

SPECIAL REPORT

“How to Save 70% on a brand new Kitchen or Bathroom”

By Scott Bywater & Geoffrey Whitworth

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Special Report



Jack and Geoffrey Whitworth

How To Save 70% On A Brand New Kitchen or Bathroom

The following is an edited copy of a transcribed interview between Scott Bywater and Geoffrey Whitworth, the owner/proprietor of **Superior Resurfacing**.

My name's Scott Bywater and today I'm going to be interviewing Geoffrey Whitworth. Now Geoffrey was a spray painter for 30 years and over that time he restored over fifteen hundred cars, including vintage, classic and show cars which require an extreme level of detail. Now as someone who also has a passion for property, what he decided to do several years ago was to turn his hand to the art of restoring the most important rooms of the house, the kitchens and the bathrooms and in this interview I'll be asking Geoffrey how he can help home owners and investors make over their bathrooms and kitchens for 70% less than a new fit out. Welcome Geoffrey.

Hello Scott, how are you?

Yeah good, good, how about yourself?

I'm fine thank you.

I'm sure there's a lot of people quite interested in what you've got to say today and I think probably the best way to start out is providing an overview, like exactly how does your resurfacing system work?

Well, it works like this; I am able to resurface the existing fixtures in kitchens, bathrooms and laundries. We repair any major imperfections and then resurface any surfaces in any colour or finish. The result is amazing. It really looks like a whole new room just by changing the colours. I resurfaced a bathroom in a home built in the 1970's. The colours were bright orange, green and mission brown. The owners chose to resurface the room in white and beige colours. On completion the room felt bigger, it was so much brighter and visitors to their home thought they had put in a whole new bathroom. I also resurfaced a kitchen bench top for a lady who had thought she would need to have it replaced. It was chipped, scratched and stained. After I had repaired the damage and resurfaced it looked brand new.

So really, what you're doing, how does that compare with what other people do, like most people obviously just get the whole thing refitted right?

Yes, resurfacing saves all the dramas and hassle of getting it all refitted. So many people are happy with their existing bathrooms or kitchens. They just want them recoloured and freshened up, livened up and modernised, especially homes over 10 years old. That's what we do, in any colour they choose and in any finish. Most people don't realize how much is required to be done for a whole new fit out to their kitchen and bathroom. There is the re-sheeting, wiring and plumbing to fixtures, new bench tops, vanity, bathtub, shower screen, cupboards and cabinet installation, framing for the new bathtub, new tap ware and accessory installation, new appliances, new paint, waterproofing etc. There is so much to do with a complete fit out, a very expensive exercise. By resurfacing existing fittings the savings are enormous, at least 70% of the cost of a new fit out along with no mess. And there is the added bonus of the whole surface being so easy to clean with no more mould, mildew or dirty grout lines and no yellowing.

That's great and how is it possible, I mean some people must be sitting there thinking yeah right, I can get a similar look and save 70% off my renovations. How is this possible and why haven't we heard about this before?

Resurfacing has been extremely popular in America for the past 30 years. It is now popular in Queensland and NSW but Victorians haven't heard much about it yet. It is possible to save so much money because there is no need to replace any of the fixtures, saving money on labour to remove and replace them and the plumbing doesn't need to be redone. Labour is so expensive let alone the cost of replacing the fixtures so you can easily see how so much money can be saved.

Yeah okay. And what process do you go through to do it? Obviously someone's got to accept your quote first and what sort of happens after that?

We offer options, and create the job based on the customers' selections and needs. As I have worked with colours for over 30 years I am able to help people choose new colour schemes and finishes, giving people ideas of what would suit their rooms. Once the customer decides what they want, we make a booking in our schedule to suit them. I let them know how long it will take which depends on the size of the area to be resurfaced.

We start off the job by cleaning the surfaces to be resurfaced, with powerful industrial cleaners to remove dirt, oils and soap scum. The next step is to scratch up the surface and apply a very strong etch primer that adheres to the surface. Cracks and chips are then repaired, loose tiles are reglued and grout is reapplied as required, then the surfaces are sanded back to smooth. I then mask the home to protect any items that are not being resurfaced.

