

# House paint secrets

**P**ainting new homes can involve less prep-work but higher expectations than painting time-worn character homes.

Operations manager of boutique artisan painting company Wall Treats, Ashley Wong, says: "In new homes, because the surfaces are new, there is a higher emphasis on achieving perfection.

"However, the paint finish achieved is reliant on the quality of the building work (for example the framing and how the wallboards were hung), and the quality of the plastering and gib-stopping."

No matter how skilled your painter is, they're not going to be able to disguise crooked framing or lumpy gib-stopping with coats of paint.

Some design elements common in new homes really put the spotlight on the quality of their interior paint finishes, Ashley points out.

Large windows flooding interiors with light, combined with big walls (typically achieved by joining many sheets of gib-board), are an unforgiving combination.

Ashley reckons labour typically makes up 80 per cent of a painting quote (with 20 per cent being product). Consumers need to be aware that not all methods achieve the same results. She's noticed an increasing use of spray machines to apply paint, especially on new homes.

They tend to be quicker than the traditional roller and brush approach, allowing professional painters to schedule more jobs.

But they increase the risk of paint being applied too thinly, in which case it won't look as good and will wear



A good quality interior or exterior paint job should last approximately seven to 10 years before needing to be re-worked.

**"No matter how skilled your painter is, they're not going to be able to disguise crooked framing or lumpy gib-stopping."**

more quickly. Someone brushing up against very thinly applied paint as they walk past can be enough to make it mark.

She recommends homeowners require the final coat be rolled on if possible.

And although no one has to strip ancient wallpaper or spend hours scraping back flaking paint in new homes, there are still some preparation decisions to be made.

A common misconception about painting new homes, says Ashley, is when a consumer assumes pre-primed timber never needs to be re-primed before painting. The timber's specifications should make it clear what sort of pre-priming the wood has had. Some timber yards apply primer that is meant to protect the wood from exposure to weather for a finite time, such as four weeks.

When the exposure period specified for pre-primed timber has been exceeded it will need to be re-primed with a quality sealer or undercoat before painting.

A good quality interior or exterior paint job should last approximately seven to 10 years, Ashley says, but this isn't set in stone. Choosing darker exterior paint colours means repainting more often because darker colours have a lower LRV (light reflective value).

For example, black has an LRV of zero. It attracts heat and absorbs it rather than reflecting it, causing damage and a tendency to bubble, especially if it's used on the warmer northern and western faces of homes.

The quality of paint used and the thoroughness of the painters' prepping will also affect the longevity of paint jobs. Homeowners can help maximise how long their exterior paint lasts by having their house washed down annually.