



Resene
Crisp Green

Resene
Swiss Caramel

Resene
Quarter Surrender

John's portfolio is an impressive one, full of high quality and highly unique projects – many of which have garnered multiple award wins.

But part of what makes him a real standout is his poetic approach to his work. “We endeavour to create architecture that speaks of its sites and surroundings, with grace and personality – unencumbered by blind conformity and dictates of transient fashion,” he explains. “We work together with clients and builders to craft beautiful forms and engaging spaces that make the heart leap and the soul sing.”

His level of commitment to everything he takes part in has made John a long active figure in the industry, too. Not only is he a Fellow of the New Zealand Institute of Architects (NZIA), he has been a convenor and member of local NZIA chapters as well as other national awards juries, and is also a visiting lecturer and tutor at the Victoria University of Wellington School of Architecture.

John tells us more about where his inspiration comes from, his favourite types of projects to work on and what he does when he feels stuck on a design.

What drew you to becoming an architect?

As a boy growing up in Nelson, there were always building sites nearby which I was drawn to. So many interesting materials and a constantly changing structure was fascinating. Making things became my passion, and when my grandad suggested architecture, it just made sense! Although, my mum was disappointed I did not follow her passion for accounting!

Your work has quite a distinct style to it, with flowing curves and eye-catching feature colours. Where do you find your inspiration for your designs?

I'm inspired by other architecture from New Zealand, from colonial through to our extensive collection of late-modern local domestic homes around the country. Also, the landforms and abundant nature we are surrounded by here.

Do clients seek you out because of that distinct style?

Some say it is the stylistic individuality and connection to the environment that leads them to seek their own place to settle into. Or, because they want to be challenged and participate in the creative process.

Eight questions with



John
Mills

With a distinctive aesthetic, one that combines a passion for materials, striking use of rich colours and a desire to create uniquely tailored buildings, architect John Mills believes the story of his projects begins and ends with the client. He says that it's by taking the time to understand who they are and what they value is how he is able to create spaces that will work for them just as well in twenty years' time as they do today.

Since establishing John Mills Architecture (JMA) in Wellington in 1990, he's held strong on this intent. “I always wanted to fulfil a vision of working to contribute toward a colourful and evocative New Zealand building style. There is so much great NZ architecture, so finding my own small place in it has been my path since 1990.”

Which are your favourite types of projects to work on and why?

I love working on homes that are on unique sites that demand a unique response and with clients who are wanting to create their 'forever home' and work alongside us and the builders to make a place that we all are proud of. All of our projects, big and small, are a team effort and working alongside interesting clients who have an ambition to make architecture that speaks passionately about place, and the people who occupy their unique slice of Aotearoa.

It seems like, because of lockdown, there has been a big push by homeowners to use money that they might have been saving up for other things (such as overseas travel) for renovating their homes instead – or even designing and building a new one. Do you think that's been true in your experience this year, and do you feel like you're actually having a busier year because of it?

There has been a recalibration about 'freedom', I think. It used to be the ability to go where you wanted to go. Now, it is more about being to be able to stay where you want to stay – to live in a place that reflects your values, enriches your life and delights you. Everyday life is where the important things happen.

What do you do if you feel stalled creatively on a project?

I usually take a long walk in the Eastbourne hills... or perhaps a large latte and Afghan biscuit or a midnight espresso!

What do you love about Resene?

Their quality service to the design community, and their long term support for the NZIA awards programme for over 30 years. This is fantastic and gives all of us architects a chance to show off our best work, as well as facilitating us sharing ideas at award events.

Which are your current favourite Resene colours?

Resene Mystery, Resene Swiss Caramel, Resene Untamed and Resene Quarter Surrender. **BW**

www.johnmillsarchitects.co.nz

 Resene Half Fossil	 Resene Cut Glass	 Resene Half Robin Egg Blue
 Resene Tea	 Resene Mystery	 Resene Untamed
 Resene Endeavour	 Resene Bermuda Grey	 Resene Royal Heath

opposite: This multi-level Wellington renovation by JMA boasts beautiful harbour views, which led architect John Mills to incorporate vibrant Resene blues and green. Feature wall in Resene Bermuda Grey, walls and architraves at left in Resene Half Fossil and right wall painted in Resene Half Robin Egg Blue. Image by Paul McCredie.

above right: This stairwell was renovated to bring in more light to the area, by building in glass balustrades and skylights. Resene Endeavour on the walls brings drama and interest combined with Resene Cut Glass. Image by Paul McCredie.

below right: Weatherboards in Resene Crisp Green help define the entrance of this home designed by JMA. Other weatherboards in Resene Tea. Image by Paul McCredie.

below: An accent wall in Resene Royal Heath punctuates JMA's design at Wellington's Southern Cross Garden Bar & Restaurant. Image by Kirsty Ballard.