We refinish the surface using a High Volume Low Pressure spray system and our Poly-Glass coating system, using the colour and effect that the customer has selected.

For maximum adhesion, we apply a primer coating and then the top coats for durability, wear resistance, and finish excellence. We remove masking, vacuum any dust, silicone edges, and leave with the room ready for use.

Okay, so you go in there, you prepare it and then you resurface everything?

Yes. The longest part is the preparation. This must be done properly for correct adhesion of the polyglass resin and that is why we are extremely fussy with this step and use the highest quality products. We clean, prepare, mask off the areas that don't need to be resurfaced and then apply the appropriate coatings which apply to the surface being done.

Okay and what do people say, like after you've done it, what are some of the comments that you get?

They're just astounded with the difference that it makes. The rooms are a lot brighter and they're happy that they haven't spent big heaps of money. Everyone has commented on how quickly it has been done without any mess, I haven't had any negative remarks or an unhappy customer.

Yeah, okay, fantastic. With something so cost effective and I guess such good value, do you offer any sort of warranty on it?

Yes, most definitely, I provide a written 5 year guarantee on completion of all my work.

Okay so it even includes a warranty which is great. How long does it take? Obviously to renovate a kitchen or renovate a bathroom is quite an inconvenience to people. I mean how long does it normally take, like when you do it through the normal renovation process?

A normal renovation could take several months. Our process takes days depending on the size of the room. I work in with the customer, of course, and I do their kitchens in separate parts so that it doesn't inconvenience them for that night. So I might do a bench top in the morning so it's dry and can be used again that evening. It takes about 4 hours in curing time, so the next day I'll go in, do the back tiles of the benches, leave them to dry, and come back the next day so that it doesn't put them out. This way they can still keep using their kitchens or bathrooms after I have left for the day.

With cupboards, the drawer faces and doors are removed along with the handles and hinges. After preparing the surface, we resurface the "skeletons/frames" and, depending on the type of cupboard, usually one side of the cupboards on the first day, then the second side the next day and on the third

day we are generally ready to put it all back together. So, depending on the type of cupboard and whether or not there is a bench top to do as well we are in and out in three to four days.

Okay great. So really it doesn't inconvenience them a lot at all?

No, minimal inconvenience.

Okay great. And how does that compare with the conventional process?

Well with the conventional process, people can be left without the use of their kitchen or bathroom for months, depending, of course on the efficiency of the tradesmen working on their rooms. Existing fittings have to be removed and new fittings replaced. The plumbing has to be redone and the electrician needs to do the wiring. The new tiling needs to be done and then the whole room needs repainting because things are now in different places. So you can see, this causes massive inconvenience and lots of time especially since there is the need for so many different tradesmen to come in.

Wow, so it's a big difference?

Most definitely, with resurfacing, I am the only tradesman involved with the work. I can tell you exactly how long it will take. When you are relying on multiple tradesmen, you could be held up for days just waiting on one to finish their job. If they take longer than anticipated the next one might not be available when it is ready for them.

Yeah, so we're talking about a few days and usually you've got the use of your kitchen or bathroom throughout that in most cases as compared with you know, weeks where you've almost got to shower, find a new place to have a shower or make your dinner.

That's exactly right.

Where does the technology come from? Is it Australia or from overseas?

It was formulated in America and has been used over there for the past 30 plus years. It has been very widely used in Europe and Canada also, while here in Australia it has been popular in Queensland and NSW but down here in Victoria it hasn't taken off like it has in other states and overseas.

It sounds like it's very widely used in other countries but sort of an undiscovered secret, particularly in Victoria?

Yes, that's correct.

How did you come across it, like obviously you've got extensive experience in spray painting that was your original trade for decades? How did you come across this?

