



6 questions with

# Richard Dalman

Christchurch- and Auckland-based Dalman Architects has become a big name in the industry. Over the span of its 23 year existence, it's received more than 50 awards and commendations on a wide range of incredible projects – including many Resene Colour Awards. The team of 20 has experience and talent to spare, but a significant factor in the firm's success can be attributed to the strength of its leadership.

A born and bred Cantabrian, the studio's managing director and principal architect, Richard Dalman, has lived in Christchurch all his life aside from the four years he attended university in Auckland. While many associate his name with his accomplishments in hospitality design, he's also been recognised for his ceaseless passion for rebuilding his hometown in the wake of the 2011 earthquakes. This dedication was personal and in his capacity as both chairman of the NZIA's Canterbury Branch and as an NZIA National councillor in the aftermath of the disaster; and it earned him a coveted NZIA President's Award.

Richard outlines his journey to becoming the celebrated professional he is today, why he is drawn to particular project typologies, where he finds inspiration and his top Resene colour picks.

**What drew you to become an architect and build your practice? Is it something you always wanted to do?**

I was a slight latecomer to architecture, as I first achieved a Bachelor of Arts in Geography and History at the University of Canterbury. It wasn't until a friend returned to Christchurch from Auckland during the holidays and told me about the architecture degree that he was doing that I began



Resene  
Half Black White

Resene  
Black White

Resene  
Endorphin



**left:** One of Richard's most recently completed projects was a stunning new home for him and his wife to enjoy. Dubbed 'Water House', the residence is perched on the edge of the Avon-Heathcote Estuary lhuatai – which makes for breathtaking views like this one. Walls and trims in Resene Black White, ceiling in Resene Half Black White and front door in Resene Endorphin. Design and colour selection by Richard Dalman, interior design by Kirsty Hynd, [www.dalman.co.nz](http://www.dalman.co.nz), build by Clive Barrington, [www.clivebarrington.com](http://www.clivebarrington.com), painting by Greytone. Images by Stephen Goodenough, [www.stephengoodenough.co.nz](http://www.stephengoodenough.co.nz).



Resene Quarter Frozen 

**left and below:** Dalman Architects took home a Resene Total Colour Heritage Award for their Acland House project, along with an NZIA local award and a Canterbury Heritage Award commendation. Exterior weatherboards in Resene Lumbersider tinted to Resene Cararra, exterior windows and trims in Resene Lustacryl tinted to Resene Pravda and Resene Half Pravda, decking in Resene Non-Skid Deck & Path tinted to Resene Beaten Track and doors in Resene Lustacryl tinted to Resene Diesel – with the exception of the main entrance, which is in a custom made Resene red hue. Interior stairwell walls in Resene Zylone Sheen tinted to Resene Pavlova, ceiling in Resene Quarter Wheatfield, timber joinery stained in a custom made Resene Colorwood hue and sealed with Resene Qristal Poly-Satin and timber floor refinished with Resene Polythane. Build by Simon Construction, [www.simonconstruction.co.nz](http://www.simonconstruction.co.nz), painting by Spencer Painters and Decorators, [www.spencerpaint.co.nz](http://www.spencerpaint.co.nz). Images by Stephen Goodenough.

Resene Diesel

Resene Beaten Track

Resene Cararra



Resene Pravda  Resene Half Pravda  Resene Quarter Wheatfield 

to think it could be for me. As soon as I began studying at the School of Architecture in Auckland, I realised it was what I wanted to do and have continued to enjoy it every day since.

I spent my first three years at the Ministry of Works applying the craft of architecture in a practical sense, then worked for seven years with project and construction management company Arrow International, where I ran their small design practice. After learning how to design for the commercial world I reconfirmed that my passion was architecture over project management, so I left to start Dalman Architects. I was fortunate to be able to continue with the same staff and projects, so it was quite an easy progression.

**It's been hypothesised that Dalman Architects may have designed or refurbished more New Zealand hotels than any other architect or interior designer. What led you to specialise in hotel design?**

I enjoy all types of projects, especially those where the client is engaged intimately in the design. Our designs very much respond

to our clients' needs and desires, but also to the individual constraints such as the site, local climate and other unique challenges that each project has. These all create opportunities for architecture to evolve. But I guess my favourite project types are houses and hotels.

