

Be bold with red

THE TRADITIONAL SYMBOL OF LOVE, red is a colour of grand gestures and bold statements. As far back as the 17th century, red was making waves, when France's Louis XIV painted the heels of his shoes with an expensive and eye-catching dye, starting a trend that spread among nobility all over Europe.

Today, red is mostly used to represent matters of the heart. "When I met my partner and fell in love I found myself designing a whole range in red," says New Zealand fashion designer Lucie Boshier, who admits she's on a mission to brighten our wardrobes. But red also symbolises happiness in some cultures. In India, brides get married in red saris. Even in New Zealand, red can cheer us up, as it makes us think of summer and pohutukawa in flower.

In nature, red warns of danger, but on an emotional level, it's associated with passion, openness, stimulation and determination. But red can have negative connotations too; in psychological terms, it's said to make people aggressive. But whatever your feelings towards red, it always sparks a response; it's the colour of action, verve and success.

Using red at home

In home decoration, a little red goes a long way but it can be used to great effect as an accent colour. "Red is an advancing colour – which means, used on the walls, it can make a space feel smaller, and used on furniture, it can make the piece appear bigger than it is," explains Jill Carroll, interior designer and colour consultant at Auckland's Colourwaves (www.colourwaves.co.nz). It's also stimulating and is thought to raise the heart rate, so avoid overuse in spaces where you need to relax, such as bedrooms and living rooms.

Because it's a warm colour, you can use red accents to take the chill out of cold or north-facing rooms, but the perfect place for the action and stimulation of the bold use of red is the dining room. "Red is one of the most congenial colours for entertaining because of its intimacy and warmth," says Jill. In fact, red is thought to increase the appetite; it's no coincidence that many cafes and restaurants use this colour.



Top, \$155, Deborah Sweeney.

Tunic, \$440, Twenty Seven Names.

Top, \$245, Taylor.

Dress, \$428, Starfish.

