



Resene Half Carefree





La Fourchette Restaurant

Auckland

The brief for the interior of La Fourchette was intimately connected to the vision for the restaurant itself. The business operates as a café by day, restaurant by night, and also incorporates a patisserie 'shop' providing takeaway coffees, crepes, pizzas and pastries. The design needed to accommodate these functions without one compromising another.

In addition, the clients wanted to present a modern French restaurant with integrity rather than a pastiche of ideas about French food and culture. It also needed to be a good 'local' and reflect the seaside location. The neighbourhood has a broad demographic ranging from families with young children through to elderly patrons. La Fourchette needed to be comfortable and accessible for all.

The space itself presented some challenges, the chief one being the layout over two levels. Another was the concrete structural ceiling that would be acoustically too lively for a restaurant setting. They addressed the change in level by creating distinct experiences for upstairs and downstairs dining. Coloured walls, painted timber panelling, banquette seating and acoustic ceilings create a more intimate experience upstairs. Floating ceiling panels, finned

pendants and simpler painted wall treatments respond to the larger volume downstairs. A shelving unit between the shop and the main dining space provides an area for display while screening diners from the glare of refrigerated cabinets and the bustle of takeaway customers.

Colour plays a fundamental role in the design. The general palette of colour and materials is intended to subtly evoke both ideas of the sea and France: Cararra marble counters draw on customary French brasserie fit-outs; the sandstone oak floors and whitewashed tabletops pick up on tones of the beach; and the strong blue wall colour, **Resene SpaceCote Low Sheen in Resene San Juan**, underpins both these themes and at the same time, unites the split level space. The chosen colours were carefully selected to respond to both daytime and night-time demands: the palette is sharp enough for a daytime café yet has sufficient depth for night-time dining.

The Resene San Juan walls also make a wonderful foil for other fittings and fixtures: the copper pendants, black and white photographs, and accents of yellow upholstery are all highlighted beautifully when contrasted against the depth and intensity of this colour.

In the main dining area on the ground floor, the ceiling soars to nearly four metres. A different colour, Resene SpaceCote Low Sheen in **Resene Eighth Friar Grey**, is used above the picture rail to lower the apparent wall height and make the space feel more intimate. This colour tones in with both the exposed concrete ceilings and the wall colour and is subtle enough not to compete with either. Throughout, the contrasting timber panelling and trims in **Resene Double Alabaster** keep the look crisp and modern.

The palette presents a warm yet distinctive space for customers, reflects the location and French identity of the business, and allows La Fourchette to seamlessly transition from daytime café to night-time restaurant.

Unique furniture items such as the wait stations, banquette seating, shop shelving and wine storage were all custom designed by MAUD to fit both the space and functional requirements. While most of the fittings are new, some, such as the wall light fittings upstairs, are second hand and have been repurposed and repainted using Resene Double Alabaster to make over old brass fittings, recovered and given a new life.



Architectural specifier: Natasha Markham MAUD (Markham Architecture + Urban Design)

Building contractor: Andrew MacDonald, Innovado

Client: Natalie & Romain Le Gal, La Fourchette restaurant

Painting contractor: Doug Ferguson, New and Old

Photographer: Emma Smales

