



a new dimension

Dave Fowell’s intricately wrought timber sculptures are given added dimension with often vibrant colour.

Above Sculptor Dave Fowell with *Pieta* (mother and child) in Resene Supernova, and a mix of Resene Supernova/Resene Sassy and mix of Resene Dingley/Resene Regent Grey.

Right *Piano Men* in Resene Black and Resene White.

- Resene Dynamite
- Resene Supernova
- Resene Tax Break

words and pictures
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Dave Fowell is a pragmatic sort of an artist. About three years ago he began creating wooden rather than stone sculptures, partly because he could work on them indoors during the winter.

Now he’s painting his wooden sculptures, partly to stop them looking weathered as they age. But painting the large, intricately-built works has also brought a huge creative bonus, by emphasising their form and creating more impact. It also brings together Dave’s love of sculpture and painting, marking yet another development in his exploration of artistic expression.

The former chef/owner of Eggentric Café in Flaxmill Bay, near Cooks Beach on the Coromandel Peninsula, has always had an interest in the arts. His South Auckland dairy farm parents had “art on the walls, books on the shelves and played a bit of music”.

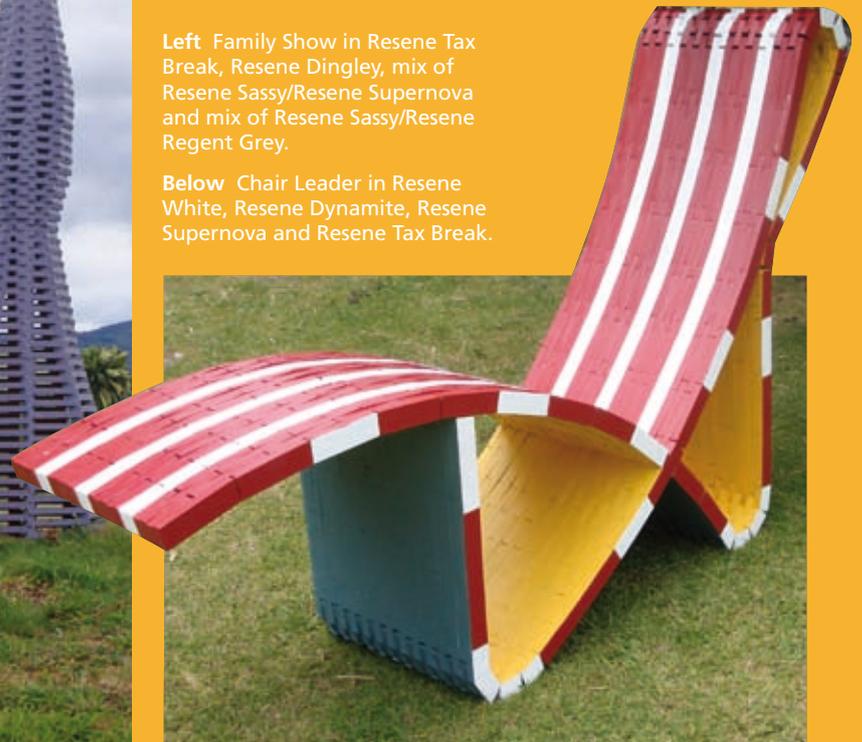
But his own art career didn’t start until 12 years ago when he took a painting class with Tairua artist Paula McNeill. After painting and exhibiting, he then met a Swiss collage artist and moved into collage for a while, before returning to oil painting.



“It’s a whole new dimension. Colour is so wonderful as well, so exciting.”

Left Family Show in Resene Tax Break, Resene Dingley, mix of Resene Sassy/Resene Supernova and mix of Resene Sassy/Resene Regent Grey.

Below Chair Leader in Resene White, Resene Dynamite, Resene Supernova and Resene Tax Break.



His interest in sculpting was sparked by the first Eggsentric Sculpture Symposium eight years ago. He and his wife Denise organised the symposium to boost public awareness of sculpture and support the artists. They also saw it as a way of creating an artistic environment for their café.

During the first symposium he picked up some tools and had a go himself. Since then he’s completed a number of stone sculptures, creating a variety of forms, from the symmetrical to the more figurative.

He started working with wood after being inspired by some sculptures in Sydney. “I brought the idea back and started doing my own thing with it.”

Each sculpture is built from small pieces of wood stacked on top of each other. It’s a process of cutting, sanding, gluing, nailing and painting. Dave uses pine for the painted works and untreated macrocarpa for the natural ones.

The work that goes into his sculptures is obvious and he says people enjoy being able to see the time and effort that he’s put in. His pieces range from the quirky – huge, stylised deck chairs and Alice-in-Wonderland like keyboards – to organic cones and sensitive human forms.

Painting the sculptures was initially a practical move, he says. “I didn’t have room to store the raw wood inside and they weathered outside. I like that but some people like something they buy to look new.

“Also it’s a whole new dimension. Colour is so wonderful as well, so exciting.”

Dave had been using Resene for his canvas paintings for about 10 years, so they were a natural choice for his sculptures.

“I went into the Resene shop in Thames and went ‘wow, buy, buy, buy!’ I got 11 colours. I do a little mixing but it’s amazing how well they work as they are. I haven’t gone for colours that are too muted or pale. I’m more out there in my colours, in my painting as well.”

Recent works displayed in the garden at Eggsentric, which is now run by his son and partner, bring the space alive. “They’re a splash of colour, like annual flowers. They pick up the colours in the garden,” Dave says.

Since retiring from Eggsentric about a year ago, he’s been able to devote more time to art but still enjoys cooking. “I’ve tried to work my life so that art runs parallel with my life. You can’t start being creative at 6am and finish at 8pm. I find lots of ideas come when I’m cooking.”

Dave also helps organise the Mercury Bay Art Escape, an annual open-studio event held over two weekends in February and March. **H**