

Mo Sutton's courtyard garden is small but utilises vertical space with archways and tall hedging such as Italian Cypress. The 'Phyllis Bide' rose is a fantastic climber with prolific blooms, says Mo. The ceramic planter painted in Resene Spanish White and blooming with purple violets and pansies adds to the classical style.

# holding court

This courtyard garden is filled to the brim with colour thanks to its owners' magic touch with roses and a paintbrush.



Resene  
Coconut Cream

Resene  
Spanish White

Resene  
Lemon Grass

Resene  
Glamour Puss

**M**o and Graham Sutton's Blenheim garden may be small. But what it lacks in area, it makes up for in colour, thanks to Resene testpots and paints, nature's flamboyance and Mo's maximalist vision.

Mo and her husband Graham bought their 496-square-metre corner section in 2005. By the time they'd built the house, adding verandas and patios, there was little space left for gardens.

So, they created some – visually, that is. Mo is a garden designer and has a company called Garden Planit, so she knows how to make a small garden speak up. Her language is colour: pink and gold as the stars, with supporting acts in reds, oranges and whites, mostly in roses. Her favourite roses include the apricot-orange 'Westerland' climbing rose, the pink-flecked cream of 'Claude Monet' and the white-with-yellow-centre 'Margaret Merrill'. She adds blues and mauves with the 'Rhapsody in Blue' rose, and, in summer, extra colour comes from sweet peas and dahlias.

"I've always had hedges," Mo says. "We are on a corner, so I wanted them for privacy, but we didn't have the space." Instead, they built a concrete block wall, painted it in Resene Lumbersider tinted to Resene Lemon Grass and planted *figus pumila*, or creeping fig, to grow over it.

"Ficus is a creeper, so from inside our property and from the roadside, it gives the effect of a hedge, which started everything growing upwards. I knew that we had to garden vertically rather than try to garden horizontally."

Clematis and roses climb skywards over the ficus. As the viewer admires the flowers, their eyes are already looking up and beyond. While waiting for the clematis to grow, Mo used artificial ivy and fake hostas as temporary fillers.

Marlborough is good for roses; they like its clay soil. Graham and Mo ensure the plants have good drainage and are watered and fed regularly. "It's important to keep the roses bug-free," Graham says, "because disease and bugs such as aphids suck out all the nutrients from the plant."

The courtyard-style garden takes inspiration from the Mediterranean, with three seating areas to follow the sun. The patio has a style of table seen in many local homes: a round timber top on a pedestal supported by three curvy feet. Mo has refreshed hers in hot pink, using Resene Lustacryl semi-gloss waterborne enamel tinted to Resene Glamour Puss. "Pink's one of my favourite colours, so when I saw that hot pink, I thought, 'Well, this is it'." Mo credits interior designer Simone Hill at Cinnamon House in Blenheim for introducing her to the Resene colour range.

She painted a couple of ageing wicker chairs to match. Oops. "It didn't work because it was just an old cane base underneath, and it didn't do anything for the pink, so we changed it to soft lilac grey – Resene Lustacryl semi-gloss tinted to Resene Morepork. The paint is helping to hold them together."

Floral fabric Mo bought years ago and a dappled-green ceramic vase set off the look. "I like putting mad colours together," she says. >



**Above top:** Mo painted the fence Resene Lemon Grass and the grey green is a great colour contrast to the vibrant green climbing ficus, which took seven years to establish. Planted on the berm side is hot pink and orange China rose 'Mutabilis' flanked by the apricot and yellow tones of the rose 'Margaret Merrill'. The home's exterior colour is a custom colour created by the Blenheim Resene ColorShop, for a similar colour try Resene Double Sisal.

**Above:** There are multiple seating – and lounging – areas around the garden. It's designed so there's always a sunny spot ready for relaxation – when Mo's not busy gardening that is. Mo created a touch of glam with Resene Coconut Cream painted on the walls, Resene Morepork on the side table and Resene Gold Dust metallic paint on the planter, which houses a life-like artificial palm.

Resene  
Morepork

Resene  
Gold Dust

Resene  
Double Sisal




**Right:** Resene Glamour Puss on the outdoor table picks up the pink of the roses in the garden. Mo revived the rattan furniture with Resene Morepork, a colour she's used as an accent throughout the garden. Resene Coconut Cream on the courtyard walls and Resene Spanish White on the columns give the garden Italian style.

