

FOR ADVICE AND INSPIRATION

ISSUE 019

renovate

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Upside of Downsizing

Renovation reduces footprint

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Inside the box

Thinking 'outside the box' is something we've all come to associate with clever ideas, creative input and inspiring outcomes. But when it comes to home renovations thinking 'inside the box' is where it's at.

Playfully called 'the toy box house', a single-level terraced home in Australia demonstrates how thinking 'inside the box' delivered an innovative solution. It provided the perfect space for the family; with vast storage and a play space, but also seating for adults at a comfortable height.

Another clever renovation shows how thinking inside and outside the 'box of home' can make better use of space. Contrary to the common approach of adding extra room to a house, here the floor area was actually reduced to allow the space to be utilised in a better and more efficient way.

Certainly when renovating and fitting out a house, there is a lot to consider – from the layout of the original home and the specifics of your section, through to functional requirements and design preferences. Not to mention financial implications and budget considerations! But in any case, renovating is usually a more cost-effective option than moving, and it gives you the satisfaction of creating a space especially designed for you and yours.

At Renovate, we're providing real-life dependable advice to help you with some of your decision-making across a wide range of topics. In this issue, we're looking at the latest trends around under-floor heating, spa rooms and low-maintenance flooring. We're also giving you a renovation cost breakdown for basic, mid-range and high-end options of both warming up your home and planting your garden.

Barry Bloomfield - Publisher

renovate

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www.renovate-mag.com

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Our People

Meet some of the talented people who bring New Zealand Renovate Magazine to life.



Sharon Stephenson

The second word she ever spoke was 'vase', her third 'sofa'. So it's no surprise the Wellington journalist is a serial renovator. Her latest project was converting her Waitarere Beach bach into a white-washed Scandinavian haven.

Home is an 1890s villa in Mt Victoria, which she shares with her husband, an animator at Weta, and their rescue dog, Bristol. She's delighted to join the Renovate stable and says she never fails to be wowed by the creativity and ingenuity of homeowners.

Having spent time in Denmark, the former BBC journalist is a fan of 'hygge', which is about creating a warm, cosy environment. For Sharon, that means cashmere throws, Diptyque candles and the perfect soy hot chocolate.



Anya Kussler

As a new contributor Anya is a writer-editor who keeps her working life varied by writing about a broad spectrum of topics. The German-South African scribbler is the daughter of a pair of serial DIY-ers, who can usually be found wielding a tool of some description as they're fixing or up-cycling their way around their abode back in the university town of Stellenbosch. Yep, they even built their own beds!

After researching an article on the latest outdoor flooring options for this issue, she's now all fired up to trade her rapidly decomposing front porch for some hardy, eco-friendly composite decking. As a new contributor, Anya certainly hopes to learn a thing or three about updating all manner of interior and exterior spaces.



Deirdre Coleman

Having written about architecture and design for 15 years, Deirdre's stories have featured in local and international design magazines.

She's had the pleasure of interviewing some of the top architects, kitchen, interior and landscape designers. Having done writing work for many building product companies, property developers and construction firms, Deirdre has a good understanding of the industry. She loves talking to homeowners about their remodelling projects, and she herself and architect partner are about to embark on one of their own.

In this issue, Deirdre fills us in on underfloor heating options for your renovation.



Penny Lewis

Penny Lewis has been writing about homes, gardens and property for longer than she'd care to admit. What she has learned with experience is that while it's okay to covet designer bits and pieces for your new-look home, the reality is building work usually costs a lot of money. Funds must be spent on boring and necessary stuff first, and this doesn't usually allow much left over for shopping at the Milan Furniture Fair.

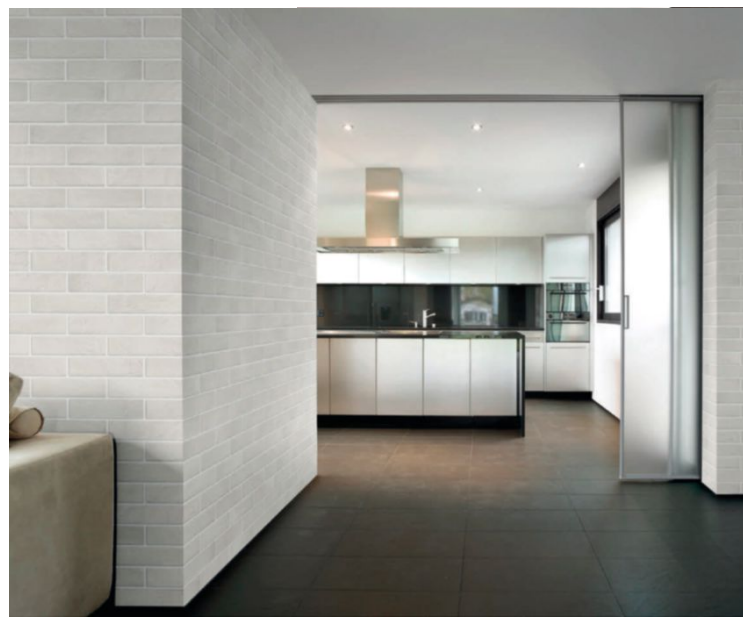
Her ultimate dreamy room for the perfect winter is the living room in the new house she has just built with her husband, Michael. After years of living in cold, draughty and damp character homes, she relishes spending the chilly months in a fully insulated house with double-glazing, warmed by a fireplace, heat pumps and passive solar gain.

Meet the rest of the team online

At Renovate, we're fortunate to be working with a talented team of writers and contributors who love to share their stories with you. Find out more about them at www.renovate-mag.com.

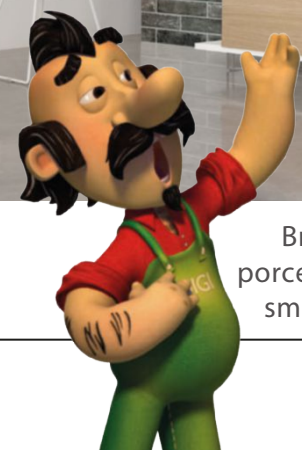
the tile depot

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Letters to the editor

Write to
our editor
and be in
to win!



Lucky winners!

Congratulations to Jennifer Cozens and Diana Holt who have both won a three pack of Philips LED Deco Classic filament bulbs!

*Letters may be edited and abridged for print.

My kind of magazine

I truly love the Renovate Magazine, and am thoroughly enjoying my second issue, which arrived the other day. So much inspiration to be gained from the articles, plus gorgeous photographs as well. My partner and I plan to build ourselves an eco-friendly home in the near future - so this magazine has much to offer us, with hints, ideas and so forth. I look forward to receiving future issues of Renovate!

Jennifer, via email.

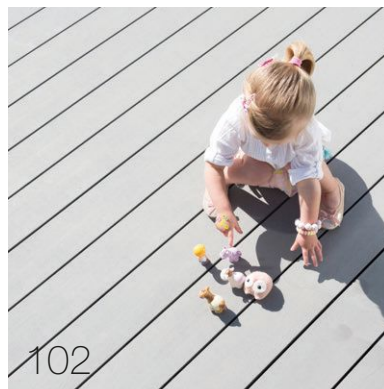
Thanks Jennifer, being eco-friendly is the way forward, and more products on the market are making it highly accessible at affordable prices. In this issue we have some great low-maintenance flooring options that are not only easy to clean, but are natural and good for the environment. Take a look on page 102.

An informed decision

Nearly four years ago I purchased an old 1935 Art Deco House in the country. Before working on the house, I needed to establish the property for my horticultural interests. I did need to do some maintenance like a new

roof, insulation and a better deck. I then found Renovate Magazine from Issue 009 and read every copy, deeply marking new learning points, as I know I have a big task ahead once I start on the house.

I have become better informed on many issues and am starting to visualise exactly what I want to do as I start to put my plans together and feel confident in my decisions. But I will seek professional assistance at each stage with knowledge to know if I am being given the correct information.

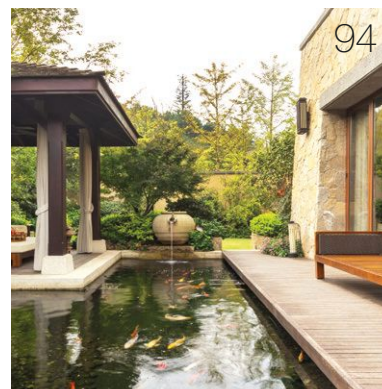


I believe this magazine is very important to those taking on renovations, to learn and not just accept what others may say. My advice is to learn about each step of a renovation as much as possible so when you are getting a quote, you understand exactly what it's all about before paying out valuable funds.

An excellent magazine with nothing quite like it elsewhere for real information.

Diana, via email.

Thanks Diana – we couldn't phrase it better ourselves. We are all about educating potential renovators before engaging in renovation services so that you can make decisions that



won't lead you down the wrong path. One topic we are looking at this season is gardens and planting for all types of budgets on page 94. I think everyone could learn a thing or two!

Brick and tile

My house is over 25-years-old – a brick and tile that needs a lot of renovating both inside and out. I have tried to update around the front door by putting in marble tiles. The tiles came from an old hotel foyer and we had to take all the mortar off the old tiles first by grinding them off. That was for over 200 tiles, so lots of hard work cutting and fitting them, but they are beautiful tiles.

Michael, via email.

Thanks Michael, what hard work and determination you demonstrated for a quality result of beautiful marble tiles. The fact that you have recycled the materials from an old hotel foyer gives them a stunning story and will add lots of character and charm to your home. If you are wanting to add even more character – why not try some art on the walls. We have selected some cool pieces for different rooms on page 20.

Tiny house

I remember how it took my dad something like four years to get around to painting the lounge at our old house after tearing down the

wallpaper. As for myself, it's not so much renovating but I'd love to build a tiny house one day.

Francine, via email.

Thanks Francine, small house living is an expanding trend for those living in city locations, where space is at a low and considered a luxury. We have seen loads of renovation examples, where clever renovation ideas for tiny rooms are demonstrated. If you look back at Issue 018 – we feature a New York City micro-loft on page 74, which is loaded with very cool storage designs for small spaces.

Living in the city

We have a three-storey city townhouse and have just renovated the top floor. The other two levels are to be completed over the next year or so.

Due to windows only at either end, I've painted them in a crisp black/white paint (walls & ceiling), changed the floor coverings (from light timber laminate) to a light grey Italian timber tile, and the kitchen replaced (from



Jarrah cabinetry & black granite bench-tops) to a white glassy cabinetry, white Caesarstone bench-top, with black and stainless steel accessories.

The final touch is a feature poster wall image of nighttime New York scene of the Brooklyn Bridge. We chose this because of the water under the bridge and we have this flowing down the stairs all the way to the front door. You would also think that a night time scene would be dark, but this isn't...because of the moonlight, the reflections over the water have a slight pink tinge...really cool.

Sue, via email.

Thanks Sue, the Brooklyn Bridge poster sounds like it would complement perfectly with a

townhouse in the city. Sounds like you have done the right thing, brightening up the space with white cabinetry and fittings to make the most of having only two windows at either end. If you are looking to further renovate by warming up your home – we discuss options and ideas on page 90.

Plug it in

Be generous with plugs for appliance, lamps, stereos, television, computers and heaters. In my first house this was overlooked and I finally got it



right by adding extra in the next house. Can't go wrong with too many power points!

Gemma, via email

Thanks Gemma, that is a good point to make. Homeowners often don't think about power points until they are living in the room after it has been finished. Another thing that people tend to forget about is built-in storage. We have a great case study in Australia using the floor as storage for all their kids toys. Take a look on page 72.

Storage rules

With housing becoming very limited in the city we have had to stop looking at open homes and decide to stay in the house we already live in – even though we have started a family and plan on having two more children!! This means that we are desperate to make the most of what we have to work with. We would love to see something on storage for the home – we need as much as we can get! Really like the ideas in the magazine as well – a great read!

Claire, via email

Thanks Claire. Lucky for you, storage options are getting smarter and smarter as people make do with living in small spaces in the city. In



this issue we have the most perfect renovation that addresses the issue of family and storage. Visit page 72 to discover how a working Mum deals with the day-to-day storage of her children's activities to make her home, clean tidy and liveable.



Write and be in to win!

We are giving away this beautiful framed 'Huka Falls' snapshot print from The Market NZ valued at \$149!

The Market NZ is all about supporting local talent, and making it easier for us too. That's why they teamed up with some of their clever creators on a range of prints. This beautiful 'Huka Falls' snapshot is Auckland photographer Jeremy Senior's salute to his New Zealand. The full range is available exclusively through The Market NZ.

To have a chance to win this stunner, email your renovation adventures through to editor@renovatemagazine.co.nz before 31 August 2016.

New & noteworthy

WORK OUT IN STYLE AT HOME

Who would have thought that your work out equipment could also blend seamlessly with the interior of your home?

The Femton toolkit, designed by an industrial design student Ali Safa, has taken four common gym apparatuses and turned them sustainable by making them out of natural materials of ash wood and marble. We think the smooth designs would tie in perfectly with the popular Scandinavian and raw material characteristics prevalent today.



Instead of having messy gym gear being hidden away amongst clutter in the garage – you can be proud of your little sustainable beauties and even use them for display upon a shelf disguised as décor (and also a great reminder to stay motivated).

The kit comprises of four workout tools – an adjustable dumbbell made of ash and marble, including six cylinders with a maximum weight of 8.3kg; a core wheel; two push-up barrels made of ash; and jump rope made out of hemp.

Now you can work out at home in style!
www.analogueways.com/femton



IT'S ALL ABOUT BEING EXPOSED

According to Tile Depot General Manager Mike Syddall, it looks as though the exposed brick look has taken the tiling world by storm.