I enjoy working on houses because we get to go deep with our clients into how they wish to live. I have just completed a new house for my wife and I on the edge of the Avon-Heathcote Estuary Ihutai, which we've named 'Water House'. It has been a wonderful journey and the result is a combination of both of our personalities and desires – a home we describe as 'contemporary meets relaxed coastal living'.

And I just really like hotels. It's fair to say I am a bit of a hotel geek. When I travel, I like to stay in a wide variety of different types of hotels. On a single trip, we stayed in a fashion hotel, an eco-hotel, a cave hotel, a modular hotel and an island resort. It's great to see what is happening from a hotel design perspective in other parts of the world.

right: Richard's Colombo Street office in Christchurch relies on Resene Black White as a backdrop for vivid accents in Resene Pursuit inside and trims in Resene Half Fuscous Grey outside. The totara walls and veneer are finished in Resene Aquaclear Satin to enhance and protect them. Image by Stephen Goodenough.



My first venture into hotel design was undertaking refurbishment work at the Chateau on the Park in the early 1990s. Designed by Peter Beaven, it was an icon in the New Zealand hotel world and I loved being involved with such a romantically inspired building. I was fortunate to be working for one of the original people involved with the development of the hotel, Joe O'Connor. The sheepskin that had been applied to the walls of the honeymoon suite had been removed over the years, and my 'claim to fame' is that I put new lambswool back on to the walls – all in a very classy manner, of course.

**What are some of your all-time favourite projects?**

Over the years, Dalman Architects has designed a full range of buildings from high-rise hotels, large industrial buildings, modern commercial offices, new homes and community buildings. I very much enjoy designing in different locations, responding to their specific requirements and landscapes. We are currently working in Tekapo, Christchurch, Whanganui, Gisborne, Cambridge, Auckland and Whangarei.

Some of my favourites would be the Chapel Street Church Community Centre in Christchurch, Te Waonui Forest Retreat in Franz Josef, the Salvation Army building in Christchurch, a new hotel at Auckland Airport that is currently under construction and the little 92 Cashel Mall retail building in Christchurch leased by Roccabella. I am looking forward to seeing our recently designed underground house in Tekapo completed once construction wraps.

**What is the best piece of professional advice you've ever been given that's resonated throughout your career?**

Over the years, I have picked up many insights or pieces of advice from other architects. I remember Pete Bossley saying at his NZIA Gold Medal address, 'it's hard, this architecture thing'. How right he was! David Mitchell once told me that, when designing, the pencil in your hand starts to have a mind of its own – while I didn't believe him at first, turns out he was right! And Andrew Barclay once said he trusts himself enough to know his first design idea is the right one and I now believe it to be true. I was also lucky enough to spend time with the late Claude Megson who taught me how to plan anything!

**What do you love about Resene?**

I have been a big Resene fan for many years. In Christchurch, there has been so much consistency with the local reps that there is a huge amount of trust built up and knowledge passed on to my colleagues. This, combined with a great product, has made it our go-to paint manufacturer.

**What are your current favourite Resene colours and how would you use them?**

I have always been a fan of Resene Black White. It has a freshness about it without being too stark. I have used it on the inside of my last two personal homes as well as our offices. It provides a perfect base for brighter colours to complement it, or for the changing colours of the sky and sea outside – as is the case with the 'Water House' – to impact through the windows on to the walls and ceiling and change the mood of the interior.

On the 'Water House', my wife selected Resene Endorphin for our front door. It is a vibrant aqua blue that has a seaside vibe and is very appropriate as a first introduction to the 'Water House' upon arrival. It also complements the Resene Black White, the light oak timber elements in the interior and the Resene Alabaster exterior cladding. **BW**

To see more of Richard's work and the Dalman Architect team's portfolio, visit [www.dalman.co.nz](http://www.dalman.co.nz).



-  Resene Alabaster
-  Resene Black White
-  Resene Pavlova
-  Resene Endorphin
-  Resene Belladonna
-  Resene Roadster
-  Resene Turbo
-  Resene Wham
-  Resene Half Fuscous Grey



above: The candy-coloured façade of Hills Road Dairy won Richard's team a Resene Total Colour Exterior Maestro Award. The colours were inspired by a bag of lollies Richard had purchased from the owner's previous dairy. This post-quake redesign was achieved using Resene Belladonna, Resene Wham, Resene Turbo, Resene Roadster and Resene Tango. Build by Horncastle Homes. Image by Stephen Goodenough.