

NEW HOMES

Different strokes

With paint, make sure you're not comparing apples with onions.

Paints are not all created equal. The operations manager of Wall Treats (past winners of the Dulux Master Painter of the Year Award), Ashley Wong, concedes premium brands can seem expensive. But, she says, you get what you pay for, and these paints usually provide better coverage and durability.

Most homeowners will be aware of the big, quality paint brands, such as Resene and Dulux, and those with a bit more knowledge may be familiar with boutique premium brands Aalto Colour or Porter's Paints. But Ashley says many people don't know that some professional painters regularly use "trade lines" of paint. These are cheaper options produced by big-name paint companies.

"Our understanding is that trade line paint has less binders and pigments than premium range paints. [Binders drive the paint film to adhere, while pigment affects its colour.] When these two components are compromised, the result may be less than ideal."

She qualifies this by saying there are occasions when a trade line will better suit a job. If this is the case, a painter should be able to explain why.

Ashley says some consumers will be happy to use trade lines to reduce costs.

"If you're talking about saving \$800 to \$1000, that could cover the cost of your lighting."

She becomes concerned when consumers compare quotes from different painters without understanding what quality of paint they are based on. "Sometimes the homeowner isn't comparing apples with apples."

She says if a homeowner isn't clear about the details he or she should ask for more information.

"The painting industry, particularly in Auckland, is



competitive," she adds. "Most consumers decide which painting company to engage based on price. Painters tend to push clients towards one specific brand because they may receive a better trade discount or because that is the only paint company that would give them a credit account."

Another problem can arise with colour matching. This happens when you like a particular shade from a particular brand and a painter wants to replicate that colour using a different brand. Ashley, who has a finely tuned eye for colour, says, "Colour matching often leads to disappointment. A close match may be achieved but the depth of colour is virtually unattainable."

She says interior designers and discerning customers often walk into homes and immediately spot colour matches. Your average Kiwi householder, however, may be less attuned to subtle differences but should be told when the shade they've chosen will be colour matched.

Wall Treats has also noticed that architectural plans and specifications they receive increasingly specify use of water-based VOC-free paints. These are considered more "green" because they don't contain volatile organic compounds which break down and release molecules into the surrounding air.