“As interior decorators, architects and homeowners try to recreate the timeless and effortless charm of small exposed brickwork, either for its rustic qualities, industrial undertones or urban detail, the brick porcelain tile has emerged with zest,” says Mike.

After seeing that porcelain brick wall tiles were so popular at the 2015 Cersaie International Exhibition of Tile and Bathroom Furnishings, The Tile Depot decided to produce a stunning Brick One porcelain wall tile available in three colours.

These colours include a classic rosso red, contemporary charcoal and white-inspired shade nero and bianco. The brick tiles measure 7.4 x 31cm and have been created to include all the tonal variations found in real raw bricks.

Stay tuned for more colour options in this range!
www.tiledepot.co.nz



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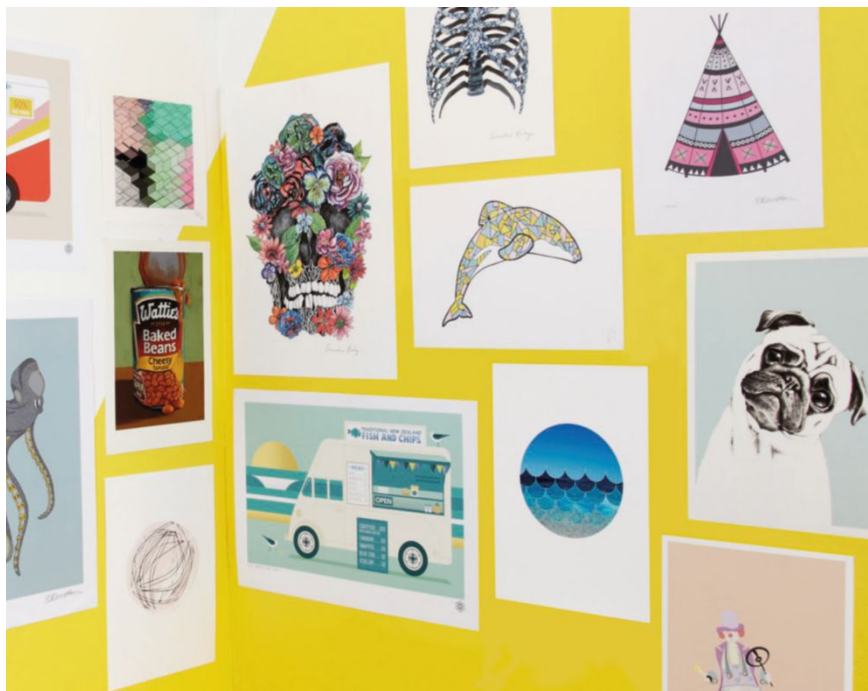
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New & noteworthy



PRINT THE WALLS

A feature wall of prints is a cost-effective way to refresh a living space, and add a bit of personality to your home. There are no rules when it comes to styling. Living room, kids room or master bedroom; get creative and make it your own!

Experiment with portrait and landscape, with frames and without – or try mixing bold, graphic prints with a contrasting coloured backdrop. The collection shot by The Market NZ shows what's available for your very own print feature wall.
www.themarketnz.com

CAPTURE YOUR WHOLE RENOVATION

Over the last year it has become common to hear about drones, whether it is regarding an impressive aerial photograph of a wonderful part of the planet, or an aerial shot of an unfortunate natural disaster.

Drones or unmanned aerial vehicles (uavs) are becoming an essential tool

for many industries, media, outlets and agriculture.

Drones are useful as they can carry various types of cameras and be used to safely take photographs or video footage of areas, which before were difficult to access, unsafe and expensive.

This is where it becomes good for home renovations. Drones can be helpful for building inspections, drawing up plans, footage for property planning and for archiving those all important renovation stages to look back on in future years to come. Show your friends and family your home renovation story from start

to finish in one simple two-minute video, rather than taking them through a whole lot of before and after pictures.

It is however important that a professional drone pilot is used with the necessary skills, licence and insurance. It may seem cheaper asking a friend to do it, but it may turn out a lot more expensive!

For the UK visit: Aeroviews
www.aeroviews.co.uk

For Australia visit: Overall Photography
www.overallphotography.com.au

For New Zealand visit: Skyhigh
www.skyhigh.co.nz





CHROME



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BLACK



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New & noteworthy

SAIL AWAY

Woven from thin strips of wood veneer using a traditional Asian boat-building technique, Israeli designer Tal Engel created this boat-inspired bathtub to “emphasise a unique relationship between sailing and bathing”.

The outside of the boat becomes the inside of the bath as a paradoxical analogy - demonstrating a special relationship between our body and water.

The chosen materials of lightweight woven veneer were taken from inspirations of craftspeople in Asia who over many centuries have weaved oversized bamboo baskets to travel on water.

While showing abstract qualities - the black steel powder-coated frame oozes sophistication for a modern and minimal interior. Sail away in your natural element.

www.talengel.com



WHAT IS LEED?

LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design), is the most popular green building rating system worldwide and has had an enormous impact in creating better buildings and homes by saving energy, resources and money, and creating spaces that

are healthy for occupants. Created by the U.S. Green Building Council, LEED is used on all building types.

LEED-certified homes and residential projects are designed to maximise fresh air indoors and minimise exposure to airborne toxins and pollutants. They're designed to save costly resources – energy and water. On average, LEED-certified homes use 20 to 30 percent less energy than a home built to code, with some

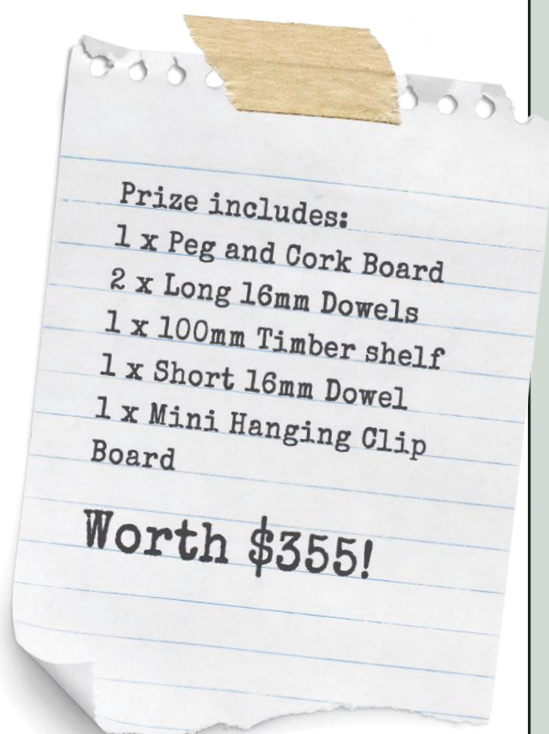
homes reporting up to 60 percent savings. Using fewer resources means lower utility bills each month. They're third party certified and built to perform better and more efficiently than a conventional home.

With proper planning, LEED homes can be renovated for the same cost as conventional homes. Every LEED-certified home is a healthy, resource-efficient and cost-effective place to live. www.usgbc.org

WIN

Be in to win!

The Peg and Cork Board from
The Mood Store!



The Peg and Cork Board, valued at \$355!

Inspired by the kiwi garage shelving system, The Mood Store have introduced their own version mixed with trendy cork.

Pin it up using regular cork pins or set up a shelf wherever you like - from the bedroom to the studio, the perforated cork board has a range of uses.

Visit our Facebook page to enter: www.facebook.com/RenovateMagazine

New & noteworthy

RENOVATING FOR THE FUTURE USING CLEAN TECHNOLOGY

Renovators wanting to add clean technology, and beat the rising cost of power, can now save thousands with the introduction of a smart new energy service offering affordable solar power and battery storage.

In a price and technology breakthrough, Solarcity is combining its solar panels with Panasonic's state-of-the-art lithium-ion batteries, allowing homeowners to store excess solar energy generated during the day so it can be used at night and when grid prices are high.

Rather than spending more than \$12,000 to buy a system, the new energy service, dubbed solarZero+, allows home owners to access solar power and battery storage for a low fixed monthly service fee and an upfront fee of \$2,500 for all the company's energy services. These include a guaranteed level of solar power for 20 years, all the benefits of the solar battery, any necessary upgrades (including a full battery change out at the end of its useful life), monitoring, customised energy advice, energy efficient product discounts and more.

The battery can also supply emergency back-up electricity to a few critical devices during a power cut.

For the best results during renovations, Solarcity recommends involving solar experts. This will help identify how many solar panels are needed to power the house and what direction they should face – a north facing position is best.
www.solarcity.co.nz



SHOW US YOUR TOYS

Billy Wolf is a heritage dog clothing and accessory company based in Montauk, New York. Billy Wolf designer Lyndsey Drago created these trendy canvas and cotton dog toys after discovering her dog needed a more durable chew toy. All goods are designed and hand crafted in the U.S. and inspired by Americana roots and New England living.

Taking things into her own hands, she designed toys made of heavy cotton canvas, striped denim and hand spliced natural cotton rope with no glue, so they're non-toxic.

The result? A collection of durable and good-looking toys dogs can play with over and over, that fit in with even the most stylish of homes. That striped denim might blend in perfectly with your couch cushions!
www.billywolfnyc.com

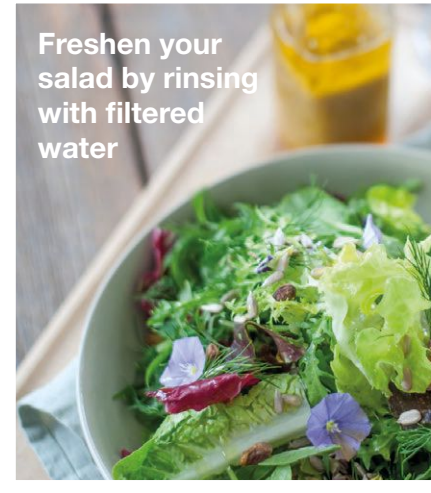




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restaurateur and
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A quality home deserves a quality water filtration system — whether you’re entertaining guests, cooking for the family or making yourself a fresh cup of tea. Just ask restaurateur and MasterChef judge Gary Mehigan, who has BRITA 3-Way Filter Tap at home. Filtered water is ideal for bringing out the full potential of your food and improves the taste, aroma and quality of water, tea and coffee.

BRITA KITCHEN ADVANTAGE

With a BRITA 3-Way Filter Tap, access to

filtered water is only moments away. And it’s so easy to install and use; there’s no need to drill into your benchtop — it simply replaces your existing tap. With one lever for filtered water and another for unfiltered hot/cold, you’ll always have great tasting water.

SEASONED WITH STYLE

An elegant built-in BRITA 3-Way Filter Tap adds a wonderfully European touch to your kitchen. The filter is tucked from view beneath the sink to provide filtered water for six months, a sensor lets you know when it’s time to replace.



BRITA 3-Way Filter Tap

- ◆ Stylish European design
- ◆ Cost effective, easy to install
- ◆ Innovative 3-Way Tap allows filtered or unfiltered water
- ◆ Filter-change reminder
- ◆ Kit includes water filter, all components and a BRITA 3-Way Filter Tap

Visit betterwithbrita.com for exclusive Gary Mehigan recipes, video and ebook.

Art gallery

Don't leave the finishing touches of your renovation to the last minute. It's time to think about how you are going to style your home so that it looks and feels complete.

ARTICLE Hayley-Anne Brown from Lou Brown Design COMPILED AND DESIGNED BY Rebecca Sayle

Kitchen

Introducing art into the kitchen is a great way to add your personal touch. For those white-on-white kitchens, artwork will inject that much needed pop of contrast and colour.

Smaller artwork propped up on feature shelving looks super chic; likewise, a super-sized piece to anchor your dining table will add a huge dose of wow factor.

For artwork placed near cooking and preparation zones, keep it protected with glass to prevent damage from cooking splatters and aromas.

NESW print, by W&AP, starting from \$49, www.endemicworld.com

Vietnam blue print, by Jenna Smith, starting from \$59, www.endemicworld.com

Eat print, by Hunting for George, \$60, www.mildredandco.com

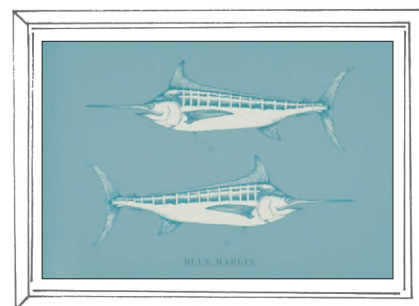


Bathroom

If you don't have tiled walls to add texture to your bathroom, then artwork is the answer. One of the best spots to place art in your bathroom is behind or above your bath tub. A super-sized piece leaning on the wall behind a freestanding bath can look gorgeous!

Like the kitchen, it's best to have your artwork framed with glass to prevent moisture damage. If you let your picture framer know the piece will be located in your bathroom, they will ensure it's as moisture tight as possible.

To make your bathroom calming and serene, choose artwork with cool colours and with pictures of natural settings.

