homestickers range so Bryn can play with them on his wardrobe door as well as the road on one wall.



### Floorboards

When you decide to rip up the carpet and expose your wooden floorboards, the surface of the boards will need some preparation. For a new wood surface, ensure the surface is clean and dry, free from dirt and loose material, oil grease and mould. For old wood, prepare as for new wood, sand to a dull finish with fine sandpaper and then remove sanding dust. If old varnish is flaking, then it all must be removed to give a uniform appearance.

Apply Resene Aquaclear waterborne urethane varnish using a speed brush. The method of application varies depending on the surface and material. Go to [www.resene.co.nz](http://www.resene.co.nz) for more information.

