





Little India

Porirua

Catalyst was engaged to design a new restaurant fit-out for Little India in the Mungavin Homestead, a historic building in Porirua.

The brief was to create a vibrant contemporary Indian restaurant in an historic 1900s homestead that had been unoccupied for some time. Last fitted out in the 1980s and vacant for a number of years, the building was in desperate need of some TLC. The client wanted to enrich the customer experience by showcasing the energy, colour and drama of Indian cooking.

The existing interior was refurbished to provide a character setting into which the contemporary elements of the Indian restaurant were inserted. A synergy was created between the modern forms and crisp finishes of the restaurant elements, and the beautiful detail of original features including native timbers, decorative plaster cornices and stain glass windows.

The juxtaposition of elements and finishes allowed the two styles to sit comfortably together, each style being allowed to

shine without competing for the eye's attention. All this, while maintaining the integrity of the building. Richly coloured vinyl wall finish and fabrics were used to bring the vibrancy of the Indian styling into the fit-out.

New English-Tawa joinery deliberately contrasts the original native timbers differentiating old from new. Contrast metal inlay detail in the bar and maitre'd counter further enhance the differences. An opening between the kitchen and dining area was created to bring the colour and drama of the kitchen into the restaurant. The stainless steel framed opening is a simple and dramatic insertion in the rich deep red and gold finished wall.

The colours and dimension of the original windows were reflected in new acoustic wall panels above the new banquette seating and helped to integrate the seating into the fit-out. Shaped and suspended panels and fabric pendant lights were used to visually balance the spaces.

Native timber plank floors were uncovered

in the dining areas to add richness to the fit-out and as a practical flooring solution for a restaurant; however these exposed hard surfaces required consideration of the acoustic absorption in these areas. An innovative design solution was the use of acoustic panels on the walls and suspended from the ceilings above the seating areas.

The colour selection was inspired by colours in the glass of the existing lead light windows that had a strong connection with the rich oranges and reds found in Indian culture and cuisine.

There was a strong need to create a neutral background to complement the existing building elements and the newly inserted colours/materials. Resene Zylone Sheen in **Resene Ecrú White** was chosen as it is a soft, barely there beige that enriches the colours of the native timber floors, ceilings, interior doors, and timber mouldings. Resene Lustacryl semi-gloss waterborne enamel in **Resene Parchment** was used in the staff and storage areas as a practical soft beige in this high wear area.



Being a refurbishment the fit-out had to deal with the challenges of an older existing building, including damaged existing surfaces.

Existing timber features were refurbished and refinished with Resene Qristal Clear in a semi-gloss finish to protect and enhance the richness of the timbers.

The finished fit-out has brought a fresh lease of life to what was a tired interior space. Soft fabrics and acoustic panels complement the hard painted and timber surfaces. And the rich interior successfully marries the rich colours of Indian culture and cuisine with the historic homestead.



Architectural specifier: Catalyst Consulting www.catalystconsult.co.nz

Building contractor: Vada Developments

Client: Little India www.littleindia.co.nz

Painting contractor: Le Prou Decorators

Photographer: Grant Heighway www.catalystconsult.co.nz