

Resene Innovation in a can

Innovation. It's been the key to success of Resene, New Zealand's own family-run paint company – from its quintessentially Kiwi beginnings in a Wellington garage 65 years ago, to its award-winning sustainability efforts of recent years.

Innovation has seen Resene forge a reputation of excellence and quality in manufacturing quality paints, colours and coatings designed to meet the demanding standards of architectural and building industry professionals.

Resene was started in 1946 by an Eastbourne builder, Ted Nightingale, who needed an alkali-resistant paint to cover his concrete buildings. There was nothing available at the time, so he employed a bit of Kiwi ingenuity and developed his own – using a cement mixer in his garage. Such was the demand from other builders that Ted began producing his cement-based paint on a commercial basis.

Ted's innovation continued when, in 1951, he launched the first water-borne paint in New Zealand under the brand name Resene – a nod to the paint's main ingredient, resin. Combating customer loyalty to traditional lead- and solvent-borne paints and the disbelief that a water-borne paint wouldn't wash off the walls with water proved tough, but Resene's perseverance paid off. The first of the new technology was demonstrated in shop windows, where boards were painted with water-borne paints and the brushes rinsed off in water, much to the marvel of passersby.

Another gamble paid off in 1975, when Resene opted to sell product directly through a national chain of retail stores, the Resene ColorShops.

Over the years Resene has led the way in colour concepts: introducing a strong range of colours to a pastel-weary nation, another that linked interior and exterior colours; pioneering the development of coloured paint bases; offering a full range of testpots; delivering virtual painting technology into thousands of homes with the launch of the free downloadable Resene EzyPaint.

The company has grown – with three generations of the Nightingale family keeping the momentum going – to produce both decorative and protective

coatings for residential, commercial and industrial needs. Resene has a presence in Australia and Fiji and exports paint and colour technology to offshore markets.

Resene was green long before it was topical. In the late 1960s, lead was removed from decorative paints well ahead of other manufacturers. In 1996, Resene joined the Environmental Choice programme, an independent eco-label scheme which makes it easier for consumers to select paints that ease the burden on the environment.

Further environmental initiatives include launching New Zealand's first VOC (volatile solvent)-free interior wall paint, as well as the Resene Earthsense range (with 20 per cent renewable content in the dry paint form and 65 per cent renewable as it is delivered in the can) and the Resene CoolColour™ range (formulated to reflect more of the sun's energy, keeping surfaces cooler and reducing stress on the coating and building). To top it off, Resene founded a paint recovery and recycling programme, Resene PaintWise.

These efforts saw Resene scoop several prestigious environmental awards in 2010 including NZI National Sustainable Business Network Awards' Sustainable Business of the Year; Sustainable 60 Awards' Large Company Exemplar Business Award, Marketplace category winner and a special commendation for being the only entrant to be a finalist in all five award categories; and a Ministry for the Environment Green Ribbon award.

In 2009 Resene won up to \$1 million in research and development services from Industrial Research Ltd to develop water-borne paints based on sustainable ingredients, breaking the paint industry's long term reliance on gas and oil for high-performance paints. The new eco range will be available soon – and Resene's innovations will undoubtedly continue in the years to come.



1961



2011

Top: One of an early series of Resene advertisements.

Above: Resene is working with Industrial Research Ltd to develop a new world-first eco paint range.



the paint the professionals use