**Below clockwise from top left:** The orange rose 'School Girl' is a repeat-flowering climber. The old-fashioned rose 'Sally Holmes' is one of Mo's favourites, "it has pink and yellow tones, which blend well with other rose colours". Fuchsia-coloured chrysanthemum 'Bold Vanessa' adds a colour pop. 'Olivia' is a David Austin rose named after the famous rose breeder's granddaughter.


- |   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
|  Resene Koru         |  Resene Spanish White |  Resene Gold Dust |
|  Resene Double Sisal |  Resene Morepork      |  |



Resene  Glamour Puss

### Mo's garden design tips

- For Mo and Graham, a horizontal garden of low-form shrubs and creepers would have literally and visually 'hit' the wall. In contrast, a vertical garden with different layers, textures and colours replicates a rambling forest, and visitors forget that the blockwork is just a metre or two away.
- Conventionally, vertical gardens are often created with structures supporting layers of pots, but Mo isn't conventional. There are ficus-covered pillars, climbing roses atop metal arches, upright statues and tall, slim clipped yew trees to give height. If a creeper is looking for a ride upwards, it has options.
- Cypress, clipped yews and small weeping trees provide layers of staggered heights underplanted with ferns and a front-layer border of heuchera and mondo grass. With the basic garden structure well-established, Mo can trim it to shape or let it roam wild.
- Every available centimetre is planted; even edibles are hiding among the flowers. They all thrive because they are well-watered and fed with liquid fertiliser.
- And there is more beyond the wall. The street berm is dominated by three Indian bean trees that stand over hydrangeas, astilbes and liriopes with plenty of visual bounce from roses that have come over the wall.

 Resene  
Lemon Grass

**Opposite left:** Arched mirrors painted in Resene Gold Dust enlarge the space and create a little Alice in Wonderland magic on the ficus hedge. The metal table and chairs match the Resene Morepork used on the planters and furniture elsewhere in the garden.

**Right:** Raised beds painted in Resene Morepork create what Mo describes as a "herb corridor". She has planted the raised beds with herbs and edibles as well as shrubs such as Buxus to provide height and structure. The courtyard area is painted in Resene Coconut Cream and a custom Resene pale brown colour similar to Resene Double Sisal.



The vase required no makeover, but Graham, Mo and their paintbrushes have transformed several large urns throughout the garden. "Those urns were a royal blue, but because they had been outside for so long, they were starting to crack. I thought, 'Well, they need salvaging, and we'll do it in gold because I have a lot of gold around.' There are gold urns everywhere."

Testpots of Resene Gold Dust metallic came to the rescue. "It's amazing how far the testpots go," says Mo.

Everywhere you look, there are joyful Italian flourishes – from plaster motifs painted in Resene Lustacryl in Resene Spanish White to veranda walls in Resene Coconut Cream, the same colour used in the lounge, on kitchen walls and on the painted cork tiles. The front door, veranda ceiling and columns are painted in Resene Lustacryl semi-gloss waterborne enamel tinted to Resene Solitaire.

The patio walls are in a bespoke Resene colour specially mixed for Graham and Mo at the Resene ColorShop in Blenheim (for a similar colour, try Resene Double Sisal).

Unlike interior design, which can be static, the garden décor evolves with the seasons, with Mo using pot plants to adapt to the year's changing moods. "Many things are in pots so that you can switch to summer planting quite easily, and when they fade, you can replace them with a winter pot.

"Most of the flowers are pink, red or orange, but sometimes I decide to add a pot of blue flowers, and it changes the whole effect."

Even the metre-high herb planter boxes have something to say and are saying it in style, in soft lilac – Resene Lumbersider Low Sheen tinted to Resene Morepork.

Mo also uses mirrors shaped like church alcoves throughout the garden, so their reflections appear as windows, bringing light and space. "When you're walking around, there are several vistas where we've used a pot, mirror or garden statue to draw your eye into each area."

And beyond... like the Italian-style fresco of pillars and tall, slender trees against a blue sky, attached to the ficus-covered wall. The faux fresco began as a photo in a gardening magazine, which Mo had reproduced onto a large board. Twenty-five years later, the fresco hasn't faded and is still bringing the aura of possibility to this space.

There's even a tree-lined avenue leading to a fountain, like a feature borrowed from an Italian summerhouse, bringing a little la dolce vita to the top of the South Island. **H**

**garden design** Garden Planit moandsutts@gmail.com

**words** Rebecca Hayter

**images** Juliette Nicholas

→ *turn the page for an alternative look for this garden...*

## paint it right

Choose the right Resene colours and paints for the job.