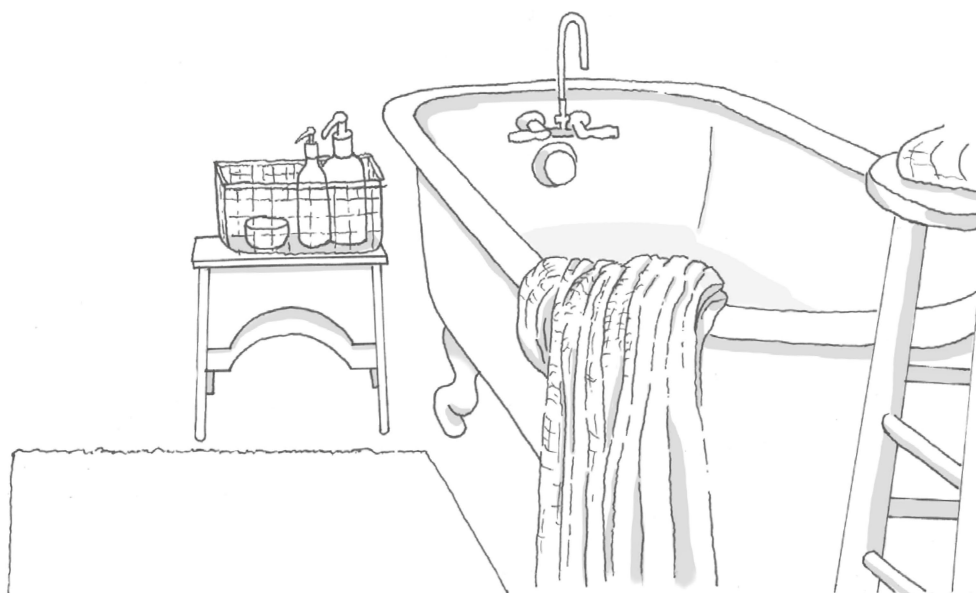


Just be print, by Ponder, \$32,
www.themarketnz.com

Holy Rose limited addition print,
by Rhianna May, \$70,
www.rhiannamay.co.nz

Blue marlin turquoise print, by
Nathan Miller, starting from \$49,
www.endemicworld.com

Misty Mt Cook by Mike Mackinven,
starting from \$59,
www.endemicworld.com



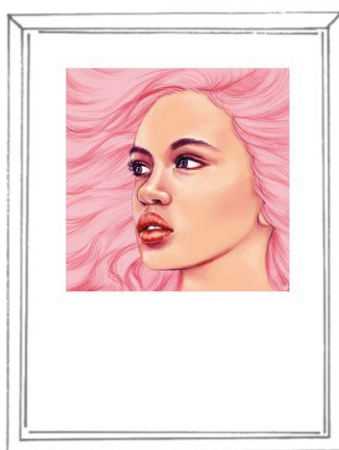
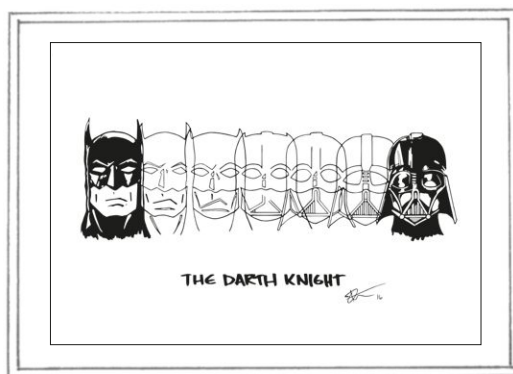
Bedroom

To make your sanctuary feel balanced you'll need to anchor your bed so it doesn't feel like it's just floating in mid space. Locating artwork at the head of the bed is a great way to achieve this.

How you arrange your artwork is up to you. Whether it's one super-sized piece centred above your bedhead, a gallery of images across the wall, or a few pieces arranged to each side above the bedside tables.

Here's a trick to figuring how to layout your art. Place each piece of artwork on paper (I use old newspaper), trace around and cut out the to-scale paper templates. Now the fun begins. Start arranging your various sized templates across the wall, attaching them with a low adhesive tape.

Next, take a step back, figure out what's not quite working, make the modifications and repeat the process until you are happy with the overall layout. This will prevent you putting millions of holes around the place! Pinterest has loads of layouts for hanging pictures if you're stuck for inspiration.

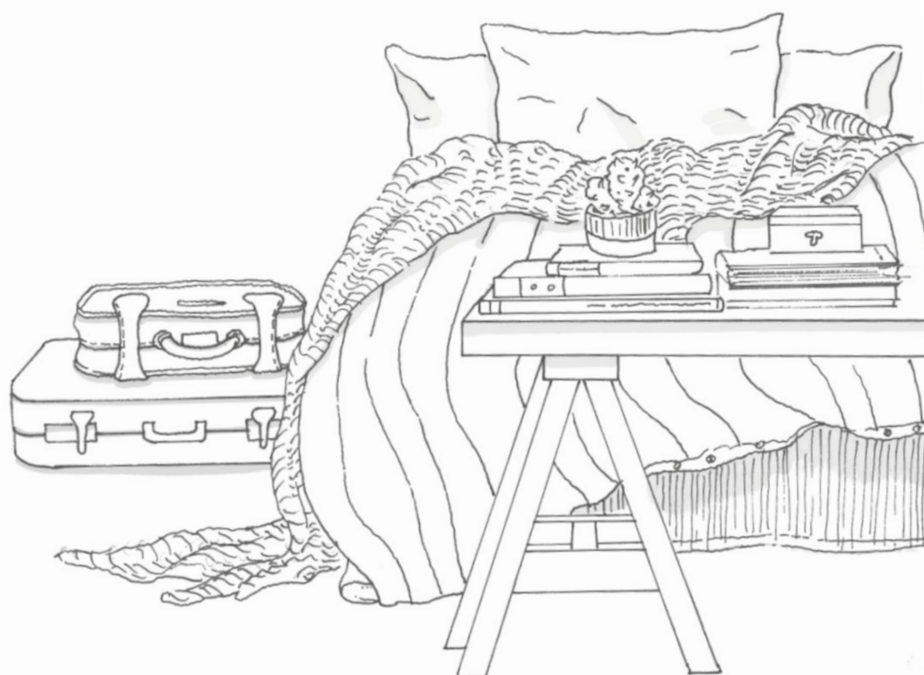


The Darth Knight print, by Damian Tuiloma, starting from \$49, www.endemicworld.com

Lola print, by Laura O'Connor, starting from \$39, www.endemicworld.com

Palm beach, by Ally Mansell, \$100, www.allymansell.bigcartel.com

Beauty & chaos print, by Alisha Brunton, starting from \$39, www.themarketnz.com



Lounge

Often, lounges and main living spaces have a lot of natural light. This is something to consider when deciding on your style of artwork. Anything framed in glass and located by glazing will likely reflect way too much, distracting the eye from the beauty of your collection. So in this instance, it's probably best to stick with art that is unframed and has a fairly matt finish.

When it comes to your fireplace, don't place your artwork too high above the top edge of your mantel piece; 100-150mm will do. Also, keep in mind the scale of your fireplace and go large with your artwork. Too many people make the mistake of going too small.

Likewise, with artwork over your couch. Try not to hang it too high – approximately 200mm above the top of the couch is best.

Art is a great way to introduce height in to your lounge. Take a look at your space, and if everything seems to be at a low level then you need to balance the space with something that has height and is in contrasting colour or texture to your walls. Artwork, or feature lighting will do the trick.



Descent from the summit,
Maungarei 3 print,
by Sara Langdon, \$225,
www.parnellgallery.co.nz

Catherine print,
by Kelly Thompson, \$120,
www.mildredandco.com

Feathers print, by Leden,
starting from \$39,
www.themarketnz.com

Sweat the small stuff



While you're saving up for those ever big renovation changes with a large dollar sign involved – why not take care of the little things and make it count, shares Carly Flynn.

COLUMN by Carly Flynn

It's easy when it comes to renovating to concentrate on the big stuff. The new bathroom, new kitchen, new garage or complete overhaul of the home. But I'm finding it's just as gratifying taking care of the small stuff. Our home is largely done, from a building sense. There's no more expansion to be had. It just needs a bit of colour, a bit of personality.

I've spent the last six or so months in my element getting the outdoors looking inviting; a new vege patch, scented potted plants, an electric gate and a long-term landscaping plan drawn up for us to plod away on over the next few years.

But as the cooler months approach, I find myself wanting to curl up a bit more indoors, and I'm confronted by what changes I want to make inside. Time to look at the finer details and make it a place that inspires me, rather than burden me.

Last winter we put in a ducted heat pump, which was, to my mind, the best money we've spent so far. Every room is warm at the flick of a switch, and it's relatively economical too. I no longer have to worry about blankets falling off the kids on the coolest of winter nights. With the double-glazed windows, even turning it off before bed means it's still relatively warm in the morning.

This has been a life changer for sure; friends comment it's like a hotel, as they dash inside after school drop-off for a well-timed warm cup of coffee.

We also covered the bamboo flooring, which was cooling down the hallway, with new carpet. It's worked well over summer too. But these projects are larger scale and I'm talking here about refreshing rather than renovating. Hopefully, spending next to nothing.

These days we're swamped with pictures of roaring fire and winter hues on social media and glossy magazines. Mustards. Purples. Olive green. I don't know about you but I don't intend on buying new cushions for every season, or swapping out my artwork just to blend in with the season. Here's a tip. Have a stash of seasonal cushion covers to switch out with seasons. It keeps your interiors looking interesting, without costing a dime.

I got an extraordinary amount of pleasure cleaning out my bulging bookshelf recently. A school book fair prompted the long overdue decision. As I ploughed through the

shelves I got braver, throwing ones out I hadn't gotten around to reading. I figured if I hadn't read them yet, I never would.

A book I have read recently is Marie Kondo's incredibly popular de-cluttering book. 'Spark Joy'. Her premise is that possessions in our home should have form or function, or literally 'spark joy'. That may be a bit of a stretch when faced with the congested playroom of a four-and-five-year-old, but I'm slowly going through the rest of the house with this mantra.

I'm trying to connect with what makes me happy in my home. A clean fridge full of nourishing food. A perfectly placed piece of artwork or flourishing pot plant. A nice cup to drink my coffee from. And clean windows to bring in the winter sun. Something else that's given me pleasure is a wonderful kitset to hide our bins. Seriously!

I think a person's home is like our own body - we have to check in with it internally once in a while and figure out what is or isn't still serving you.

Even though we moved and de-cluttered big time just over a year ago, we're already full up again. Books, kids' drawings, toys, kitchen appliances, and pantry items we'll never eat. Stuff that does little to spark joy, or have any form or function.

Some of it is going on Trade Me, some to friends, some to charity. I now have a little account that is stashed with anything I make. I'm saving up for beautiful wallpaper in my bedroom. Something to wake up to put a smile on my face.

My attention has turned also to storage. In particular, the kids' toys; puzzles, pens and plastic. Good storage is essential in any home. We have enough of it so I'm culling what spills over. And teaching the kids how to put things back in their place; if only I could get the kids to hang their bags in a particular place each day I'd be a very happy lady!

So even though solar panels, a chicken run, and a pool project are on the long-term plans; short-term I'm changing out my seasonal cushions and sheets, remembering to water my plants, filling my fridge and freezer with nourishing food, tending my winter garden, and being eternally grateful for being in a home I love. ■

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Is the housing market getting us down?



COLUMN by Deborah Carlyon

Deborah Carlyon is an Authorised Financial Adviser. This column does not provide personalised advice. Her Disclosure Statement is available on request and free of charge by emailing deborah@stuartcarlyon.co.nz

The news media is awash with articles on housing unaffordability, particularly for first home buyers in Auckland. Indeed house prices have risen 300% over the past 15 years, far outpacing the 66% rise in incomes.

Houses are deemed affordable if they cost 3 times household income yet Auckland has reached 9.26 times. The median house price hit \$820,000 compared to a median income of \$88,590. Financial website interest.co.nz defines a typical household income as a couple with a child, where one works full time and one part time. The only places in New Zealand deemed affordable are Rotorua, Gisborne, Wanganui, Palmerston North and Invercargill.

Home ownership rates have fallen to their lowest level since 1951. They peaked in the early 1990s at 75%, and are now 64%, but in Auckland owner-occupiers have fallen to 58%.

This isn't unique globally. Australia and the United Kingdom show similar long term downtrends falling to 67% and 65% whereas the United States has a stable long-term home ownership rate of around 64%. There was of course a US peak in 2007 to 69% during their period of risky mortgage lending and that ended very badly - the Global Financial Crisis, foreclosures and a severe downturn in house prices.

In Australasia, ever higher city prices are thwarting the home ownership rite of passage. But Auckland and Sydney have well and truly joined the world stage as global cities - they bear more resemblance to London and New York than to the rest of their own countries. Perhaps our mind set has to change too. Young people who call London, Paris, New York or Tokyo home have never expected to buy a family home in those cities. They rent, or buy a small apartment, or leave town.

Or they think outside the box, becoming "rentvestors", a term coined by LJ Hooker in Australia. Rather than disrupt their current lifestyle these buyers purchase a property in a more affordable part of the city or country, and rent that property out while they remain as tenants in their current location. There are several pluses - they have joined the property ladder, their mortgage interest is tax deductible and they can add value by renovating.

Housing provides shelter and security and is a fundamental component of happiness. The "Better Life Index" started a few years ago by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and

Development (OECD), measures the well-being of societies. Participants include the 34 OECD member countries plus key partners Brazil and Russia.

The OECD has identified 11 topics that are essential to well-being, and grouped them into two categories:

- Material living conditions - housing, income and jobs
- Quality of life - community, education, environment, governance, health, life satisfaction, safety and work-life balance.

Each of the 11 topics is built on specific indicators. For Jobs it's the employment rate, personal earnings, long term unemployment rate and job security. For Housing it's rooms per person, housing expenditure, and dwellings without basic facilities. Income indicators are household net adjusted disposable income and household net financial wealth.

"Houses are deemed affordable if they cost 3 times household income yet Auckland has reached 9.26 times..."

