Gimme shelter

Every dog has its day, and Winston's are always warm and dry in this roomy hut.

Winston bounded into our lives as a 10-week-old puppy and quickly established himself as much more than a pet. He's the boys' doggy brother, and he's my buddy when I am working outside.

Over the summer, Winston joined me as a swimming companion each time we went to the lake. Maybe he thought I couldn't swim and that he needed to save me. Labs love swimming, and with his big paws and rudder-like tail, he's great in the water.

He and Milly, the goat, both think they are human members of our 'farmily' and should be allowed inside whenever they like. That's still being negotiated, and it's time for Winston to have a home of his own – even if he tries to sleep on the boys' beds most nights.

Our mate Dylan, a keen DIY-er, says building a shelter or kennel for your dog is an easy project, especially if you use a pallet as the floor.

"Pallets are free and available just about everywhere once you start looking out for them," he says. "They come in various sizes but I used a square one that was 1100mm x 1100mm."

The sides are made with five panels of Douglas Fir (which was harvested and milled on the farm), stacked horizontally and screwed flush with the pallet, starting with the bottom one.

"Four are 200mm by 1100mm (the length of the pallet), and the final one is narrower at the rear end as it provides the pitch of the roof – sloping from front to back," Dylan says. "I made it 100mm wide at the narrow end."

The side panels are held together with an internal cleat (Douglas Fir in our case). These cleats are 50mm x 25mm for the front two and shorter for the back two. Adjust the rear cleats to the height at which you have cut the rear of the side panel.

The rear is made up of five panels of Douglas Fir. In order to be flush, they are slightly longer than the sides. In our case, 1100mm plus the 25mm thickness from each of the two side boards, i.e. 1100mm + 25mm + 25mm = 1160mm.

Supporting the roof are two 1100mm x 200mm x 25mm purlins; one is fixed at the front and one at the rear. These are screwed into the side panels, and the corrugated iron roof is screwed to them.

We used a piece of corrugated iron we found on the farm. Find yours at your local recycling centre or buy new.

To create a door, Dylan attached a 200mm x 25mm Douglas Fir board across the top, flush with the roof, then fixed one down either side to the cleats and one across the base.

Dylan reckons Winston's flash new home looks like a liquorice allsorts lolly. River and I painted it in stripes of Resene Double Stack (grey) and Resene Black White (white) using Resene Lumbersider low sheen waterborne paint. We used Resene Flame Red for the roof. As a final touch, we made Winston a grand plaque for his name, painting the background in Resene Flame Red and 'Winston' in Resene Double Stack. The days are beginning to cool, so I've lined Winston's shelter with warm fleeces so he will be snug. It is even big enough for him to invite a doggy friend for a sleepover.

Resene Double Stack

Resene Black White

Resene Flame Red

We used Resene Double Stack and Resene Black White for the striped walls and Resene Flame Red for the roof. The name plaque is Resene Flame Red with 'Winston' in Resene Double Stack.

Resene
the paint the professionals use