### *outside done right*

Resene Lumbersider is a waterborne paint ideal for exterior projects, from walls and house exteriors to fences and landscaping features. This Environmental Choice-approved product is based on a tough 100 per cent acrylic resin to ensure maximum durability in all exposed conditions and comes in heat-reflective CoolColour to reflect more heat in dark colours.



### *all that glitters*


Add a little sparkle to plant pots, picture frames, furniture and timber doors, wallboards and window frames with paints from the Resene FX Metallic range. Colours come with a recommended basecoat hue so you can apply that to get the optimum colour effect from your metallic topcoats.



### *all the trims*

Paint windowsills, architraves and doors with Resene Lustacryl semi-gloss or Resene Enamacryl gloss waterborne enamel paints for enamel-style toughness on areas subject to a lot of wear and tear. These easy-to-clean finishes are ideal for both exterior and interior spaces. The gloss finish is a little easier to wipe clean and the semi-gloss finish is a little more forgiving of less-than-perfect substrates, like wooden joinery.

 Resene Solitaire



 Resene Coconut Cream



**Above:** Timber is the star of this outdoor living area with three different shades of wood playing a part in this modern design. This ombre design starts with the soft natural tones of garapa decking protected with Resene Furniture and Decking Oil, the screens near the fireplace are stained in Resene Waterborne Woodsman Bark with Resene Pitch Black wood stain on the ceiling. Timber screens on the back wall are coated with Resene FX Faux Rust Effect to give the look of corroded metal and the concrete seat and pavers are stained in Resene Concrete Stain tinted to Resene Bleached Grey. The walls and columns are Resene Half Alabaster to tie in with the classical garden elements of the magnolia tree, star jasmine hedge and spiral topiary. Outdoor sofa and coffee table from Outside Space, cushions and throw from Bolt of Cloth.

**top tip**

When staining or painting timber a dark colour, opt for a Resene CoolColour formula. This special heat-reflective technology will reflect more of the sun's heat and keep the timber finish and surface cooler helping to protect the wood.

Resene Bleached Grey  Resene Half Alabaster 

# elegant and modern outdoor living



Designers **Kate Ryan** and **Vaughan MacKenzie-Browne** of Zones Landscaping suggest this alternative scheme:

We've reimagined this Italianate garden as a contemporary outdoor living area. A small space can be made to feel bigger when the eye is drawn to different areas. The design centres around the Mini Burton fireplace and the screens create cosy privacy and act as artwork in the garden. The diagonal and vertical screen on the back wall is finished with Resene FX Faux Rust Effect to look like laser-cut steel, and not only gives the eye somewhere to travel to but gives the space depth and ambience at night. Changing the decking to garapa decking protected with Resene Furniture and Decking Oil softens the space and adds warmth. The ceiling in Resene Pitch Black makes the space feel like an additional living area. The star jasmine and 'Little Gem' magnolia have beautiful fragrance and are also hardy and easy to grow. The topiary potted plant creates fun and form and will be a talking point for guests.

phone 0800 60 01 38 web [www.zones.co.nz](http://www.zones.co.nz)

Resene  
Half Forest Green



**Magnolia grandiflora**  
**'Little Gem'**  
Southern Woods  
[www.southernwoods.co.nz](http://www.southernwoods.co.nz)  
0800 800 352



Resene WB Woodsman  
Natural

**Juniperus chinensis**  
**'Blue Point' Spiral Topiary**  
Standards of Excellence  
[www.topiaryplants.co.nz](http://www.topiaryplants.co.nz)  
07 549 0852



Resene WB Woodsman  
Bark

**Mini Burton Outdoor Fireplace**  
Trendz Fireplaces  
[www.trendzoutdoors.co.nz](http://www.trendzoutdoors.co.nz)  
0508 252 784

**Outdoor Canvas Cushion Cover**  
Bolt of Cloth  
[www.boltofcloth.com](http://www.boltofcloth.com)  
03 389 5203

Resene  
Green Spring



Resene WB Woodsman  
Pitch Black

**Stella Round Outdoor  
Coffee Table**  
Outside Space  
[www.outsidespace.co.nz](http://www.outsidespace.co.nz)  
09 630 6177



illustration  
Malcolm White