The website is rich with information from 36 countries. Starting with Housing, on rooms per person, New Zealand ranks high at 3/36 and for dwellings with basic facilities at 11/36. It seems New Zealand, Australia and the United States all rank closely with quite large houses whereas the United Kingdom is 10/36. Housing costs take up a large share of any household budget by the time you add up rent or mortgage payments, gas, electricity, water, furniture and repairs.

The OECD average is 18% of after tax household income spent on keeping a roof over our heads. The United Kingdom and New Zealand are both more costly with housing expenditure at 23% and ranking 30/36. Australia ranks 11th with the United States far better at 4/36 on the affordability scale. Across all the housing metrics, the United States is 1st, Australia 4th, New Zealand 7th and the United Kingdom 16th.

Interestingly, Australia and New Zealand are actually quite high on the global housing scorecard. Furthermore, New Zealand tops the rankings for Health, with life expectancy and water quality high, while air pollution is very low. There is a strong sense of community and high levels of civic participation. For Life Satisfaction, New Zealanders rank 8/36 just ahead Australia and the United States, while the United Kingdom is lower at 19/36.

With some perspective, perhaps life is not as gloomy as the house price headlines would have us believe. ■

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Living low



Many people dream of having high ceilings in their home. A common reason because they equate high ceilings with architecturally-designed homes that have spacious rooms, lots of light, grandeur and elegance, says Donna.

COLUMN by Donna White

Donna White is a professional member of the Designers Institute of New Zealand PDINZ
www.donnawhite.co.nz

An added bonus is that according to real estate agents, homes with higher ceilings generally fetch better prices than similar quality homes with standard ceiling heights.

However, the standard ceiling height of New Zealand homes is 2.4 metres. So, there is a good chance your home has this. There is no negative in this. It is what you do with what you have that makes all the difference, even to real estate prices.

Before we look at this, the positive side of owning a home with a 2.4-metre-high ceiling is that they are warmer, more intimate and more in proportion to the human scale. On the practical side, the 2.4 metre height makes it easier to change a light bulb, or clean the ceiling. You can simply pull out a step stool. Try that with a high-pitch roof!

So, what if your ceilings aren't that high? You can create the perception of height without making your ceilings higher, by cheating a little. To make a ceiling appear higher, you need to make the walls appear taller. Here are my tips for achieving this:

Colour: In modern homes, the majority of ceilings are painted in a matte white paint. As white reflects more light than any other colour, it consequently promotes height. A matte white ceiling will blend in with neutral-coloured low-sheen walls, and by doing so meld the dividing line between wall and ceiling. However, ceilings can contribute to the decorative effect of a room, and a ceiling in a gloss, or semi-gloss, will create an illusion of endlessness.

To create the impression that your walls are higher, use the same paint colour on the wall, cornice and skirting, and a white on the ceiling. For a truly dramatic effect, use the same white on the ceiling and the walls, so you are less aware of where the walls end and the ceiling begins.

Another way to make walls look taller, and thereby making the ceiling seem higher, is to emphasise the vertical.

Vertical stripes and patterns: Taking a cue from fashion, it is best to use vertical stripes instead of the horizontal, because vertical stripes create the illusion of height. This tip does not only apply to paint and wallpaper on walls.

"For a truly dramatic effect, use the same white on the ceiling and the walls, so you are less aware of where the walls end and the ceiling begins."

Doors: If you are willing to make some structural changes, raise your interior door openings all the way up to the ceiling, or close to it. If not, paint standard height doors in a similar colour to the walls.

Curtains: Hang window treatments as high as possible, because floor-to-ceiling curtains elongate a wall.

Lighting: General (and task) lighting for low ceilings can be addressed with recessed ceiling downlights, or flush ceiling mounted lights. However, vertical wall lights (and standard floor uplights) create visual height, because they bounce light off the ceiling. The vertical element of a tall wall light in itself will also help create the look of a taller wall.

Table lights provide task lighting by shining light down, but a side effect is they also throw light up. Light that is thrown up and down creates height by duping the eye.

Pendant lights were specifically designed to make a higher ceiling look closer to the floor, and also bring the light source nearer to where it is needed. That is not to say pendant lights can't be fitted in a home with a lower ceiling. The light fixture you choose should be one that you can see through and isn't

too dense. It should be hung higher than you normally would for height illusion, and also to avoid the danger of someone banging their head on it.

Furniture: Often we choose furniture based on appearance and comfort, and give little consideration to functionality. In low ceiling houses, low horizontal furniture is perfect, because it increases the feeling of space between ceiling and floor. If you are fortunate enough to have a great view outside, low furniture will give you an unobstructed view, whilst maximising the perceived height of the ceiling.

Shelves and bookcases: A half-height bookcase will cut a wall in half. This defeats the purpose of making a wall appear taller to make a ceiling appear higher. So, fit shelves to the ceiling to deceive the eye.

Clever design makes the best use of space, and using these tips can make any ceiling feel just a bit taller. ■



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Top Shelf

We head calmly into winter with rich rustic tones and tribal-inspired patterns; finishing it off with a mix of fresh pastels and moody greys to keep it classic.

WRITTEN BY
Nicole James

COMPILED BY
Rebecca Sayle



Patterns of life

Looking for something groovy for your kitchen or living area to make a statement? Experimenting with patterns and vintage techniques is what George & Co like to do with all their homeware pieces. For their platter they have taken the pressed approach with a 'crazing' technique, using oxide to give a vintage look after being glazed. Pressed pattern platter – orange, \$54.50, from The Market NZ. www.themarketnz.com



Break the mould

The craft of stoneware is making a comeback. Durable and well suited for daily use, the Kali cup from Aura by Tracie Ellis brings sophisticated and modern navy hues, along with its natural finish to a classic ceramic kitchen collection. Hard-glazed in a gloss finish, this piece is dishwasher and microwave safe. Kali cup, \$12.95, from Aura Home. www.aurahome.com.au

Key to home

Add a bit of excitement to your life with patterns, symbols and contrasting colours. UK artist Saskia Pomeroy uses her screen-printing experience to produce a textile that makes a throw versatile. Not only can it be used for picnics or as a throw – it is also visually appealing enough to be hung up on the wall as art. Parker throw, \$220, from Slowdown Studio. www.slowdownstudio.com



Hey roomy

Boasting copious amounts of storage with loads of style, the Compound sideboard unit in natural oak ticks all the boxes. Smooth and square combining a mixture of oak and veneer, this clever object features drawers, shelves and cupboards to cover all your storage needs. This would be a perfect addition to a small home or apartment with limited storage space. Compound sideboard, \$2,290, from Citta Design. www.cittadesign.com



Conquering hurdles

Perch on this little cutie every morning, while you ponder the challenges for the day. Its sturdy structure with legs in a black powder-coated steel and a strong American oak top comes in two heights (650mm or 750mm) – we recommend you measure the space you have to find the best elevation for you. Dowel Jones hurdle high stool, \$350, from Hunting for George. www.huntingforgeorge.com

Give it a throw

Kick your feet up and relax with this cosy cable knit throw in a timeless creamy beige colour. Throw it over a contemporary grey or taupe lounge suite for the ultimate look. It's an accessory that will always be needed - whether you throw it over your couch, use it as a spare blanket or use it to add texture or interest to a space. Spektor throw 130 x 150cm in cloud, \$99, from Freedom Furniture.

www.freedomfurniture.co.nz



Cool for time

Cool and classy is how designers Hunting for George describe the Olivia clock in two harmonious tones of wood and grey. Made out of bamboo, it's natural yet pretty sleek. The acrylic white and purple hands give it that little bit of extra detail. Olivia clock, \$215, from Mildred&Co.

www.mildredandco.com



Nice to matte you

This has got to be one of our favourites. The texture is unreal using a raw unglazed bisque porcelain outer, which gives it that matte skin-like texture. The mould of the cup tapers out as part of the signature style of the Scope collection at Country Road. The inside is contrasted with a shiny gloss for a smooth drink. Scope mug, \$9.90, from Country Road.

www.countryroad.com.au



Square essential

The go-to basic essential for your home - here's a side table that will never go out of date. A black tube steel frame complements a light Tasmanian oak veneer for a neutral Scandinavian finish. Sleek and clean with sharp lines - it will sharpen up your bedroom or living room. Oliver side table, \$499, from Hunting for George.

www.huntingforgeorge.com



Sink-in charmer

A traditional leather couch with a contemporary slim-arm profile makes this stunner piece a must-have. The leather gets better with age - leaving you with a well-loved vintage-industrial sofa. The frame is aluminium making it lightweight yet strong - easy enough to move around if you like to rearrange your living room frequently. Clifford 2 seat sofa in charme tan, \$2,499, from Freedom Furniture.

www.freedomfurniture.co.nz



Be my tribe

Drawing its design from tribal inspirations - the Masiri cushion cover features, woven indigenous patterns modernised in a geometric form, and is inspired by stacked tribal bracelets. The rich earthy tones are 100% cotton, and will make your living room feel right at home. Masiri woven cushion cover, \$109, from Citta Design.

www.cittadesign.com



Two's a pair

A pair of salad servers in a subdued charcoal hue will be an asset to your dining room table. Show off their distinct minimal and modern shape while tossing up an enriching salad. Country Road has an extensive collection of raw bisque stoneware serve ware with a touch of gloss on one side, which we love. Scope salad servers, \$34.90, from Country Road. www.countryroad.com.au



Feeling rusty

A new and improved version of the industrial chic powder-coated steel dining chair. The legs have been redesigned to ensure that they are safe, while also looking cool and rustic. The industrial classic neutral tone will match with most other colour shades for something that you can use all year round. The more you use the dining chair – the better it will look! Laurent dining chair in rusty, \$189, from Freedom Furniture. www.freedomfurniture.co.nz

Seat heart

We just can't move away from a timeless Scandi grey couch. This one in particular is suited for a small space apartment, studio or home, with a relaxing extended right end to lounge about in. This look is so fresh with a solid light timber frame and steel spring suspension. Studio modular 2.5 seat in arena cement, \$1,799, from Freedom Furniture. www.freedomfurniture.co.nz



Meet me by the railway

Ever noticed the splendour of wooden rails on an old railway track? You can now pull that natural element into your home with the Chill side table from Republic Home. Glossy stainless steel is contrasted on the base as a sophisticated twist. If you're going for an atmosphere of industrial chic in your home – you can't go past it. Chill side table, \$949, from Republic Home. www.republichome.com



Pretty mint

Using the jacquard woven approach for high definition – Aura Home by Tracie Ellis has created the Parquet bathroom collection including 2 x bath towels, 2 x hand towels and 1 x bath mat in a plush absorbent pure cotton. Wrap yourself up warm after a long shower or bath for ultimate relaxation in this fresh mint and charcoal colour combination. Parquet bath towel set, \$179, from Aura Home. www.aurahome.com.au



Back to basics

From the same family as the Kali cup featured on lower page 30 - the Kali large bowl in a gorgeous mint is another example of fine durable stoneware. Traditional quality high-fired techniques have been used to produce a funky peppermint green bowl to suit the trends of today. With a shape that is as sophisticated as ever - you will be setting a statement when you set the table for your next family and friends gathering. Kali large bowl, \$19.95, from Aura Home. www.aurahome.com.au



Living large

You might be seeing these little gems in all kinds of shapes, colour and sizes in stores. But we think we have hit gold with this oversized white stone canister hand-dipped in a stunning sheer glaze. With a generous 15cm diameter it becomes an all-purpose storage canister for all your storing needs. Its light and neutral colour tone will keep your kitchen looking clean and minimal, your bedroom clutter-free or your bathroom light and fresh. Art extra large canister, \$44.90, from Country Road. www.countryroad.com.au



Lets glow

In all its white glory, the Austin table lamp will be sure to brighten any interior. White powder-coated steel is broken up with small brass accents to deliver a sharp looking décor element for your room – and of course functionality! Austin table lamp white, \$199.95, from Milk & Sugar. www.milkandsugar.com.au

Black on white

Go abstract while keeping it nice and simple in colour shades. This quirky cushion cover makes comfort an imperative made out of durable natural cotton denim. The creators who engineered this cushy goodness recommend a fine feather inner 5cm larger than cover size for extra cosy comfort. 'SLIP' natural/black 50cm x 50cm, from Your Welcome Design. www.yourwelcomedesign.com



Console yourself lucky

Step aside double drawers. We have found this clever three-drawer console that looks just as fine. This means you can keep your keys, bags and phones tidy and hidden away, while having a focused place to display your luxurious candles and stunning décor elements. The charming aged look comes from mangowood finished in a tea brown stain finish. Cortina console, \$1,095, from Republic Home. www.republichome.com

Q&A

Ask our resident experts

Have you got a question that you'd like our team of experts to answer? Simply email your question to editor@renovatemagazine.co.nz and it will be answered in an upcoming issue of Renovate magazine!

COMPILED BY Nicole James

Q

"We currently own a rental bathroom and don't want to spend a lot on remodelling it when other people are doing the wear and tear. Do you have any advice on transforming a bathroom quickly?"

A

Just like your own home, a rental property is also an investment that will prove fruitful over the long haul, as well as the short term with the rental income.

Renovating or adding a bathroom is a home improvement project that is sure to give you 100% return on investment – in the short term is more appealing to renters (and could possibly demand a higher rent) and in the long term it can add significant value to your property.

As a house doctor, I practice in efficiencies and practical planning every day and I know all the tricks when it comes to adding value on a budget! The first piece of advice I would give is to:



Work with what you've got

Take stock of what you have and assess what you can keep, revamp or need to replace. It's amazing what a respray can do to an existing vanity that offers good storage. Baths can also be resurfaced and tiles professionally cleaned, resealed

and re-grouted. Replace items that you really need; like tired tapware with a good consumer guarantee and renovate the items that serve the need and space well.