I had been looking for a change from restoring cars since I had been doing it for over 30 years. I had thought about the idea of resurfacing bathroom and kitchen surfaces so I decided to contact major paint companies in Australia and overseas to find out if there was a suitable product available. Most companies said they had products that would do the job but would not offer a guarantee. After

extensive research I came across a company called Napco in the United States. I was really impressed as their products are specially formulated for resurfacing all the different types of kitchen and bathroom surfaces and they guarantee their products. I contacted their supplier in Australia to obtain more information. As well as being a supplier he also had his own resurfacing business in Queensland and had been using these products for many years. He explained that he had used other products but now uses Napco products and has found them to be superior to any other product he has used, backing up my research. Since starting up our business, Superior Resurfacing, our supplier has started a network called Resurfacing Australia. To be a part of this network we must abide by strict standards along with using Napco products, because, unfortunately, in Victoria, there are no regulations governing resurfacing and there are resurfacing companies using motor vehicle and marine materials which are not satisfactory. Most of these businesses are franchised so are not able to choose which materials to use. Because we are an independent business we can choose to use any product. Napco products are the best resurfacing products available in the world, they are also the most expensive. By using these products we can confidently stand by our written guarantee.

Sounds like your research paid off, you found the best product available. Obviously, I believe when you were a spray painter, one of your specialties was in restoring cars to the showroom condition and particularly for sports cars and vintage cars. Has that experience come in handy along the way?

Most definitely, you've got to be a good spray painter to be able to apply these materials. I found, after extensive training in resurfacing, that it is similar to automotive refinishing but a little bit more technical, there is a bit more involved but it is still along the same lines. You still need colour matching skills and your preparation work is the same as for an automobile. If you don't do your preparation work properly, the material will start falling off. That is where all the time comes into it along with the correct technique in actually applying the material.

I understand you have your son working for you, what experience does he have?

My son, Jack, is a qualified sign writer, custom spray painter and airbrush artist. I don't like to brag but he commenced his training at the age of 14 while still at school and has won numerous awards for his airbrush work. He has worked on prestige cars, air brushing and spray painting so has an eye for detail. Once our business started growing and I could no longer keep up with all the work he was the obvious person to employ. He is somewhat of a perfectionist and produces the same quality result as I do.

That's great! So it obviously takes a great deal of level of detail as well?

Yes, firstly in the preparation, not only in the cleaning but in the repairs. Imperfections need to be picked up, chips, cracks etc. Also, the correct technique is required to apply the material to ensure a perfect finish. Our experience in Spray Painting prestige cars ensures this. I did a quote for a lady who had her basin resurfaced by another company. I was shocked by the finish. I'm not sure if it was the product or the application. Both have to be the best for the best result. That is why I guarantee my work with confidence because I use a top quality product and know we have the expertise to apply it correctly.

Absolutely. So what are you saying with 70% off, that's like a \$10,000 job can be done for \$3000 and look as good as if you had paid \$10,000. Is that the sort of dollars we're talking about?

That is correct.

Yeah, so I mean it really helps you. I mean a lot of people might be tight on cash and \$10,000's a lot of money but \$3,000, there's a bit of difference between the two.

Oh that's right, yes.

What caused you to get into this area?

As I said before, I was looking for a change from Spray Painting cars so after finding out about the Napco products I started talking to a few people about it as I was really impressed with the idea. I discovered that the majority of people were happy with their kitchens and bathrooms but wanted the colours changed to modernise them, especially homes that were built in the 70's and 80's with the bright colours. I realised then that there was a market for this type of business and that I would be helping people save money. I have done a lot of resurfacing for older people and it has been very satisfying to see them so happy with the result and them not being stressed out over a major renovation. Some older people were putting up with their dated colours because they didn't want to go through a traditional renovation so it is a very rewarding job too, knowing you are helping people.

Yeah I guess you could see the opportunity. Obviously from a convenience aspect and the money saving it's sounds as though there's a lot of interest out there?

Yes, that's what I have found, which is very good.

