



viva le pacifica

A pampering yet practical bathroom blends French overtones with Pacific style.

In an era when so many bathrooms are awash with tiles and sleek with contemporary style, this renovated space is not only refreshingly gorgeous but so perfectly in tune with the house in which it sits.

The house is unusual – built in double brick at around 1910 by an Australian builder who bought Federation influences with him from across the Tasman and merged them with classic Kiwi villa characteristics. It's one of a handful of such houses, all in a row in Auckland's Mt Eden and now dubbed The Seven Sisters.

When the current owners, Marg and Michael Wood, began renovations, they wanted to modernise the bathroom but not with a clinical result. "So many bathrooms are clinical and gloomy. I wanted it to be simple and uncluttered but friendly and welcoming," says Marg.

A bathroom needs to be functional, she says. It's a business-like room but that doesn't mean it can't have character.

The house had been renovated in past decades by owners who added varnished rimu tongue-and-groove panelling to the bathroom. Rather than strip this out, Marg used it to advantage by painting it in Resene Mischka, a soft slate blue. The walls above the panelling are painted in Resene Seashell.

Marg was keen to keep the colour scheme simple – white, blue/grey and black – so rather than have natural floorboards, she chose to paint them in Resene Black, then further protect them with a coat of polyurethane. >



words Sharon Newey pictures Mark Heaslip

Above The striking window was inspired by tapa cloth.

Right The room has been cleverly laid out around its tricky L shaped space.

Above right Rimu paneling from an earlier renovation was painted out in Resene Mischka.

 Resene Enigma





Above A basin on a wrought iron stand adds whimsy.

The floor was possibly the trickiest aspect of the bathroom to achieve. Says Marg: “We tried to get tradespeople to do what we wanted but they kept applying washes. We wanted to paint out the floorboards altogether. We wanted a solid colour, so one night at 10 o’clock, my husband and I got down and did it ourselves.”

Although the bathroom has a somewhat French flavour with its ornate basin and pretty collection of antique perfume bottles displayed on a glass shelf, it also has strong Pacific references. A new stained glass window was commissioned from Glassworks (the same glass artists who made the Auckland Cathedral windows) to emulate a tapa pattern.

Says Marg: “I wanted the window to be the focal point. It’s quite large so it needed a special treatment. It works beautifully, letting in lots of natural light but also giving privacy.” There is also a tapa flower artwork on the wall.

The gorgeous handbasin and stand is an American Standard brand bought at LG Carder, and the wrought iron table and candelabra are from French Country Collections.

Although dating back to 1914, the clawfoot bath is also an American Standard brand, apparently one of only 14 bought into the country that year. “The resurfacing man got quite excited about it.”

The unusual L shape of the room left no room for a shower, so that is located in a second bathroom nearby, which has a second toilet and handbasin.

Marg doesn’t rely on just towels and the usual accessories to dress up both bathrooms. For example, an arrangement of round balls on the floor is actually made up of paperweights. The whole effect is a clever blend of feminine and masculine, pampering yet practical. **H**

Did you know? Resene SpaceCote Low Sheen Kitchen & Bathroom combines anti-bacterial silver protection and MoulDefender mould inhibitor, perfect for minimising unwanted nasties in kitchens, bathrooms and laundries.



Wrought iron table and candelabra: French Country Collections

Resene Enigma



Window: Glassworks
www.glassworks.co.nz

Resene Sage



Basin: American Standard

Resene Seashell



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Resene Mischka



Resene Afterburner



Resene Black