Layout

Assess if the layout is working well. The ideal situation is not to move the plumbing around - maintaining the existing layout will save on labour costs and plumbing parts.

Remember, you don't need council consent if your remodel is working within the existing foot print and maintaining the existing number of plumbing items; however, if you're adding a shower or an additional toilet you will have to factor in the consent process and fees. Talk to your specialist about local and up-to-date council changes.



Walls

Repainting a bathroom is more cost-effective than tiling, but it can take longer to paint a bathroom than any other room – so factor in time and labour. However, for a rental, good porcelain tiles are more practical and will take a beating, whereas painted Gib will mark and scratch.

When evaluating, factor in another repaint in a couple of years. Technology in digital printing has come a long way, so it's possible to have a totally practical and seemingly indulgent bathroom on a budget.

Marvel's new range of 'marble look' porcelain tiles have such a huge variation in print that you would be forgiven for thinking it was the real thing! Consider using large format tiles; they are not only more cost-effective and quicker to lay; they can also make a small space appear seamlessly large.

Wet room

If you want a modern looking bathroom that is incredibly practical and efficient in every way – consider creating a wet zone (a half wet room) or full wet room.

Wet rooms do require full water proofing and the flooring will need to be raised slightly to create a run-off for water. Initially, the cost might be higher than just replacing the shower cubical, but the benefit is a modern clean look that mitigates the need for glass and the constant maintenance that goes along with that. In the long run, a wet room is a good investment for rentals and they also look the bomb!



Nadia Sakey

Interior design and property consultant
The House Doctor
www.houzz.com.au

Q

"We are renovating our kitchen to an open-plan living arrangement and want to make it as quiet as possible. Is there anyway we can make it more silent?"

A

The kitchen is part of a living space that is as much about socialising and entertaining as it is cooking. With many consumers embracing open-plan living, the modern kitchen should be conducive to conversation between family members and socialising with friends while cooking up a storm.

Nobody wants to be drowned out mid-convo by a rangehood that sounds like a jet engine and kitchen pundits agree that silent technology is more than capable of providing the solution. As well as soft-closing drawers and quiet dishwashers, InSinkErator and Schweigen offer super-silent kitchen solutions.



Schweigen rangehoods come equipped with one of the quietest and most powerful extraction motors and fans available. The motors are placed outside of your home generating little or no noise inside your kitchen. So while the noise is being eliminated, the excellent airflow performance creates the ideal balance between power and silence.

Stylish, practical and silent, Schweigen rangehoods are the perfect solution for a quieter kitchen.

The new InSinkErator Evolution Series food waste disposers feature technologies addressing the two most common food waste disposers issues – grinding ability and noise.

This allows homeowners to grind nearly any type of food waste with significantly reduced noise. And if you have a septic tank that can handle a dishwasher and a washing machine, it can easily handle a disposer, too.



Barnaby Thompson

General Manager
Parex Industries
www.parex.co.nz



Q

"We are currently planning our next home renovation and would like to make our home as green as possible. The first thing we are going to do is rip out the flooring - do you have any new features for eco-flooring that is not just plain wood?"

A

It's no secret that I am a huge fan of using tiles throughout all the main living areas of the home. They are durable, sustainable, colour fast and easy to clean and maintain. Will all of the different colours, patterns, shapes and sizes that tiles have to offer there is no reason for them not to be used more.

More and more I am having clients ask for timber floors that won't fade, are easy to maintain and are also suitable for wet areas.



Tiles offer a unique opportunity to have a vintage timber floor look in a variety of colours and finishes that would be otherwise and obtainable for most people. With tiles you can achieve a timber look in interesting spaces, such as your bathroom where you wouldn't be able to lay natural timber floors – and you can install underfloor heating to ensure it's still snug underfoot. (See page 43 for a further explanation on underfloor heating).



My favourite example is the Chevron Chic collection from The Tile Depot because it has different colour gradients in each tile and it can be laid in interesting patterns such as herringbone for a truly unique look.

I see timber look tiles as a far more interesting option than laminate flooring and it's my opinion that in many ways the Chevron Chic wooden tiles are better than the real deal.



Hamish Dodds

Interior Designer
The Tile Depot
www.tiledepot.co.nz

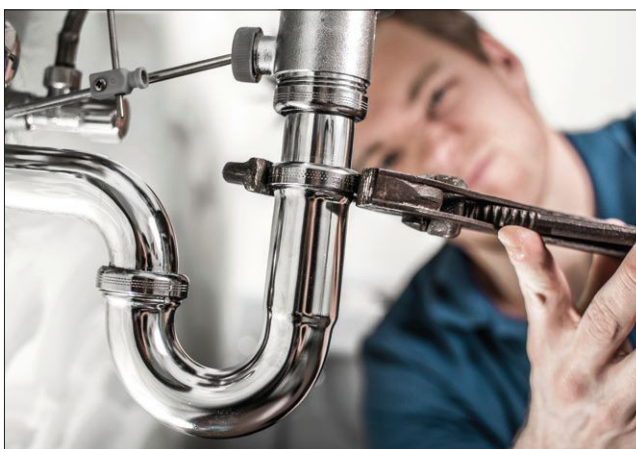
Q

“We have a leaky S-trap under our bathroom sink and are getting it replaced with a P trap – what is the difference between the two?”

A

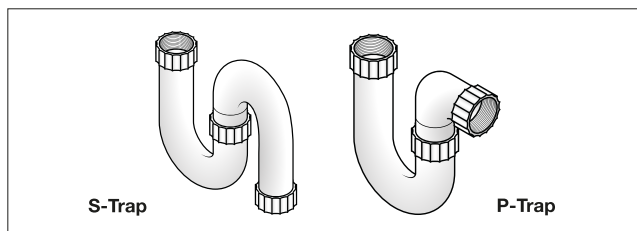
In plumbing terms, a water trap is an extremely important requirement of any plumbing fixture installation. Traps must have no less than 25mm of water seal depth, to prevent sewer gases and drain smells from entering a building.

These days, modern plumbing fixtures, like toilet pans, incorporate the water trap within the moulding of the pan, or with the use of adaptors. Other fixtures like basins, baths,



showers, tubs and sinks, have a manufactured waste trap installed under the plug outlet. Have a look under your vanity – it's the bendy bit of the waste pipe.

This brings us to the questions, what's the difference between S & P? S or P traps refer to the outlet configuration of the trap. If you laid an S or P on its side, the end of the S will point vertically down and the P will point out horizontally. So an S trap is used when the discharge needs to exit downwards through the floor, and the P trap is used when the discharge exits horizontally out through the rear of the fixture or through the wall.



With toilet pan selection, it is critical to know the set out dimension of the waste discharge pipe, as pans differ in their installation distance from the rear wall. If in doubt, ask your renovation specialist. A licensed plumber must be used to install plumbing fixtures.



John Gutry

Licensed Certifying Plumber and Gasfitter
Master Plumbers
www.masterplumbers.org.nz

Q

"Is there something we can do to make our long driveway safer at night? Our guests often park on the street and have to walk up it. It has a high fence either side so it's not practical to light it all, but at the moment it's very dark."

A

One way to make the driveway more visible is to paint a line of white paint along the edge of the driveway and overcoat with Resene's new FX Nightlight glow in the dark paint. This will glow at night so guests can see where the driveway leads to. It's also handy for the edge of steps or other obstacles that can't be easily seen at night.



If your home is hard to spot from the street, painting your numbers on your letterbox in Resene white paint then Resene FX Nightlight can make it easier for your guests to find your place. The glow in the dark paint is also good for children's areas, step edges for extra caution and safety around the home.



Nikki Morrison
Colour consultant
Resene
www.resene.co.nz

Q

"Over the course of twenty years, which flooring system is actually the most cost-effective option for your house once you take into account ongoing maintenance, longevity, etc?"

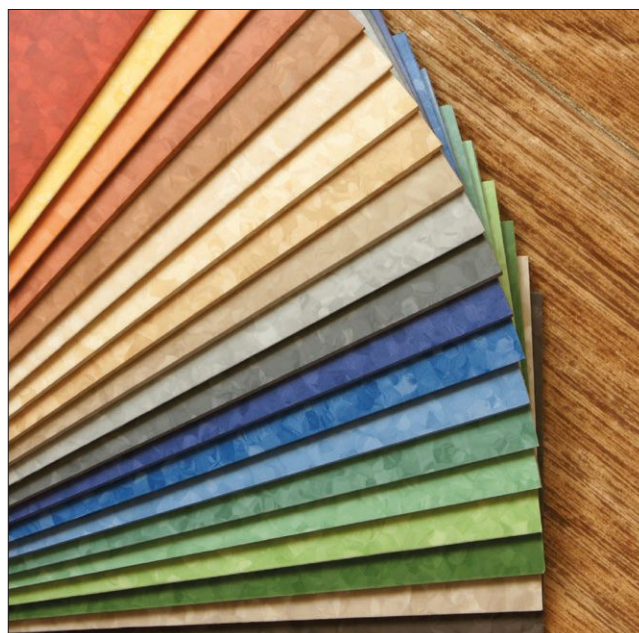
A

Resilient flooring including vinyl, linoleum, cork and rubber is potentially the most cost-effective option for your home once you take into account ongoing maintenance, longevity, etc.



It's durable, flexible and inexpensive, with vinyl consistently being the cheapest floor covering you can buy.

Being an engineered floor, resilient flooring, including sheet products, luxury vinyl tile and luxury vinyl plank, provides exceptional performance in high traffic areas. Resilient flooring can be moisture resistant, meaning it is the perfect product for the kitchen or bathroom, where moisture is a constant issue.



Resilient flooring is extremely easy to maintain. Resilient sheet flooring provides a smooth surface free from cracks and crevices that allow for easy clean up of dirt and dust.



Nicholas Leko
Renovation specialist
Refresh Renovations
www.refreshrenovations.com





It's like a sauna in here

There's a world-wide trend towards installing a home spa or steam room. If a home spa sounds like a luxury too far, maybe it's time to think again. With spa pools, saunas and steam rooms now available across a wide range of price points, renovators are budgeting for a spa room in their makeovers.

ARTICLE Patricia Moore



Saunas are now being installed in bathrooms to create your own little sanctuary. Photo credits living4media/Van-Berge, Alexander



The Kos Minipool by Robertson is the ultimate relaxation tool with hydromassage circuits

A spa room at home probably owes its origins to the popularity of luxury spas in high-end hotels. It's driven by an increase in spending on goods that increase pleasure, plus an emphasis on health and well-being.

For fashion designer Donna Karan a home spa is an essential – as she explained to the *Financial Times How to Spend It* magazine, she's had one installed in each of her three homes!

The Pool & Spa Outdoor Living Expo 2016 in Western Australia attracted thousands of visitors wanting to invest in their lifestyle and create a holiday feel to enjoy at home everyday, says organiser Carol Harper.

"Our weather allows people to enjoy the outdoors and items like spas that encourage good times at home, with family and friends high on the list."

The first thing you need to do is talk to your local council, says Refresh renovation specialist Tim Walters.

"Building a spa room is like building any structure. Generally, these can be built outdoors without consent, but if you're roofing anything about 9sqm, you'll need a permit."

Tim says height-to-boundary issues may apply, along with any regulations regarding fencing, stormwater collection, building over sewer lines and similar.

Sauna

Choosing a home sauna means deciding between a traditional or Finnish timber sauna, and the newer infrared models. While both offer much the same heat-bathing benefits – relaxation, stress-reduction and relief from aches and pains – there are differences.

A traditional sauna, where water is splashed on to heated rock, provides a high heat, low humidity environment. Infrared saunas use light to create heat that goes deeply into the body, inducing the desired benefits at a lower temperature. The health benefits of

infrared saunas are resulting in their growing popularity, report Pool Spa & Outdoor, with many homeowners opting to install these in the bathroom.

"Because saunas are generally associated with cold pools or showers, they're often by a pool, but we've done many in bathrooms, rumpus rooms and home gyms," says Sue Burgoyne, NZ Sauna Manager.

A sauna can be situated in a space as little as a metre square, she says. "However, it's essential it's properly ventilated and made from specialised timber, that will withstand the temperature."

Get advice from your landscaping or renovation specialist and ask about the cost of running and installation requirements, including the type of flooring necessary.

Price: An entry-level kitset sauna starts from \$4,900 + GST. An entry-level iyashi infrared kitset sauna starts from \$3,000 + GST.



The Kos Quadrat freestanding minipool from Robertson has an infinity edge for visual interest

Steam rooms

A home steam room provides much the same benefits as a sauna but with 'wet' heat in a tightly sealed enclosure, as opposed to the 'dry' heat of a wooden sauna.

With humidity levels at 100%, steam rooms create an environment suitable for people who suffer respiratory conditions.

The latest steam generators can be installed in a fully enclosed, completely waterproofed shower, says Sue Burgoyne.

"A lot of people don't have the extra room for a sauna and want to utilise the shower space. With added seating it's a luxurious option."

To make an indoor shower steam room capable or when locating a shower for an outdoor spa, it's advisable to check local council regulations.

Price: Entry-level small steam generator starts from \$4,500 + GST.

Spa pools

These days a spa pool can be pretty much any size, says Brent Regnaud of Wright Pools and Spas in Wellington.

"With custom-made spas the only limitations are your budget and your imagination. But the buyer needs to consider longevity, warranties, parts availability and whether the company with which they're dealing will still be around when they need them."

