

# hide, disguise, enhance...

Paint is your friend when it comes to tricking the eye.

Resene  
White Thunder

**Does your living** room look too long, or just plain wrong? Does the ceiling seem to be falling on your head? And why do you have to turn the lights on whenever you go into the dining room?

Before you ring up the builder and ask him to take away or add walls, or raise the ceiling, there's a much cheaper and cleverer way of correcting weird proportions or disguising architectural oddities and less-than-perfect details. And that's with paint.

Firstly look at the dimensions of your room, where the light comes from and what you wish to highlight or disguise. Used with care, colour will do wonderful things to the most unprepossessing of spaces. It can also link a whole interior together, or break it down into discrete moments of magic. Here are some rules of thumb:

- Dark colours make a space smaller or lower. Paint an end feature wall dark in a long thin space to bring it forward, or darker on three walls and light on one of the long walls if you want to improve the proportions. Use a single interesting colour on feature walls throughout an open-plan interior (either in the same strength or tones of the same) and feel the spaces 'talk' to each other.
- Light colours recede and bounce available light around and can't be beaten in small well-lit spaces. If the room is naturally gloomy, however, it's unlikely you'll solve all its problems with a can of white paint. You might do better to make the walls warm and intimate while keeping the ceiling and woodwork pale to give it drama and definition.
- All colours have emotional properties. For example, red and orange stimulate, blue cools, green soothes and purple is the moody queen. For the best results it is always better to work with these properties, not against them. For example, a gentle green in the bedroom is always a winner, while soft shades of raspberry red seem to do wonders in a traditional dining room. >

**Right** Using Resene EzyPaint software, you can try the look of a room before you commit to buying a room-load of paint. Were you after a cool and sophisticated yet summery look with Resene Tsunami (top)? The ceiling is painted Resene Alabaster to make the room appear more airy and spacious. Or do you feel the room is too long and narrow? Try painting just the end wall in a darker colour, like Resene Triple Tapa, to make it appear closer. Go to [www.resene.com/ezypaint](http://www.resene.com/ezypaint) and try virtual painting for yourself.



Resene  
Tsunami



Resene  
Triple Tapa

# shiny or dull?

Dull is not necessarily a bad characteristic for interior paint. A flat finish deflects your eye from wall imperfections whereas a shiny surface highlights dings and dents in the surface and the substrate below. That's because of the way light bounces from it. If you have a dark space you want to give life and drama to, this is a trick worth considering.

Glossier paint is also easier to clean so is good for kitchens and bathrooms, and other surfaces where fingers might stray. Just don't skimp on the preparation or underestimate the skill required in application. See the Resene Gloss Levels fandeck to see how the gloss level will affect your colour choices.

If your walls are absolutely past saving but the plaster is still sound, consider an anaglypta or textured wallpaper and then paint over it. The Victorians usually used anaglypta below their dado rail as a hardwearing and forgiving surface, but a more contemporary look is to completely paper a feature wall and paint over it in an interesting Resene colour thereby adding texture as well as colour – with the added benefit of disguising a less than perfect surface underneath while you're at it.

- Colours can also be perceived as warm or cool. Red, orange, yellow, brown, reddish purples and yellow-greens and their many variations are warm colours which make a room feel, literally, warmer and cosier. These colours are good for south-facing rooms and larger cavernous spaces. Cool colours are blue, grey, blue-greens, blue-purples and pure whites. They make a room appear larger and are good for overheated north-facing rooms, or to make a space look crisp and clean.

## Devil's in the detail

The way the architectural joinery details are treated can make or break an interior and, again, much depends on what they are and what you are trying to achieve. If your architraves, skirting and doors are crisply new, you will be able to use their lines and planes as delineators between spaces and objects of interest in their own right. For example, you might want to use shades of off-whites as your main wall colour, but can add definition to the whole by painting the woodwork in a contrasting strong neutral. Double strength of the same colour on the doors links the idea but doesn't overwhelm.

If the woodwork is in poor repair or badly proportioned, however, or if there's some odd architectural detail you'd like to hide – an obtrusive bulkhead, out-dated balustrading – it is better to let it retreat into the walls and ceiling by painting it the same colour. Changing the gloss

level between the walls and the joinery will add any interest you need. Conversely, if you have an element you want to highlight – a chimney breast is a perfect example – you can paint it a different colour or a darker tone of the wall colour.

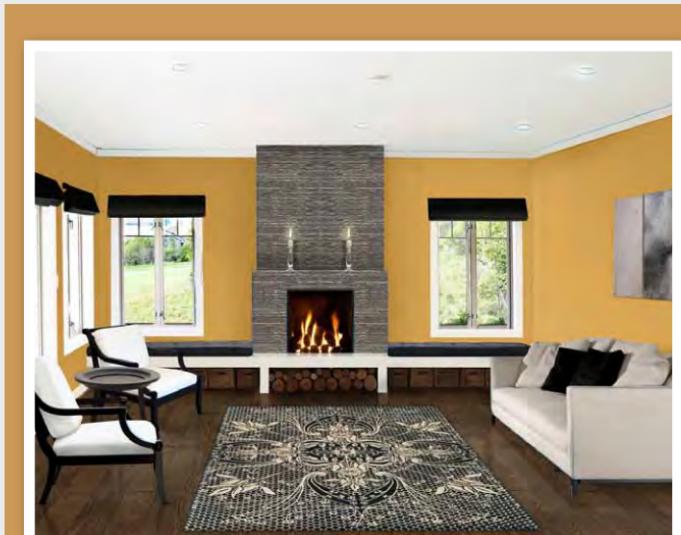
The right lighting and the type of lighting will also help hide and enhance the various aspects of your room.

Last but not least, never underestimate the power of the testpot. It is astonishing how different a large square of colour can look compared to a stamp-sized bit in a colour chart. Think of the difference in effect between a snapshot-sized photo and a wall-sized version and you will know why. The easiest way to use testpots is to paint A3 or larger pages of colour, leaving a white margin around the edge, and move them around to judge the effect of light and colour at different times of the day or night. Once you've decided on your favourites, it's time to get decorating. **H**

**words** Cate Foster

**Right** Walls in rich Resene Bittersweet make the room appear much cosier and warmer. The fireplace becomes a feature by using a different treatment on it, or painting it a different colour.

Colours on Resene EzyPaint are representative only. We recommend that you use colour charts, Resene testpots and physical samples to check your chosen colour scheme before decorating.



Resene  
Bittersweet

Resene  
White Thunder