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 DREAM  
 ROOM

**WINNER #2**

# BLUE FOR BOYS

When two brothers begin sharing a room, their mother decides it's time for an exciting burst of creativity

By **Debbie Harrison** Photography **Nicola Edmonds**



Having great ideas is one thing, but following through on them is another, especially when life is already hectic, with a household to run and children underfoot.

Sometimes it takes just one good reason to spur you into action. When it came to redecorating her sons' bedroom, Feilding mum Catherine Larsen had more than one good incentive – she had three.

Firstly, she had plans to move her six-month-old son Isaac in with his 21-month-old brother Aaron, but she wanted to inject some personality into the room before that happened. Secondly, Catherine suffers from postnatal depression and thought that immersing herself in a creative project

might help, by giving her a new purpose and sense of achievement. But the third reason was the biggest impetus of all: she was one of our Resene Dream Room competition winners, meaning she received \$750 worth of Resene paint and \$750 cash to get her going.

"I'm three-quarters of the way through a diploma for interior design and I've always dreamed of being able to do stuff like this," the 24-year-old mum says. She and hubby Caleb rent their home from her parents, with plans to buy it one day.

Helpfully, she's a dab hand on the practical front, so rolled up her sleeves and got straight to work, pulling three layers of wallpaper off the bedroom walls. Then she set to work on her key feature of the room: the striped wall. She chose timeless colours that she hopes

will see the boys through childhood to adolescence: Resene Botticelli, Resene Bunting and Resene Alabaster. It was a time-consuming job, but worth the effort. "It took about two weeks just to do that one wall. It needed two coats of each colour, plus the drying time. It also took some organisation to get people to look after the kids while I did it all. Everyone was pulled in to babysit – my mum, my husband – so that I could just shut myself in the room and potter away at it."

The end result is definitely striking. Painting the shortest wall worked to make the room look bigger and while the navy Resene Bunting is a dark choice, it doesn't seem encroaching because it's broken up by the five white frames Catherine nabbed at a Harvey



Left: Catherine and Aaron enjoy the newly decorated space

Below: Caleb and Aaron with Catherine holding Isaac



Norman sale. She filled them with images from a Hairy Maclary frieze but plans to swap them out for other images as the boys grow.

When it came to furnishing the room, self-confessed bargain-hunter Catherine did it all on a budget, upcycling furniture where possible and scouring retail sales for bargain finds. The single bed is actually part of a set of bunks that were originally a dark walnut stain – Catherine bought them on TradeMe for \$50. The cot and drawers were other canny TradeMe purchases. All three items of furniture were kindly painted by a friend of Catherine’s dad who owned a spray gun. Using Resene Waterborne Smooth Surface Sealer saved them hours of fiddly sanding on the cot, the bed, the drawers and wardrobe door.

For a pop of colour, Catherine chose Resene Celery for the drawers and painted the front of them in Resene Magnetic Magic. She made the clever magnets on the drawers using photo magnet paper from a \$2 shop in town. She simply put them in her printer, printed family photos and clip-art from the internet, then cut them out. “Aaron loves photos and looking at photos of people, so it was a cool way of putting pictures in there without having to hang things on the wall,” she explains.

The choice of green as an accent colour (it’s also in the quilt and cushion

## When it came to furniture, self-confessed bargain-hunter Catherine did it all on a budget

cover Catherine made) was a considered one. “The green is something that can be changed later on. I didn’t want the accent colour to be permanent. Down the track the boys may want it to be red or orange, so I only added it to things that can be easily changed or removed (or repainted, in the case of the drawers). It won’t be too much of a drama to change the look of the room by just changing the accent colour,” she says.

Catherine reckons the blackboard on the wardrobe door really finished off the room’s look. She only hung it the

night before the photo shoot and was impressed by how well it balanced the mirror attached above. She made the blackboard using a \$5 photo frame she bought at a garage sale. She painted it in Resene Bunting (to match the wall stripe) and added some MDF painted with Resene Blackboard Paint.

The investment piece in the room is the blind, which Catherine had made (at a cost of \$400) in Unique Fabric’s ‘Going Spotty’. She liked the playful feel of it and saved a bit of money by adding stripes of blue fabric down each side of the blind, to make it wide enough to fit the window without blowing the budget.

Looking at what she has achieved has given Catherine a sense of accomplishment, so it won’t be her last DIY project. She plans to paint the hallway and the exterior of the house next – but all in good time. “I have big plans but I have to remember I have two kids to look after and study to do. But it felt good to do something

### RESENE COLOURS USED:

- **Main walls:** Resene SpaceCote Low Sheen in Resene Botticelli, Resene Bunting and Resene Alabaster.
- **Skirting and trims:** Resene Linen.
- **The drawers:** Resene Magnetic Magic with Resene Celery.
- **Blackboard:** Resene Bunting and Resene Blackboard Paint.

# TRICKS & TIPS

▶ “I used Resene Sureseal on the skirting boards because they had varnish on them – it stopped it from bleeding through.”



▶ “Use good quality masking tape. At first I brought cheap nasty stuff and the paint bled under it and the tape fell off the wall by the time I reached the other side.”

▶ Isaac’s name spelt out in some of the colours from the striped wall makes a great point of interest.



▶ “I chose Resene SpaceCote Low Sheen for the walls because it’s harder wearing and wipeable – a necessity with two boys!”



▶ The magnetic-fronted drawers add a splash of Resene Celery.

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