The same applies when buying a manufactured pool; don't let your dreams of massaging away the aches and pains under the stars, be ruined by choosing an inexpensive option with poor insulation and shell construction. Insufficient insulation means greater heat loss and more spent on electricity.

So what are running costs? "Depending on the model, power costs for can range from \$28 (incl) per month."

Portability is a huge factor says Brent. "Once a spa pool is in-ground that's

where it's staying; we move a lot of pools from one property to the next. A spa pool doesn't add dollars to the value of a property – it adds value to the quality of lifestyle."

Another option, from bathware specialists Robertson, is the new Kos Minipool, a luxurious overflowing-rim bathtub. Combining Italian design with the latest technology, and with freestanding and built-in models offering seating for up to five, underwater LED lighting and an automatically adjusting hydro massage system – it's the ultimate in outdoor home spa luxury.

Price: A spa pool has a starting price from \$10,000 + GST.

Spa rooms pricing guide

Points to consider

What form will a spa room take; will it be indoors or out? Will the area be roofed or simply screened from the neighbours; a stand-alone structure, pergola, gazebo or pool-house complex? (A fully enclosed structure will mean less loss of heat and added security).

Talk to the your landscaping or renovation specialist regarding any regulations and check if fencing is required. Lockable covers and the height of the pool may mean this is not the case.

What's the primary use of the spa pool – therapy or relaxation? This may influence size and choice of extra features. Try before you buy; if the showroom you're visiting doesn't encourage this, move on.

Lastly, consider health issues. Do you need ease of access to a spa pool due to mobility issues? Or do you require a steam room with high humidity levels to address respiratory difficulties?

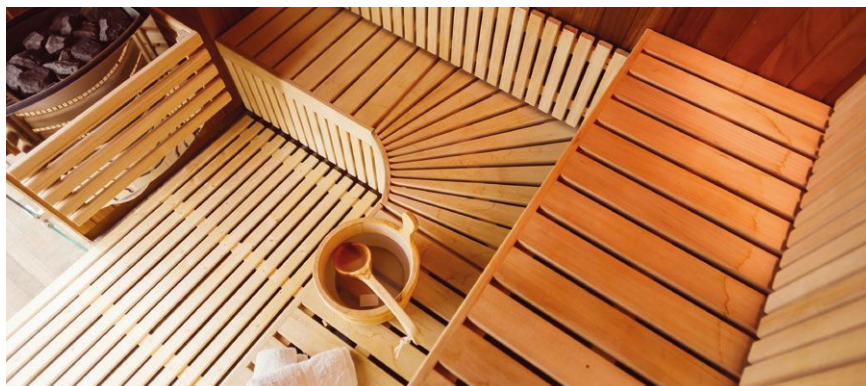
Design and style tips

We talk to Landscape architect for Zones Landscaping Specialists, Nichola Vague.

While spa room basics – spa pool, sauna and steam room – can range from budget to high-end, it's often the décor and planting that adds that special touch of luxury.

Nichola recommends using plants that create a tropical feel as a backdrop, and including species with dramatic foliage that will look effective when lit up at night. "This increases privacy and creates a resort environment. Nestle the spa pool into the planting and select species with low levels of leaf drop and litter, plus incorporate plants that are naturally associated with water."

Nichola also suggests using scented plants, such as gardenia and star Jasmine to heighten the senses. "And consider using plants that deter insects, such as the 'mozzle buster' pelargonium, rosemary and lavender."



Sauna

From \$4,900



Steam rooms

From \$4,500



Spa pools

From \$10,000

All pricing are rough approximations only and companies will not be held responsible for their accuracy. Pricing does not include installation and prices vary depending on measurement requirements.

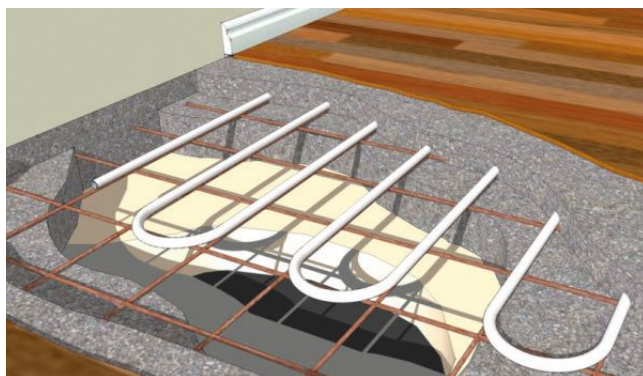
Warmth under foot

Bouncing into the bathroom on a chilly winter's morning is so much easier when the surface beneath your feet is warm and inviting.

Underfloor heating has become a popular option for new home builds, but what about renovations?

ARTICLE Deirdre Coleman





Hydronic heating uses hot water in a closed loop of insulated pipes. Image by Central Heating NZ

In the first century BC, the Romans used hot-air underfloor systems called hypocausts to heat public and private buildings. Today's modern solution use one of two methods to heat floors: hydronic (warm water pipes) or electric cables.

'Infloor' heating might be a more accurate term for what we know as underfloor heating, because it works using a system of pipes or elements installed within or on top of your floor slab.

The radiant heat produced comes up evenly from the floor and rises to a height of about two metres, so it heats the space you actually occupy, rather than rising straight to the ceiling.

Obviously, a new build provides a clean slate and you can lay your underfloor heating within your concrete floor slab. Renovations are slightly trickier because the floor slab is already in situ – or you may only have a suspended timber floor. But that doesn't mean it's impossible to retrofit your existing home. So, what are the options?

Hydronic underfloor heating

Hydronic heating uses a heat source – such as a boiler powered by gas, diesel or electricity, or an air-to-water heat pump – to heat water held in a closed loop of insulated pipes containing hot water. The pipes are laid in loops, evenly distributing the heat from wall to wall.

Hydronic systems can be installed in a number of different ways, depending on your home design and your requirements.

The inslab method – where the pipes are laid into the home's concrete slab – is the most common system used, due to its low installation costs. However, it's usually not possible for existing homes with a concrete slab in place.

Those doing a major renovation could instead opt for the European screed floor method, which can be installed over an existing home's floor slab.

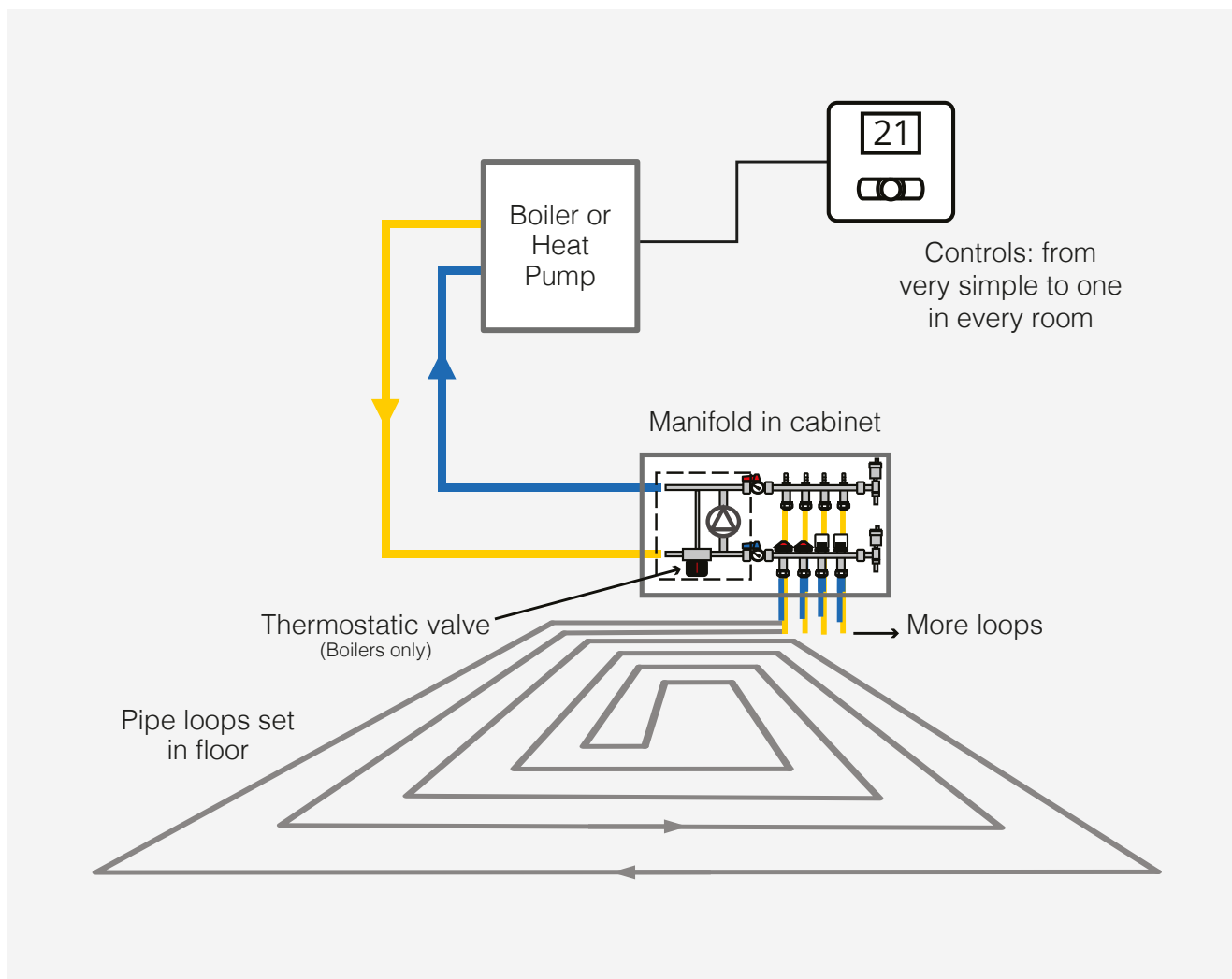
The pipes are clipped to polystyrene placed on top of the construction slab and then covered with a 50mm screed

This results in a loss of room height of around 85mm.

Another solution, particularly for timber villa renovations, is the spreader plate system, which doesn't require a layer of screed or concrete. It works well for joisted wooden floors and uses slotted metal panels to hold the pipe in place between the floor joists. To prevent downwards heat loss, it's wise to install additional insulation between the joists.

VarioComp is a new hydronic underfloor heating system offered by Central Heating New Zealand. It's a lightweight system from Europe that's suitable for existing homes as it can be laid over solid or timber floors, says Wesley Pearce from Central Heating.

"If you want a retrofit heating system, it's a great way to go," he says. "It has a thin profile of only 20mm and the closely spaced pipes enable the heat source powering it to operate at a very low temperature, making it highly efficient to run."



Here's how hydronic underfloor heating works. Diagram by Central Heating NZ

Electric underfloor

Electric underfloor systems have been around for several decades and are still extremely popular, safe and effective. The heating element is laid directly beneath the tiles or carpet and covered with a self-levelling screed and a fibreglass mesh layer. The wires can be configured around furniture and fixtures, and this is also a good solution for high-traffic areas.

Like most underfloor heating systems, electric heating works best with flooring materials that naturally retain heat, such as ceramic tiles, stone and marble. For carpeted areas, such as living rooms, Warmup manufactures water-thin undercarpet heating pads that fit between your carpet and the underlay. They come in a selection of shapes and sizes to fit virtually any room.

Electric underfloor timber options

Underfloor heating is most effective when your home sits on a concrete slab that retains the heat, but there is an option for owners of timber-floored villas. It involves

laying a 5-6mm thick thermal underlay onto the floor with an insulation cover on top of that. The screed with the undercarpet heating system goes on next beneath the carpet.

Devi Heating Systems is the New Zealand distributor for Europe's leading brand of electric underfloor heating. It offers a product called Devimat 150, that can be retrofitted onto timber floors using a stabilising and insulating board, between the electric element and the timber floor. A waterproofing membrane can be added, making this a suitable solution for bathrooms.

Which rooms?

Hydronic underfloor heating is the best way to go to centrally heat the whole house.

Heating the whole house will be the most cost effective in terms of installation and running costs, as well as providing whole home comfort, enabling you to enjoy the whole of your home, all year round.

Electric underfloor heating works best in bathrooms, kitchens, entries and living areas, says Ashley Hill from Heatwell.

"Electric undertile heating is great for areas that you want to heat up and cool down quickly – it takes roughly 40 minutes each way," he says.

"It's ideal for working families where they get up at 6am and are gone by 8am, then they're home in the evening. You can put it on a timer thermostat and we use a floor sensing probe that controls the floor temperature."

Hydronic underfloor heating is commonly installed in bedrooms as part of the whole home's central heating system.

