



small house, big *dreams*

Meet the family who embraced minimalist, Scandinavian living when they built their own tiny house.

Located in the heart of Hawke's Bay and next to acres of farmland is Mike and Loren's striking home. It's a build that's a little smaller than your average home – at just 22m² it makes the cut for what's known as a tiny house. The project has taken five years to complete, and it all began when Mike was researching American tiny houses. It was a relatively new concept to the local market at the time when they began their design for the build. But with Mike's skills as a mechanical design engineer, and Loren's as a fashion designer, together they created a practical home painted in soft, neutral shades of Resene paint for themselves and daughter Hazel.

When it comes to tiny homes, the devil really is in the details. A practical and functional layout is critical to ensuring a liveable space. For Mike and Loren, it was important to first establish what they both needed, wanted and desired in order to establish a workable and comfortable home environment.

"As far as tiny houses go, our home isn't very traditional. Normally, tiny homes have loft spaces at each end for sleeping quarters. Ours is single storey and

a little wider, too. We found it fun to do things slightly differently and not as the status quo," Mike explains.

In order to create individual living spaces, the tiny house is compartmentalised throughout with sections raised to different heights. The design maintains an open plan appearance but also an aspect of separation between major activities. As a young family, it was important to the couple that the most space be allocated to the kitchen, their most used section of the tiny house, and that the area was efficiently laid out with adequate storage.

"We're heavy kitchen users and are in there most of the day. We wanted to include decent sized appliances and we can access almost everything from one place without having to walk."

To provide a degree of space and height within the house, the couple decided on a light, bright and neutral colour palette. Choosing the right colours is critical in a tiny home, as the ceilings are usually a lot lower and the side walls closer together.

"In order to open up the space, we wanted fresh, bright hues on the walls," Loren says.

Resene White 
Resene Colorwood Dark Ebony 

Above: The kitchen is the heart of the home for the family. Mark and Loren added additional storage necessary for a growing family and chose natural hues to enhance light and space. The walls have been finished in Resene Colorwood Whitewash and Resene Zylone Sheen Zero with no added VOCs in Resene White for the ceilings, joinery and for the kitchen splashback. The floor is stained in Resene Colorwood Dark Ebony and sealed with Resene Qristal ClearFloor. The window joinery is in Resene Atmosphere.

images Tim Whittaker

“It’s a colour palette inspired by Scandinavian design trends combined with a Kiwi bach vibe. We wanted the colours and look to be indicative of our home’s surroundings.”

Mike and Loren decided to keep the colour palette consistent throughout the build so that the entire area had a degree of open plan living. It’s an element that is common in Scandinavian builds, along with clean lines and clutter-free space. Resene Colorwood Whitewash teamed with Resene Zylone Sheen Zero in Resene White help add a sense of space. To elevate the design, they relied on soft furnishings to add texture and a point of difference.

The exterior of the home, however, deviates away from the neutral palette. It’s clad in recycled pine stained in deep blue Resene Waterborne Woodsman Woody Bay timber stain while the windows are trimmed in soft grey Resene Atmosphere for contrast – a choice that blends the understated and natural look of local beachside baches and Scandinavian homes.

When Hazel was born, however, Mike and Loren had to make adjustments.

“We thought we might need to consider a child, but we decided we would just get through it. The first six months were fine, you’re all in the same room anyway. Now, it’s a little harder. You ideally need another separate room to close off for sleeping,” Mike explains.

A curtain rail now wraps around the cot to further compartmentalise the space so baby Hazel can sleep. The new parents also have an additional space outside – a shed where they can retreat to. But as they toy with the idea of growing their family, is a tiny house still a sustainable choice, and would they do it again?

“I’m keen to build another house after what we learned from the first, but if we had another baby it would be too much. Though it can be done, for us, it’s been a really good bridge between buying some land and building another house there. In all, it’s an experience we will never forget.” H

Find out more about Mike and Loren’s tiny build at www.weemakechange.co.nz.



top tip
Dark colours outside can soak in a lot of heat. Use a Resene CoolColour version of your colour to keep the paint and surface cooler.

tiny house top tips:

Want to build your own tiny palace? Here are Mike and Loren’s top tips:

- Book a stay in a tiny house on Airbnb, take your family and treat it as a living dynamic rather than a holiday.
- Be prepared for hard work.
- Assess where you want your life to be in a few years’ time and plan for potential adjustments.
- Stick to a light and neutral colour palette to help open the space visually.
- Decide what your favourite part of your home is first and make sure that’s a feature in your tiny house.

Above: Mike and Loren’s bed slides out from beneath a raised platform so that maximum floor space is available during the day. When their daughter Hazel was born, they added a curtain rail to compartmentalise her sleeping area from the rest of the space. The plywood walls are in Resene Colorwood Whitewash, the ceiling and joinery is in Resene White, the floor is in Resene Colorwood Dark Ebony and sealed with Resene Qristal ClearFloor and the window joinery is in Resene Atmosphere.

Above top: Mike and Loren spent five years’ worth of weekends constructing their tiny house. The timber cladding is finished in Resene Waterborne Woodsman tinted to Resene Woody Bay. The window joinery is painted in Resene Lustacryl tinted to Resene Atmosphere.

In circle: Mike, Loren and Hazel in their self-built tiny home. The ply walls are in Resene Colorwood Whitewash and window trims are in Resene Atmosphere.

