

# home on wheels

You don't need a lot of space to feel at home, you just need to do what it takes to make your little abode feel homely

Words **Sammy-Rose Scapens** Photography **Heather Liddell & Jonny Davis**



**FUNCTIONAL AND COMPACT**

The economic use of space is vital both inside and outside the caravan. Outside, the laundry basket doubles as a table, and the Douglas and Bec brass stool folds away when not in use. Inside, wooden crates can be stacked and double as an extra chair or moveable storage when needed.

## *“IT WAS LIKE PASSING A BUNDLE OF PUPPIES... WE COULDN’T HELP BUT PICK IT UP ON THE SPOT”*

**SITTING IN SOGGY** clothes, in a leaky tent, in the middle of a rainy campground, Heather Liddell and her husband Clancy Cummins decided it was probably time to invest in something a little more waterproof. And so they decided to buy a caravan. Travelling back to Auckland on the last day of their ‘summer’ holiday, the couple passed a caravan sales lot where they spotted a 60s Crusader Munro sitting despondently awaiting a new owner. “It was like passing a bundle of puppies,” says Heather. “We couldn’t help but pick it up on the spot.”

Only 2.1 metres wide, just over three metres long, and smelling like mould and mothballs, the caravan was in a less than glorious state. But it had a cute shape and lots of windows, so the interior felt more open and wide than the diminutive frame would suggest. The determined couple felt sure that they could make it into something both functional and aesthetically pleasing.

Without a tow bar, they arranged to have the caravan delivered back to their Coatesville home to begin renovations... where it spent a full six months in the carport. But this wasn’t procrastination. With over 30 years of wear and tear and two single beds that demanded some rebuilding, a fair bit of research needed to be done first.

When they did get started, Clancy took control of the structural side of the project. Beginning by tearing everything out of the interior, he discovered some of the lining was water damaged – meaning the interior rebuild was more intensive than they had originally thought. Reconstructing the kitchen was also a big challenge, as it not only required careful pre-planning due to the size restrictions of a caravan kitchen, but also because of the ▶

**PRIMING AND PAINTING**

When Heather and Clancy bought the caravan, the exterior paint was worn and flaking. It had been painted several times over the years, meaning a lot of stripping and sanding had to be done before they could achieve a smooth finish. Particularly rough areas were sanded. Dings and dents were filled with JB Water Weld. Then the newly exposed aluminium was primed with Resene Vinyl Etch, before being painted in Resene Half Orchid White and Fountain Blue. If the exterior of your caravan is aluminium, then you have two main options when it comes to painting it. The most durable one is Resene Armourcote 221 and Resene Uracryl – or, for an easier option, use Resene Galvo-Prime and Resene Summit Roof. Then, once the painting is done, clean out your Resene bucket and use it to haul your beach finds back to your new little home.

**A MATTER OF MATERIALS**

Heather chose a strong geometric pattern for the curtains to add depth and interest to the monochromatic colour scheme. The woven bedspread by Citta Design adds further texture.



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**CABINETRY** With its rope handles the cabinetry has a fun holiday feel, while being held together by solid brass fixtures. Father Rabbit's enamel falconware is prepared for the knocks of the road.