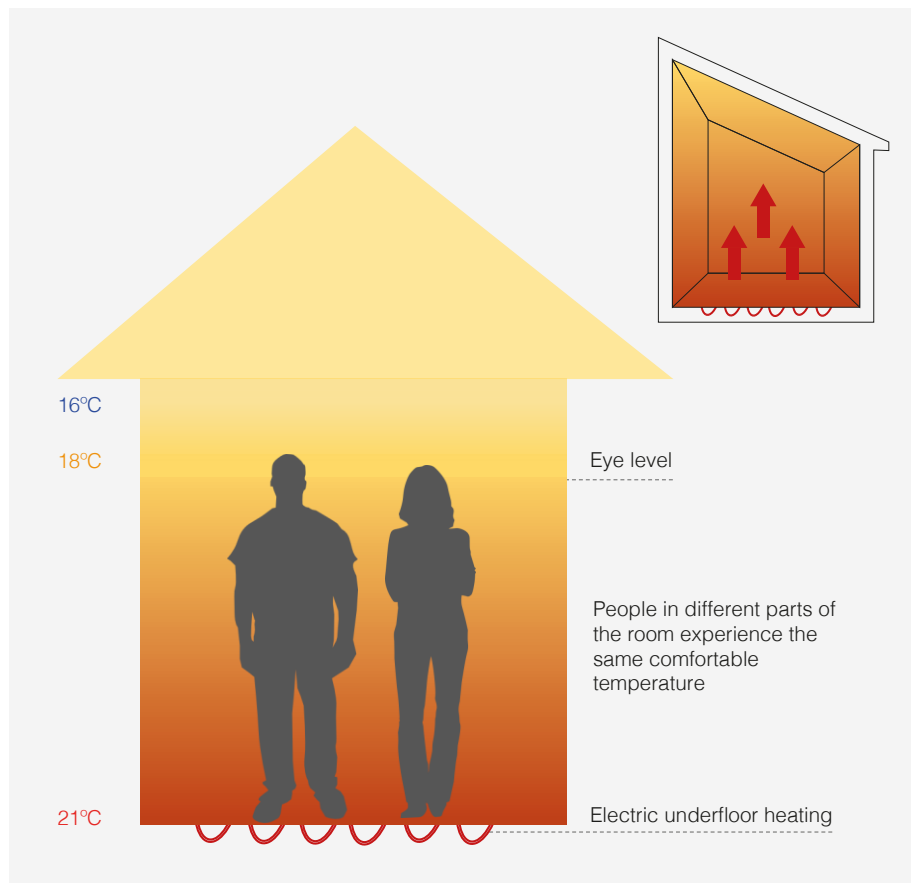
"We can do large living areas, but electric undertile heating in bathrooms makes up the bulk of our work. It's particularly popular because it's safe and cost-effective," he says.

Important note

Pricing and options all depend on the room size, how well your home is insulated, how much glazing you have, the wattage you choose, energy costs in your region, the local climate, the indoor air temperature, and user preferences such as daily running times.

Because of this – both options need to be considered. For example, electric underfloor heating might look cheaper to install, however the daily running cost is likely to be double the amount of hydronic underfloor heating. Therefore, it would be better to use electric for small surface areas like bathrooms or kitchens and in regions that aren't cold so it doesn't get used all year round.

If you're in a region that's consistently cooler than most or intend to live in your home for more than 10 years; hydronic will be more cost-effective.



Warmup electric underfloor heating ensures the floor temperature is slightly warmer than the head (temperature) to optimise comfort levels. Electric underfloor heating is best suited for a home located in a region that has a warmer climate, for a small area in the home, and underneath flooring materials that retain heat like concrete and tiles.

Expert advice

The floor coverings you choose will affect the efficiency of your underfloor heating system. It's important to talk to your heating designer about the floor covering you want to use, so that they can help you select the right solution.

Tiles, concrete, stone, slate and marble are ideal floor coverings for use with underfloor heating. Carpet is an option, but the underlay acts as a natural insulator, preventing some of the heat from passing through. It's best to opt for thinner underlays and stay away from deep-pile carpet.

Be aware that retrofitting underfloor heating options is likely to raise your floor height by up to 20mm or 85mm (with the European screed system), so you'll need to consider the flooring levels of adjacent spaces, such as hallways.



Underfloor heating pricing guide



Hydronic underfloor heating

Starting from \$17,000 for installation with a lower daily running cost



Electric underfloor

Starting from \$2,000 for installation with a higher daily running cost

All pricing are rough approximations only and companies will not be held responsible for their accuracy. Pricing does not include installation and prices vary depending on measurement requirements.

All things interior



littlebigbell



♥ 800 likes

UK

Colour is strong amongst UK bloggers and interior designers, and we are seeing a twist on classic heritage design, where older style homesteads are modernised with colour, texture and furniture from local and international designers. Modern homewares, such as Tom Dixon light fittings, are instant classics and sit comfortably alongside antique pieces.

Also prevalent is strong use of colour and texture in a more accessible and affordable way through bright art and homewares, use of paint to highlight and accentuate, and modern affordable furniture companies like IKEA and Habitat.

Who to follow: Geraldine

Instagram account: @littlebigbell



indiehomecollective



♥ 730 likes

New Zealand

New Zealand's love of the eclectic interior continues, and authenticity also plays a large part of the design movement in New Zealand with many smaller boutique design companies offering unique NZ made homewares, as well as individuals foraging for mid-century pieces.

Recent popular Scandinavian monochromatic schemes of strong white and black are softening, and we are beginning to see more colour and pattern incorporated. Layered textures, including bohemian elements and indoor plants are teamed with nature-inspired colours, such as bone, olive, navy and quartz.

Natural fibres like wool, sheepskin, linen and cotton are offset with materials, such as brass and American oak.

Who to follow: Indie Home Collective

Instagram account: @indiehomecollective

We talk to interior designer and blogger of Roomie, Tina Stephen about what's trending around the world for interior's and some people to follow for all your inspirational needs!

ARTICLE Tina Stephen



em_henderson



♥ 5,892 likes

USA

The traditional styles of stores such as Restoration Hardware, with a focus on larger homes, is still strong, where larger furniture items are the hero. Particularly with a coastal or country aesthetic. Larger homes also are resorting back to divided rooms – including tech free living rooms, formal dining rooms and purpose-built media rooms. There is a shift away from black and dark grey features with a preference for softer colours, such as navy, olive and mustard, teamed with bone white.

The California Bohemian style touted by stylists, such as Emily Henderson and Amber Lewis, is also gaining in popularity due to its focus on a more relaxed and affordable style of living. This embodies a more authentic focus towards purchases, such as genuine mid-century pieces, thrift store finds and homewares from small boutique companies. The coastal element is injected via white washed walls, large framed beach scene photos, cool metallic and tribal patterns.

Who to follow: Emily Henderson

Instagram account: @em_henderson



kararosenlund



♥ 1,779 likes

Australia

Australia is a leader in interior design forecasting, and there is a large focus on sustainability and longevity. Recycling, reinventing and reusing items is driving consumers to consider their purchases, and this also is driving interior trends to focus on enduring style. Soft muted colours are being used for larger items, such as sofas and rugs, with accent colours appearing in homewares, such as cushions and throws as an added seasonal layer.

In the past, there has been a tendency to let the indoors connect to the outdoors with room layouts positioned to achieve that all important indoor/outdoor flow. Now we are seeing the outdoors invited in, in the form of greenery, such as living walls and hanging planters, as well as plant-inspired homeware in palm print fabrics and art.

Who to follow: Kara Rosenlund

Instagram account: @kararosenlund

My space

Starting off in fashion design, further dabbling into hair and make-up, Kelly Karam has creative flair from all angles. Now she is adding beautiful touches for many couples' special day and to a range of corporate events as a floral stylist. Often found climbing up a ladder at a wedding venue or installing a large venue display – we let Kelly take a breather to show us her inspiring space at home for thinking up designs and beautiful things.

ARTICLE Nicole James PHOTOGRAPHY Amanda Thomas





Tell us a bit about yourself.

I started out my career studying fashion design and make-up artistry.

How did you get involved in the florist industry?

My Mum's dear friend has run a fantastic flower shop for years – I started working for her and fell in love with floristry straight away.

How would you describe your signature style?

I love to mix old and new. I love antiques, as well as contemporary art and design. This shines through in the aesthetics in my home and in the way I style my flowers.

What's your favourite flower?

A Gardenia, not only for their form but their alluring fragrance.

Where do you go for your inspiration?

Everywhere! From natural elements to food and styling.





Does your area at home reflect your style?

Yes, I draw inspiration from elements in nature – such as crystal, coral and lush green plants at home. I love antiques, but at work I like to keep things more contemporary.

What were the vital features that you wanted when creating your home office?

I love my workspace to feel like my own space, having the right scented candles and inspirational books around me helps keep me to feel calm and inspired – it's like a little sanctuary.

Would you recommend working from home to others?

Yes, I love it as it's cosy and you have everything you need at your fingertips.

How did you come up with the colour scheme?

The colour scheme is natural and inspired by nature; in my workspace I prefer neutral tones.

Do you incorporate fresh flowers into your space?

Always, but only the flowers that I love – currently Phalaenopsis Orchids, garden roses, and tropical foliage.

Do you have any home styling tips for our home renovators?

A fresh coat of paint is always my first go-to in any space, and a beautiful light fitting – it completely sets the tone to any space. **📌**



To see more about Kelly and the work that she does, visit her website [Blush Floral Stylist www.blush.co.nz](http://www.blush.co.nz)

The big question: should you stay or should you go?

There is a lot involved with renovating your home or moving house. And there are lots of things to consider when making the all mighty decision to take the next step in life.

Do you like the current location you live in? Do you like your neighbours? Is it in zone with a potential school you would like to send your children to in the future? And what is more economical – staying and renovating or moving out?

We take a look at some costs and what you could do to improve your existing home versus what it would cost, on average, to pack up your life and move to another location.

ARTICLE Nicole James

Renovation costs



Costs to renovate a bathroom
From \$20,000



Costs to renovate a kitchen
From \$20,000



Costs to add a garage
From \$50,000



Cost to add a second-storey
From \$200,000



Costs to add an outdoor room
From \$20,000



*Sorted.org.nz has a great Event Planner tools that allows you to list all the things you need to budget for making it easy to get a fair idea of how much you need to move or renovate your home.

Is Relocate



Relocation costs



Real-estate fees

An average of 2 - 4% of house sale price + administrative fees



Advertising costs

Upgraded internet advertising, videos, print media, signage, etc.
From \$1,000 - \$10,000



Furniture removal

From \$500 - \$3,000

*Depends on whether you hire a truck to do-it-yourself or hire full-service relocationists



General maintenance

From \$500



Legal fees

From \$2,000



Builder's report

From \$500



Connection fees for phone, power and internet

From \$500



QV, LIM report and registered valuation

From \$900 combined



Household cleaning

From \$60

*Depends on whether you hire cleaning equipment or pay for someone to do it



Rubbish removal

From \$200



Further renovations

From \$5,000



Total = from \$25,660

*Total based on minimum fees and costs and an average-priced house of \$750,000. Please note all cost estimates provided are rough approximations only and neither Renovate Magazine or any other party can be held accountable for their accuracy.



Upcoming features

Here is the lowdown of what we think is worth a read - from a Kiwi 1970s excavation to a playful weatherboard terrace home in Melbourne transformed with kids in mind – we are providing you with a range of inspirational real-life home renovation projects providing loads of ideas to fester your eyes onto.

Going under – stage two

58



62

Spoiled for space

Made for entertaining

70



Toy story

72



70s fling

80



84

Upside of downsizing

Going under

STAGE 2

After seeing the initial excavation process back in Issue 017, the second stage of the transformation of Neil and Yvette Basson's home is now complete, rendering what was a tired 80m² 1970s weatherboard home unrecognisable.

ARTICLE Clare Chapman PHOTOGRAPHY Scott Espie



Now, contemporary, light-filled spaces flow seamlessly from one to the next, rooms offer dynamic areas for the various members of the family, and entertaining is not only possible, but desirable, with a modern kitchen and extensive outdoor areas.

Turning this cramped three-bedroom, one-bathroom house into a four-bedroom, two-bathroom house with an additional living area without increasing the footprint by more than 25m² seems like an almost insurmountable challenge, but it was achieved in this project as a result of a clever design and excavating under the existing house to utilise unused space.

For the Bassons, who say they went into the renovation project with a relatively conservative attitude, what has transpired is beyond what they ever thought possible.

"We knew we needed more space and a second living area, and that we wanted an open-plan living/dining area but that was about it," Yvette says. "As a result of the process, the house became what we really wanted and not just what we thought we wanted when we started. We got to a place where our house actually works with our lives."

The Bassons, having lived in the house for nearly six years, both work full time, have two children aged 17 and seven, as well as dogs, and have various other commitments including sporting interests, so a house that would work for their specific needs was important.

The first step for the Bassons was to get concept drawings done. This kicked off in April 2014, and as Yvette says, ensured everything was as they wanted it to be at an early stage.

"It also allowed us to make small tweaks here and there before building started, but we hardly changed anything from those initial concept drawings."

The renovation was undertaken in two stages due to its complexity: a cavernous area underneath the existing house was excavated and a master bedroom, WIR, ensuite, laundry and second living area, as well as a small deck was added below





the house; while upstairs, the kitchen was reorientated, the laundry moved to make way for an internal stair to the addition, and the living/dining area turned into a contemporary open-plan space leading out to a deck that sits on top of the lower extension.

The excavation and building work underneath the house was completed first, allowing the Bassons to live on site through the first stage; the second stage rendered the house unliveable as works moved upstairs for six weeks to complete the renovation.

Despite the obvious complexity of such a project, the Bassons found it to be an interesting and relatively stress-free process as a result of their decision to engage a project manager from the beginning of the process.

“Once the build started, we realised just how fantastic it was having a project manager. Because we work full time, have kids and dogs and a lot of commitments, we would never have been able to do this project if we were running it ourselves. It also took away the stress and day-to-day issues that crop up if you’re running a project, and we never wanted to be the people directing the work; we don’t have the specialist knowledge or the time.”

There were some challenges living on site of course, but they were minimal, Yvette says. “We went six months without a backyard because it was filled first with piles of dirt from the excavation (which was later used to flatten out the sloping section) and then building materials, but it was a minor inconvenience.”

