



BAYLEYS

Warmth of natural wood

Courtyards and decks create intimate sitting spots and views over the garden, writes **Cheine mi h**

Biting the bullet to build a house from scratch is not something started lightly. But five years ago when Alan Gibson and Jane Kordina were house-hunting around Alan's old stomping ground of Point Chev, closer to town than their old home in Te Atatu, they spotted a piece of land carved off a spreading section, and thought "why not".

"Everything we'd looked at, we wanted to alter anyway," says Jane. "We thought of it as a challenge. We saw a house in a magazine by Architecture Smith + Scully, realised they'd done one down the road that we'd admired, and said 'That's it'."

"The brief was the usual things, such as number of bedrooms, and important things like a wine cellar," says Alan. "We're gardeners, so we wanted indoor outdoor flow and to see the garden from lots of places."

Early on in the year-long planning (the build took another year), Alan and Jane called on interior designer Kerry McComish to detail the lighting and electrical plan (including a series of blinds that disappear into the joinery when not in use and housing for the complex audio wiring), cabinetry, flooring and finishes.

She introduced a warm walnut for the ground floor, the floating staircase and cabinet feature wall in the living room, kicking in drama with a glossy red front door and splashback in the kitchen.

The couple asked the architects for a resort feel, using courtyards and decks to open the house to intimate sitting spots and open views on to the garden all through the day.

Architects Carolyn Smith and Hillary Scully finely crafted a generous house that uses every inch of the 700sq m of land.

Sun flows in the windows and views of the water are framed, but neighbours are obscured.

The garden can be seen the minute visitors walk through the front door.

The enthusiastic gardeners trucked in more than 40 cubic metres of good volcanic soil and, with a landscaper son-in-law, added boardwalks that meander through the dense planting, as well as hefty stepping stones to finish the retreat feel of the house. Large-leafed tropical plants share space with citrus trees, herbs and a small veggie box.

Breaking up the contemporary square exterior, the architects paired rich cedar siding with a garage box of black battened sheeting.

They wrapped the house around a double height atrium, which pulls afternoon sun into the living and bedroom floors.

Alan particularly likes the way they grouped nine differently shaped windows into a pleasing Mondrian-like composition, framing the mature kowhai tree that became the centrepiece of their garden planning.

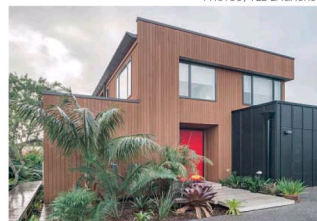
A steel and walnut staircase with glass balustrade floats in front of the windows; a practical mix of louvres and doors provides air flow and access to the sunny afternoon courtyard. At night, strip lighting highlights the built-in seating.

The ground floor has a generous guest room with walk-in closet and en suite, as well as a laundry with a European-style drying cupboard and guest loo. Alan got his walk-in wine cellar, temperature and humidity controlled, with room for 1000 bottles to be admired through the double glass doors. The living room end of the house opens completely to the deck and garden through a wall of sliding glass.

Jane and Alan love to cook, so worked with Kerry to detail every inch of the drawers and cupboards in the glossy black kitchen and adjoining scullery with its second dishwasher and appliance cupboard. There are two ovens, an induction



PHOTOS / TED BAGHURST



cooktop and a smaller wine fridge for day-to-day entertaining.

Kerry slotted a slab of walnut on to the bar, a welcoming warm place for guests to hover. In the three years they've been there, the couple has hosted work parties and family Christmases, the doors opening to comfortably hold a crowd of 26 or more.

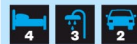
A glass door leads to the small morning deck, a sunny spot that also houses the gardening shed.

In the adjoining living room, Kerry designed a wall of cabinets and open shelves, top lit for the couple's extensive collection of glass, hiding the electronics and TV bits so that the long gas fire is

the highlight. A ducting system from the fire heats the ground floor and upper master bedroom.

Jane and Alan have a three-room master suite, including an office and a sunroom with windows that fold back in summer, keep the space cosy in winter, and have views across to the water. There's a walk-in closet, plus an en suite with double vanity. The other two bedrooms share a family bathroom with bath and shower. Walls of storage complete the upper hallway.

But the enthusiastic gardeners have found themselves a new project, a beachside garden on the fringes of Auckland, so are selling in town to make the move.



11 GH D, PO N CH V

S Z : Land 718sq m, house 287sq m.

P C GUD : \$2.8 million-plus. Sale by negotiation.

NSP C : Sun 215-3pm.

SCHOO S : Point Chevalier school, Western Springs College.

CON C : Ross Brader, The Professionals, 027 475 5977, Jo de Beer, 027 469 4148.

ON H : professionals.co.nz/PTCO0210