Your personality

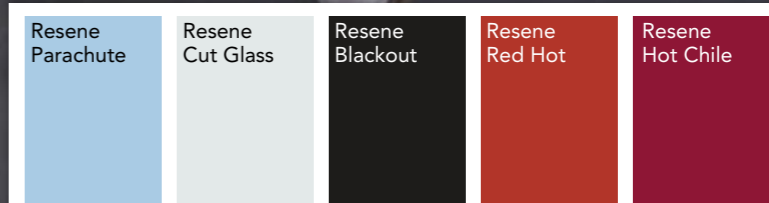
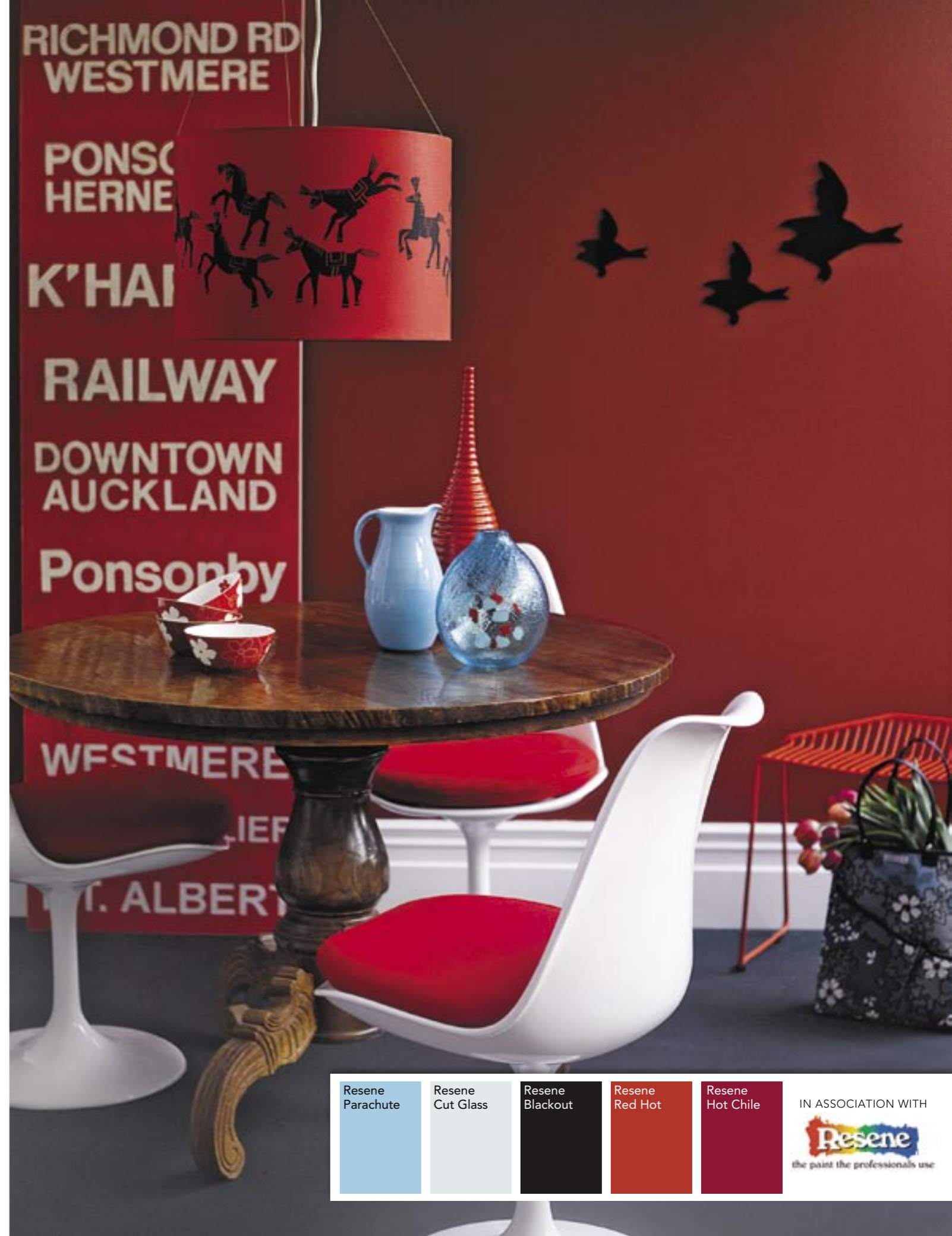
No one uses red strongly by accident. People who have an affinity with this colour are self-assured. They enjoy being the centre of attention, can be persuasive and have a dynamic, sometimes fiery nature.

Wearing red

In her book *Why Are You Wearing Those Colours?* (Peaceful Living Publications, \$30), Auckland based colour coach Thelma van der Werff of Colour Comfort (www.colourcomfort.com) says that if you reach for red you're feeling excited and ambitious. You have enthusiasm for life and the determination and motivation to take initiative. If you're suffering emotional burn-out, Thelma suggests that wearing red can revitalise your passion because it counteracts negative thinking.

Fashion stylist Ingrid Vink (www.vink.co.nz) thinks of red as dynamic. "Wear it in moderation to project authority and assertiveness without being threatening. But if worn with gusto as a head-to-toe ensemble it can be interpreted as bossy," she says. Red is a flattering colour and most people can find a shade to suit them. Team it with charcoal, white, metallics and chocolate brown. →

Vintage table, \$1995, Republic Home. Dining chairs, \$350 each, Homage. Vintage bus blind mounted, from \$350 each, Vintage Styles. Bowls, \$15 each; set of three wall ducks, \$89. Both from Style Direct. Esther Diamond light shade, \$360; Saben bag, \$220; Pedro stool, \$269; blue jug, \$65; red Peter Collis beehive vase, \$335; J Penman glass vase, \$319. All from Eon Design. Wall in Hot Chile, \$57.50 per litre, Resene.



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