Yeah absolutely. Now it's a polyglass resin, is that right, not a paint?

Yes, a polyglass resin, it's not an automotive paint or anything like that, it's applied similar, mixed a similar way but the way it's been formulated, it's not a paint, it's a polyglass resin, it's a lot stronger, a lot shinier and very robust. It is resilient to cracking during expansion and contraction due to temperature fluctuations and also provides a surface which is harder than acrylic or enamel. It also has excellent stain resistance and colour retention. Unlike epoxy enamels, motor vehicle and marine materials which, as I said, are used by many of our competitors, our product will not crack or yellow over time. The new surface will last well beyond the 5 year written guarantee we provide. Also, Napco products are low in Volatile Organic Compounds (VOC's) so people will have less toxic fumes in their homes while spraying and none within 2 hours. Products, especially those that don't dry quickly, leave fumes for 24 hours or longer. The Low VOC's make Napco products the only resurfacing coating that is compliant with the new USA EPA Clean Air Regulations, higher than Australian standards. This is the biggest green tick of approval to date for a Resurfacing product.

That's great and can it be used for anything, like obviously you're talking in a bathroom, you're looking at wall tiles, bath tubs, shower bases?

Yes, anything like that, steel, glass, tiles, any surface, there's not a surface that I can't apply the material to. Also, all kitchen surfaces too, including bench tops.

Wow, so it really works on everything?

Exactly.

And does it go yellow or does it chip or anything like that?

No, as I mentioned before, it won't yellow off even with hot water. And as for chipping, the new surface is no different to the original surface, it's as hard as laminate. If you drop something heavy on it, of course it will chip but it won't fall or flake off or anything like that. Like the original surface, if it is looked after it will last forever and a day.

Great, so what you're saying, it will last really as long as any original surface if it's looked after obviously?

Yes, exactly, if not longer. Original vinyl bench tops yellow off and stain, if they are resurfaced with our product they won't stain or go yellow so will last longer than the original.

Okay and how does it stick to the existing base, like how well does it actually stick?

As I explained before, with correct preparation, it will not peel off. We guarantee it.

Okay that's good. There's going to be, particularly with the savings and the convenience, I imagine there's going to be a number of people listening today who are going to want to find out more about this, how can people get in touch with you?

They can call us on our free call number, call my mobile number or go to our website www.superiorresurfacing.com.au If they prefer, they can send an email with photos of their rooms and we can send back an estimate for them. Our email address is info@superiorresurfacing.com.au.

Can you give us your contact numbers?

My free call number is 1800 073 642 and my mobile number is 0409 360 459.

That's great. Just one final question that just came to me, in terms of, how are landlords sort of taking to this sort of thing? Obviously they've got tenants and it's a major inconvenience to tenants if they don't have the bathroom for a couple of weeks, what's the sort of response when it's a few days?

Landlords and tenants alike love this procedure due to the short amount of time it takes and the low cost compared to replacement. This has been great for tenants as it minimises the time they are without the room and for Landlords as the repair is a lot cheaper than replacement It's also a great option for Landlords who want to tidy up bathrooms and kitchens for when they re rent their rental properties. It brings in extra rent and minimises the time the house is off the market while the rooms are being refurbished.

Okay great, so it doesn't matter if you live in or you're a property investor; it really is great across the board?

Most definitely.

Obviously, the kitchen and the bathroom are two of the areas where if you improve them it sort of adds quite a bit of value to the property, so I imagine there are extensive benefits there as well.

Yes, these are the two most used rooms in the house so they get the most wear. When selling a house this is an economical way of freshening up these rooms and ultimately adding value to the house.

Yeah, that's excellent. Well thanks for your time today Geoffrey, you've really informed our listeners of the powerful new technology which I'm sure many of them will be interested in and we really appreciate your time.

No worries, I thank you for the questions you've asked, I hope I've made this more enlightening to you.

Absolutely, it's been very handy.

No worries.

Enjoy the rest of your day.

You too.

