

Healing hues

A graciously-coloured clinic that's anything but clinical.

Whatever the reason for making a visit to a medical clinic or hospital may be, it's not an experience that people generally look forward to. At best, it can be emotionally charged. At worst, it can be painful.

We've also come to assume a certain aesthetic to greet us when we enter the doors of a healthcare facility: utilitarian sterility lit by harsh fluorescents, and not often a space that evokes warmth or comfort. But when Intra, a world-leading provider of healthcare guided by medical imaging, approached Klein Architects with a view to develop a premium facility for both their patients and staff, the designers took it upon themselves to create something far beyond expectations.

Located in Auckland's North Harbour Southern Cross campus, what's now known as Intra North Harbour is nothing short of impressive. Klein Architects brought Pac Studio on board to assist with colour selection and interior design, and the result of their team effort is a beautiful, progressive facility that induces comfort and calm.

Thanks to recent advances in imaging technology, many procedures that Intra performs today are far less invasive than ever before. It means that patient recovery time is significantly reduced, sometimes to the point where patients can now walk out of the operating theatre following their procedure.

"Having an investigation or treatment in hospital is stressful, and we wanted the design features to help patients tolerate this time better," says Liz Tjahjana of Pac Studio. "The reduction in recovery time encouraged us to rethink the experience. Instead of isolated cubicles, patients are treated to views of Rangitoto Island and entertainment from their lounge pods while staff relish working in their observation hub with full sightlines of the recovering patients, and the same gorgeous vista. A feeling of calm is reinforced by the use of warm timbers and perforated plasterboard ceiling, which provides a gentle acoustic environment."

While the facility boasts a number of noteworthy design elements, perhaps the most immediately striking is the reception and staff base, which is framed by an energetic sculptural form that serves as the project's key focal point. Its flowing organic shape is complemented by the subtle angles and softly curved walls throughout. But it's the awe-inspiring procedure suite that really takes the cake.



opposite: The key focal point of Klein Architect's and Pac Studio's design is an angled timber ribbon which sweeps around the reception and staff area, shooting along a ceiling bulkhead and twisting down to become the wall, then a countertop and a staff work surface.

above right: Rather than being tip to toe in a cold and clinical white, warm umber Resene Wan White was chosen for the base of the colour scheme and complemented by soft Resene Half Spindle and deeper Resene Bondi Blue along with a few pops of toasty orange and ochre, brought in through upholstery. The result is filled with interest and a sense of comfort.

below right: The stunning organic form that surrounds the reception and waiting area draws in the eye. It's complemented with a contemporary and subtle base colour scheme, consisting of Resene Wan White, Resene Half Spindle and Resene Bondi Blue. Together with the timber detailing, the colour scheme invokes an impression of warmth and great calm.

-  Resene Bondi Blue
-  Resene Wan White
-  Resene Half Spindle



The first in the world to feature an astronomical 'night sky' with 1,500 LED 'stars' within a pressurised clinical theatre, Intra North Harbour's patients are welcomed into a highly unique and soothing experience that still maintains infection control requirements and the necessary mechanical principles that such a space demands. Set amongst some of the latest medical imaging technologies available, the 'sky' is operable to six astronomically accurate settings.

"The theatre is designed to ease patient anxiety by retaining a strong biophilic connection in materiality and a dark ceiling with the night sky to soften what could have been a harsh clinical environment. Due to the pressurisation of the procedure suite and other clinical services, millimetre precise planning was required to do usually simple things like brace the reception bulkhead," explains Liz. A combination of traditional craft and digital fabrication techniques

were used to create the organic reception counter. The arms of the counter extend beyond the desk linking the patients to the staff and the spaces adjacent to the procedure suite.

"Innovations in manufacturing techniques which weren't possible just a few years ago are now helping us to turn stark clinical spaces into easy to clean, texturally rich environments," says Liz. "The night sky panels and three dimensional panels behind the bed heads were created with the use of digital modelling and CNC production."

"An environmentally-friendly solution and healthier alternatives were required to maintain the high standards of a healthcare environment, so all the paints we specified are Resene waterborne Environmental Choice approved formulas with low toxicity."

Durable Resene SpaceCote Low Sheen was used for wet and high traffic areas, including the staff room



• **above and below right:** Grooved panelling in a herringbone design painted in Resene Bondi Blue brings depth and calm to patient waiting areas and grounding to the greater recovery space. Selected walls and doors are in Resene Half Spindle, while Resene Wan White was used as the base of the colour scheme on the main walls and ceiling.

• **below left:** The first in the world to feature an astronomical 'night sky' within a pressurised clinical theatre, Intra North Harbour's patients are treated to a uniquely soothing setting lit by 1,500 LED 'stars'. The walls, doors and architraves are painted in Resene Wan White.



kitchen, bathrooms and utility rooms while skirting boards, door frames and architraves were coated in Resene Lustacryl semi-gloss waterborne enamel and Resene ClinicalCote was used throughout the clinical and recovery areas due to its antimicrobial properties.

Liz says that it was through the design's carefully curated colour palette that the team was able to further help to ease patient anxiety and, ultimately, aid in their recovery. Resene Wan White, a sophisticated yet warm umber off-white, was selected as the base colour for the fit-out and used for the reception counter and patient recovery areas to highlight the curvaceous staff base and to gently contrast with the timber ribbon. Soft blue Resene Half Spindle was used to delineate the back of house and circulation areas from the light-filled front of house. In contrast to these more subtle colours, deep Resene Bondi Blue was used as an accents on furniture and various detailing and panelling to create a visual and textural interest. The same hue was also carried into the chat room and staff kitchen to enhance the sense of privacy and intimacy in those spaces while neon lights, artworks and Scandinavian furniture upholstered in bright accent colours add vibrancy to finish the look.

“Acoustics also play a large role in creating a feeling of calm. Acoustic Marmoleum was utilised throughout the project, as well as a perforated plaster ceiling in the recovery area. The angles and organic curves of the joinery and walls also help to reduce noise while softening the visual environment.” **BW**



• **left and above left:** Feature walls and details in Resene Bondi Blue add character to the staff lunchroom and the patient storage area. Ceiling and small cupboards in Resene Wan White.
• **above right:** Resene Bondi Blue was used as the main colour in the social area to build intimacy and cosiness. Ceiling in Resene Wan White.

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- Resene Bondi Blue
- Resene Wan White
- Resene Half Spindle