



A delicious kitchen design by Natalie Du Bois for this villa uses warm but muted neutrals with Resene Quarter Pearl Lusta cabinets, Resene Blanc walls and Resene Triple Milestone on the wall behind the shelves above the fridge.

white magic

With the right detailing and colour accents, the classic white kitchen can look stunning. Sharon Newey explores the options.



Kallan MacLeod



Above: This striking Mal Corboy-designed kitchen uses cabinets in Resene Quarter Thorndon Cream with accent cabinets and a splashback in the dramatic purple Resene Upstage.

There's no denying it – white kitchens are a classic and have been popular in their many forms for decades.

For homeowners, they represent a safe choice. Kitchens are expensive, so you want to avoid feeling the need to change the cabinetry every few years. The colour of cabinetry is likely to be the dominant colour in your kitchen so it needs to last the distance, and white certainly gives flexibility and a feeling of timelessness. You can change out other elements in the room – the wall colour, perhaps – as fashions and tastes change without incurring too much expense. White is a neutral backdrop on which to ring the changes.

In a country where we move houses fairly regularly, white is also a reassuring colour for resale. It's unlikely to offend anyone and won't clash with a potential new owner's furnishings.

It doesn't have to be "white white", however. There are many versions of white, as shown by the Resene Whites & Neutrals charts. There are those with a slight hint of stone, of yellow, of green

or of grey, which can all be used with Resene ArmourCat, a tough epoxy finish that's perfect for kitchen cabinets.

White is also highly flexible in terms of style. It can be sleek and architectural, or country-style and traditional with panel doors and tongue-and-groove detailing. Go beachy with turquoise accents and a timber bench top or urban with stainless steel and minimal detailing.

Giving white a lift

If you're worried about a white kitchen being too boring or bland, there are many ways to give it a lift.

One of the most popular ways in recent years has been adding a pop of colour on a back-painted splashback. You can use Resene Imperite tinted to any Resene colour, or some other material, such as tiles

or granite, to enliven your splashback.

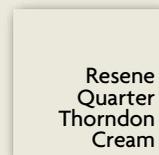
Texture and detail can really lift a white kitchen. You can use a different door profile – try one with panelling, or tongue and groove. Or you might try a different surface to add texture and interest, such as back-painted glass for the cabinets, which gives a tough, high-gloss, almost luminous quality.

Or use a mix of cabinetry materials, for example, painted cabinets below bench height but frosted, glass-fronted cabinets above bench height.

Other details such as interesting handles or a mix of handle styles can lift the cabinetry – you might have handleless cabinets on one side of the kitchen and handles on the other. Or you might introduce sculptural elements, such as a striking rangehood, or detailing on an island bench.



Below: A back-painted splashback in Resene Flourish gives a lift to this kitchen, designed by Mal Corboy. The island bench almost becomes a piece of sculpture, further highlighted by creative lighting. The cabinets are Resene Quarter Thorndon Cream.



Above: Resene Wan White cabinets combine with a Caesar Stone benchtop in this scheme by Emma Morris of Eterno Design.

Below: Gorgeous Resene Fountain Blue is the perfect contrasting element for the kitchen of this seaside home. Designed by Celia Visser, it has cabinets in Resene Eighth Thorndon Cream and a Corian benchtop.



Kallian MacLeod



Introduce colour and character in the other main visual planes in the room. Strongly coloured walls will allow white cabinetry to stand out more. An interesting benchtop material, such as a luxurious granite or engineered stone, or a warm-looking timber, can add interest. Or consider a flooring treatment, such as character timber or tiles. For an up-to-the-minute blonded look, try Resene Colorwood Whitewash on your timber floor.

You can use an interesting material or stronger coloured paint on the back of an island bench, or go for an unexpected use of strong colour, such as behind cupboard or pantry doors, which will only show when the doors are open.

Effective lighting will change the mood of the kitchen and colour

appearance. You can even get LED lighting that will wash cabinets with coloured light.

Many of these design devices are those that can be explored for you by a good kitchen designer. They will know how to lift a white kitchen beyond the ordinary, as you can see by the examples pictured here. To find a designer, a good place to start is the National Kitchen and Bathroom Association website on www.nkba.org.nz.



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