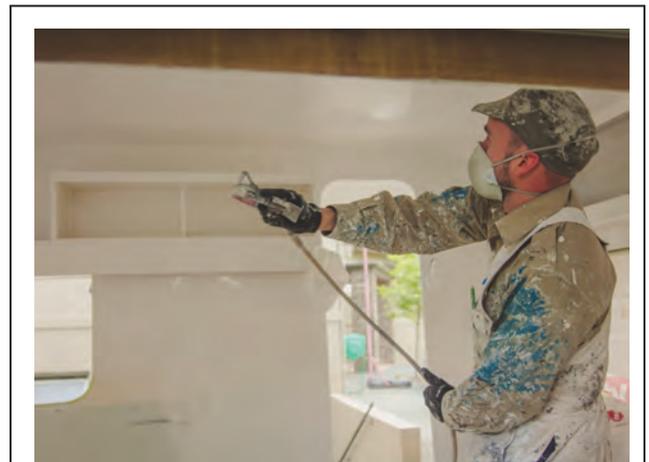
level of craftsmanship required. "Not one job in the interior was as simple as it seemed on paper. The details of the kitchen in particular played on my mind," says Clancy. Meanwhile, Heather took the reins when it came to deciding the aesthetics. She was determined to re-do the space in a modern, clean and minimal way, with a monochromatic colour scheme and gold accents. "We wanted to make it a small home with all the things we love, like clean lines and wooden finishes – none of the kitsch retro vibe or brown and oranges that a lot of other classic Kiwi caravans have been restored with," says Heather.

Luckily they had some assistance. A very successful bribe of "if you help you get to take the caravan for a weekend" got a few helping hands on deck on the weekends.

Now featuring bold cabinetry, striking materials and clean-line furnishings, Clancy and Heather are at the stage where they can fill their caravan with everything that makes them smile: good books, good food, treasures picked up along their journeys and, of course, those very helpful friends. ■



**COUNTERTOP** The LVL ply countertop and table was limed with a coat of white paint, lightly sanded and then drowned in waterproof polyurethane. Douglas and Bec cutlery and ceramics accentuate the brass used throughout the rest of the cabin.



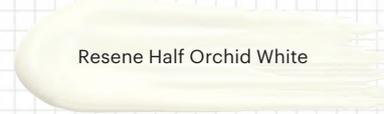
### INTERIOR PAINTING

When it comes to decorating a caravan, the key concern is the limited space. This means it's often best to focus on one feature shade inside and complement it with a few other touches of colour. All the normal paint finishes you would use in your home, can be used in your caravan. Realising the importance of a smooth and even finish, Heather and Clancy applied Resene Double Alabaster with a sprayer unit. The result is an interior with a fresh and open feel. Perfect. If you're doing up a caravan yourself and feel stuck with smooth surfaces that you can't afford to change, you can give them a new lease of life with the help of Resene Waterborne Smooth Surface Sealer. This will grip onto the surface so you can topcoat it in your favourite colour – a handy way to get a new look without having to completely replace things. If you feel bright hues are too overpowering in a small space, consider consider painting your outdoor furniture in sunny colours instead.



**BEFORE** Only 2.1 metres wide, just over three metres long, and smelling like mould and mothballs, the caravan was in a less than glorious state when Heather and Clancy bought it. But it had a cute shape and lots of windows, so the interior felt more open and wide than the diminutive frame would suggest – lending itself to all kinds of unusual possibilities. **AFTER** The result is clean and sleek – less caravan, more compact home. Heather and Clancy didn't see why their aesthetic tastes in homewares should change just because they were working with a caravan.

**EXTERIOR COLOURS**

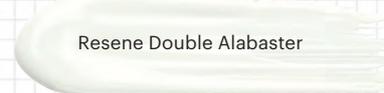


Resene Half Orchid White

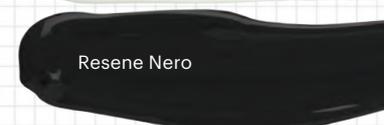


Resene Fountain Blue

**INTERIOR COLOURS**



Resene Double Alabaster



Resene Nero

**style this look** "We wanted to make it a small home with all the things we love, like clean lines and wooden finishes – none of the kitsch retro vibe that a lot of other classic Kiwi caravans have been restored with" – Heather Liddell

Soren woven bedspread, \$279, cittadesign.com

Folding brass stool for Kate Sylvester in black, \$289, douglasandbec.co.nz

Octagon chopping block, \$65, douglasandbec.co.nz

Nest printed cushion cover, \$49.90, cittadesign.com

Riess shallow milk pan, \$67, fatherrabbit.com

Futagami IHADA knife and fork set, \$195, cittadesign.com

