



Neutrals are a perennial favourite with investors wanting to attract the widest range of tenants.

Renovating can be a hard business, but it can also be fun. Here are some tips and trends from those in the home improvement business to help you make the best decisions around renovating in 2019.

COLOUR TRENDS

Paint colours are always evolving according to overseas fashions and local demand. Rentals tend to have more muted interiors and it's important to make sure that they will have mass appeal. Karen Warman from Resene says that most landlords decorating rental properties are aiming for universal appeal and that neutrals are always the best option.

"Use popular neutral colours that go well with a wide range of furnishings, so tenants can easily visualise their furniture and belongings fitting into the space, without worrying about colour clashes."

She says that some neutrals are always popular with Black White and Sea Fog very popular in urban areas and on modern properties.

"Older properties and ones in cooler regions, work well with variations of Pearl Lusta and Resene Spanish White. Resene publishes a top 20 colour list each year, which is a good place to start when considering your colour options."

She suggests that a good cost-cutting option is to choose paints that work through multiple properties. "That way when you need to touch up or repaint, it's easy to remember what goes where."

As rentals often take a lot of wear and tear, waterborne enamels are a good idea as they are durable and easy to clean.

KITCHEN MAKEOVERS

Kitchens make or break a rental home's appeal. Dirty, dated kitchens make a home extremely unappealing and can badly affect their value, so it pays to keep them up to scratch.

Investor and expert renovator Trish Keogh has a "keep it under \$5,000" policy for her rentals and she's clever when it comes to keeping the kitchens cheap. In a recent reno in Masterton she chose to bring in cabinetry from another property and used it to replace the existing kitchen. It was repainted and brought back to life and she says that it made a world of difference.

"The kitchen worked out really well. It was the most dramatic makeover of the whole project."

For those who want to save a little time and get the experts in to help with

ON TREND

Looking to renovate your rental in the new year? Here are some tips and tricks from those in the know. By **Joanna Mathers**.



RENOVATION



ABOVE Upgrading a bathroom can be as simple as replacing a tired vanity and tapware and tiling a new backsplash.
LEFT PlaceMakers essential kitchen range is great value for money for those looking to renovate their kitchens; prices start at \$4,000.

kitchens, suppliers such as PlaceMakers can provide full kitchens at a reasonable rate. They have a range that starts from \$4,000 for all cabinetry and benchtops, this is excellent value for those wanting a completely fresh kitchen.

"The key trends in kitchens next year will be woodgrains with concrete colour finishes, black tapware, and black bowls in matt finishes," says Liz Aitken, PlaceMakers kitchens category manager.

CLEANING UP THE BATHROOM

Bathrooms also play a huge part when it comes to a home's appeal. Bathrooms in rental homes are often very simple affairs, but if you are wanting to add value to your yield, spending a bit of money bringing a bathroom up to scratch is a great option.



Winner of the Resene/NZPIF Renovation of the Year award Nicholas Irons managed to transform a filthy old bathroom in his Invercargill rental without spending the earth on improvements.

The bathroom had contained a bath/shower unit, toilet and vanity and he opted to remove all of these and replace them with a luxe shower unit that featured both a rain head shower and a wall shower head, contained within a glass shower with a sliding door.

"The rain head and the wall head make the shower look incredibly expensive, but I actually managed to only spend about \$1,800 on it," says Irons.

Louise Cook is the bathroom categories manager at PlaceMakers. She says that trends to look out for in the new year include "black and brushed gold finishes in tapware and textured finishes trending towards natural elements and materials."

GREAT OUTDOORS

Street appeal is important if you are wanting to attract the best renters for your property. A lick of paint can go a long way towards adding value to the rental returns or increasing value if you're planning to sell.

Karen Warman says there has been huge shift towards black and grey finishes outside, teamed with white trims.

RENOVATION



“The greys go from the softest whisper of grey through to deep shades, such as Resene Surrender and Resene Bokara Grey. The sun tends to make colours look lighter outside so often it’s best to choose the darker of your favourite colours so you don’t end up with a glary exterior.”

THE LOW DOWN ON FLOORS

Floors are often a problem area in rentals. Carpet and wood are prone to much wear and tear and need to be refreshed when possible. Many older homes have beautiful wooden floors hidden under crummy carpet, which can be refreshed with paint or wooden stains.

If you chose to go down the paint route, it’s best not to go for white, as it shows up many stains. Creams and greys are an attractive option, and even pale green can work well in areas such as bathrooms.

If you prefer carpet for your rentals it pays to shop around. You can pick up

TOP Resene Qristal ClearFloor is a satin floor finish. LEFT Scandinavian-style pale wooden floors look great and hide many stains.

‘Many older homes have beautiful wooden floors hidden under crummy carpet, which can be refreshed with paint or wooden stains’

carpet from around \$35 a square metre for a decent brand, so talk to your local carpet sellers about what they can offer you. Floors will also need to be prepped before your carpet, which can be costly if you have bad floors (around \$65m²) so again, it pays to do your homework.

Solution dyed nylon carpet is very durable and a good choice for rentals that are likely to have young families. When it comes to colour, opt for something darker that won’t show the stains. Cream carpet may look lovely, but it’s not going to stay pristine for long, so be practical about your choices. ■