When Monica Holt bought this 1940s ex-state house in Hayne Paddock, Hamilton East, six years ago, it looked very different. The two-bedroom house had dated colours and was awkwardly laid out. Monica removed a load-bearing wall between the kitchen and lounge to open up the space, and when it came time to choose colour, she had definite ideas—and an unusual source of inspiration.

“I have a Crown Lynn McAlpine fridge jug in cream with baby-blue writing,” says Monica, “and I’ve always loved that rich creamy colour.” She painted the new living area and kitchen walls in Resene ‘Bianca’, because “it had a warm feel in the room, which has all-day sun”. A kitchen renovation came next, and the installation of a handy island bench to give space for a DishDrawer and more storage. “I was going to remove the cupboards,” says Monica, “but architect Laura Kellaway told me that people pay heaps for beautiful old cupboards of rimu and matai, so I decided to keep them. I have kitchen accessories and a Smeg fridge in a similar light blue to the colour on the jug, so I decided to look for a colour that would go well with that. I’ve always thought that the combination of red and light blue was especially bold, so I went to Resene and looked for reds. The staff said that red is the colour that changes the most when the paint is dry, so I got heaps of test pots and painted patches all over the cupboards. Resene ‘Hot Chile’ turned out to be the exact colour I was after when it was dry.”

For contrast, Monica painted the cabinetry frames and windowsills in Resene ‘Soapstone’, which matches the cream colour of the jug. The new island bench sports a white benchtop and cabinetry painted in Resene ‘Hot Chile’. With chrome handles to match the detailing of the art deco light fittings, this kitchen looks better than brand-new.

Entries to the Resene Colour Home Competition close on January 12, 2009. The last of the six finalists will appear in Your Home & Garden’s March issue, and the winner of the $5000 cash prize will be announced in the April issue.