And the benefits of renovating far outweighed any challenges during the process itself, which were very limited. “Often you are working within existing spaces and trying to make them work for your life and way of living,” Yvette says. “So being able to say: ‘We want this sort of space to do that’, or, ‘We need this size for that space’ was amazing.”

“I love coming home now. Being able to entertain was really important for me and I can easily do that now in lovely, relaxed spaces. Having a second bathroom is great too, and a spacious master bedroom downstairs, as well as being able to enjoy the larger deck upstairs, and interact more with the back yard by accessing it from the bottom level of the house. It’s bright and beautiful and modern and it works for us, specifically.” ■



Check out Stage 1 and photos before the renovation took place on www.refreshrenovations.com



Tips for planning an excavation:

We spoke to Refresh Renovations renovation specialist Tim Walters about what to consider when planning an excavation.

What is the first thing to think about if you're looking at excavating?

If you're going to excavate under an existing property, the key is how much space you have available. The more room already available under the house, the less you have to excavate and the more you can reduce the costs. The Bassons' house in Birkdale had about 2.4 metres at the highest point, and at the least, about 1.6 metres available, which was ideal.

What are common issues with excavation projects?

Different areas have different issues for excavation work, but a common one is coming across volcanic rock, which can be very costly. Public stormwater pipes are another one. The rules are strict about what work can be done around them but they aren't always exactly where they are meant to be, or as deep as they should be and this can cause problems.

Do you need to plan for dirt removal?

If you can redistribute the soil on site, you'll save a lot of money on disposal fees. It's not cheap to get rid of soil. Often excavations are on sloping sites so it can easily be redistributed to flatten out the section and make the backyard into a more useable space, which is what we did in this project.

Are there any council restrictions to consider?

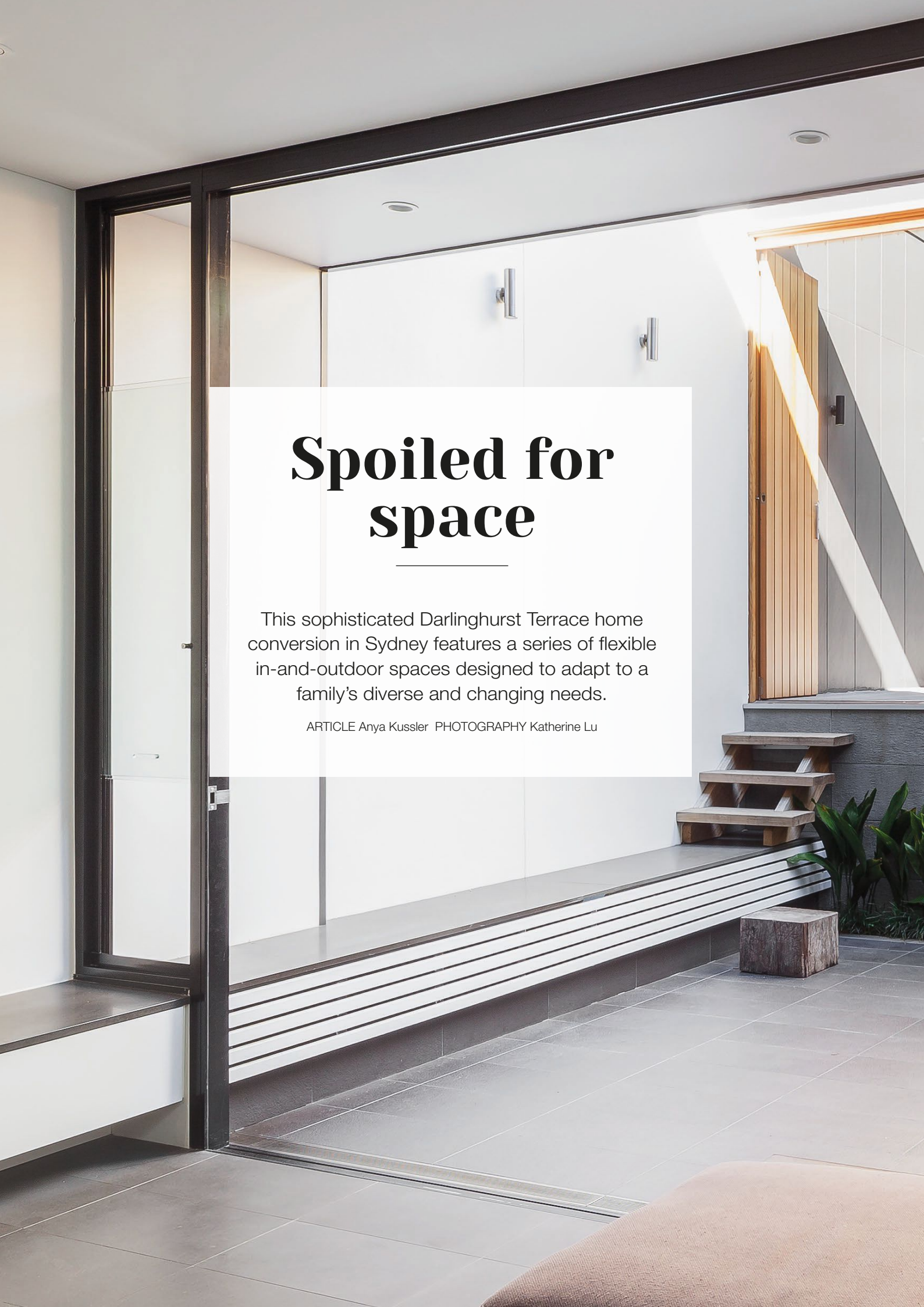
Each council is different but on Auckland's North Shore, for example, if we had extended the existing footprint of the Birkdale house by more than 25m², we would have had to put in more water tanks under the storm water restrictions - a very expensive process. In this case we were able to extend just 24m² as a result of utilising the space under the property and avoid extra costs in this way.

When is the best time of year to excavate?

You generally only need a couple of weeks for a domestic excavation but the weather can greatly extend a programme. During this excavation at Birkdale, the schedule was put out by about four weeks as a result of persistent rain in spring, which was unlucky.

Other things to consider?

There needs to be enough space for a digger to access the property and if you're planning to take dirt off site, both a truck and a digger will need to be able to access the area. Problems with access can have a big impact on a project.

A photograph of a modern interior space, likely a home conversion. The room features large glass doors with dark frames, leading to an outdoor area. The interior has white walls and a ceiling with recessed lighting. A long, low, white bench with dark horizontal stripes runs along the base of the glass doors. To the right, a wooden staircase leads up to an outdoor area with a wooden door and a small potted plant. The floor is made of large, light-colored tiles. The overall aesthetic is clean and minimalist.

Spoiled for space

This sophisticated Darlinghurst Terrace home conversion in Sydney features a series of flexible in-and-outdoor spaces designed to adapt to a family's diverse and changing needs.

ARTICLE Anya Kussler PHOTOGRAPHY Katherine Lu





Streamlined modern spaces with broad connections to the outside, balance the desire to complement the original terrace spaces, which were reinstated with traditional, textural details in a modern colour palette.

Creating multi-functional spaces and visual connection to the outdoors, were two main driving factors in Architect Jodie Niven Choi's game plan to convert her family's Darlinghurst Terrace heritage

home in Sydney. The inspired project involved stripping the tired-looking two-storey, two-bedroom, one-bathroom existing building back to its original brickwork shell, and transforming it into an airy, modern three-storey, four-bedroom, three-and-a-half-bathroom abode with two living areas.

"Our brief was to create a private and sophisticated family home with a series of flexible spaces designed for a variety of uses inside and out," Jodie explains. "And one that catered for family members of all ages, and for our changing needs as our kids grew."

The space factor

Jodie's strong focus on expanding and cleverly utilising limited space, stems from her own experience. At the time

she and husband Ivan bought the Darlinghurst Terrace home, the couple were living in a small two-bedroom Sydney-side apartment within a converted Victorian Terrace house.

"We had no connection to the outdoors and as our family grew, first with the arrival of our son Asher, and then our daughter Isla two years later (just eight weeks before construction started!), the space became increasingly claustrophobic."

Hence the main push behind every planning and design decision was to open up the floor area and make every space multi-functional.

"Our focus was not only on increasing the floor space, but also on opening up the house to light, glimpses of sky and



Quick chat

We talk to homeowner Jodie to get a bit of an insight on the impact of the renovation for their family lifestyle.

Why did you decide to renovate?

We bought the house because it was the perfect candidate for renovation in an area we already loved, and, as an architect, I knew that we could both bring its original character back to life, and introduce flexible modern spaces which would expand our lives, even within such a small site of only 140m².

We were desperate for an outdoor connection after being contained without our first floor flat for years.

How did the renovation changes improve your life?

We all suddenly felt like happy, independent individuals, even the kids. We all quickly found our own favourite spaces, and invariably these were the spaces designed to offer flexible uses, with the ability to be connected to the outside.



The ability to find our own 'quiet space' made us a happy family, and we wouldn't be able to do it all without the help and collaboration of Craig Niven!

the exterior wherever possible. I saw it as a home that we could peel open in summer and retreat within in winter.”

The transformation of the original parking area into a second living area is a prime example of a beautifully executed, light-drenched, flexible space. Here, stacking timber bi-fold doors were used to separate the raised parking area from the lower courtyard, with the upper level performing double duty as an outdoor entertaining space.

Atmospheric lighting and integrated speakers that wirelessly connected to the home’s audio system were installed, and custom outdoor curtains that can be pulled across to conceal the garage door added.

“That way, when set up with a large outdoor table for an alfresco dinner party or used as a ‘performance space’ by the kids, the area felt more like part of the home,” Jodie says. “We nicknamed it the ‘Stage’, and certainly used it that way!”

Design wise

As far as design changes go, Jodie says the original Terrace home had been stripped of much of its original character and suffered from a poor east-west orientation, leaving it dark and cold. In order to give it a new lease of life, she provided a softened minimal design and pared back a black-and-white colour palette to complement the reintroduced traditional, textural cornices, skirtings and fireplace surrounds of the original Terrace.

“The original floor boards were in poor condition, so it was an easy decision to stain these black,” she says. “The crisp black and white balances the traditional and modern, and highlights the traditional detail as a textural element.”

A life(style)-changing result

It took nine months to complete the makeover. In the process Jodie faced a number of challenges, such as the fact that the building was set on a small, steeply sloped site, that she had an eight-week-old baby and a two-year-old with a broken leg in tow, and that Ivan’s job as a business consultant frequently took him out of town.

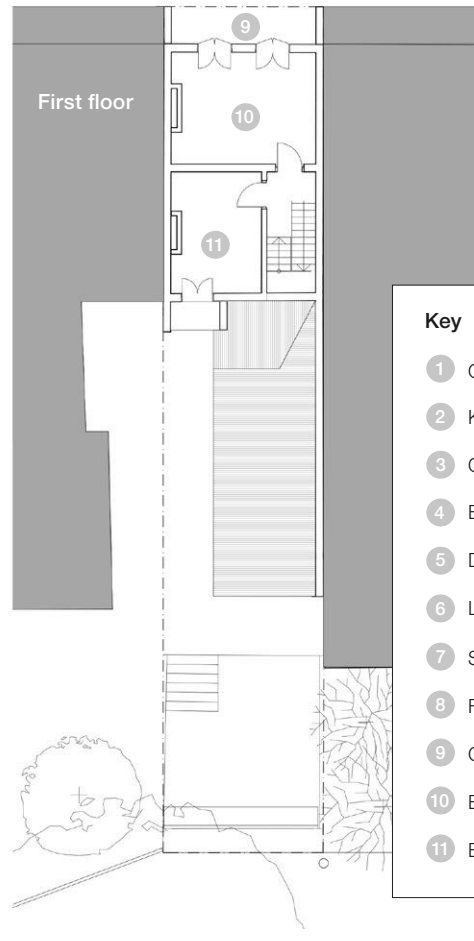
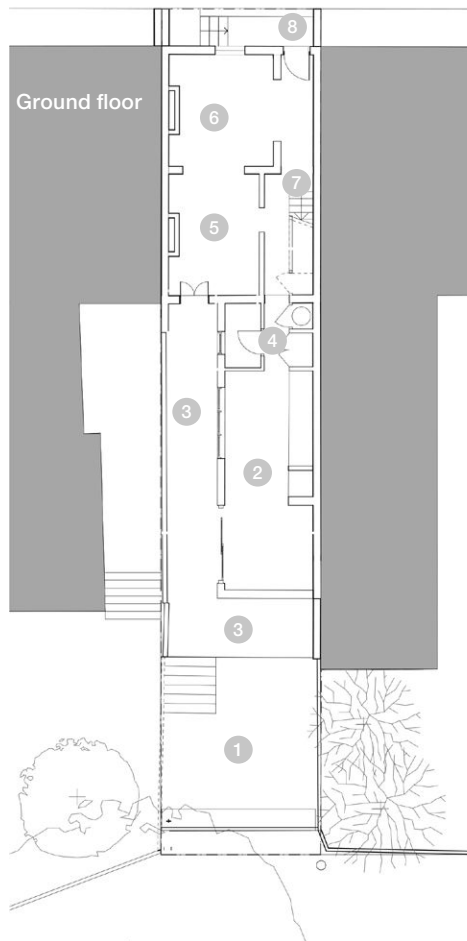
The alterations provided Jodie and her loved ones with the lifestyle improvements they’d dreamed of.

“Having the ability to change our home to suit our changing social and living needs on a day-to-day – or mood-to-

Before the renovation

Before the renovations took place, the narrow Darlinghurst terrace home was dark and cold due to an east-west orientation and had separate and independent closed up living spaces, allowing no room for a connection to the outdoors.

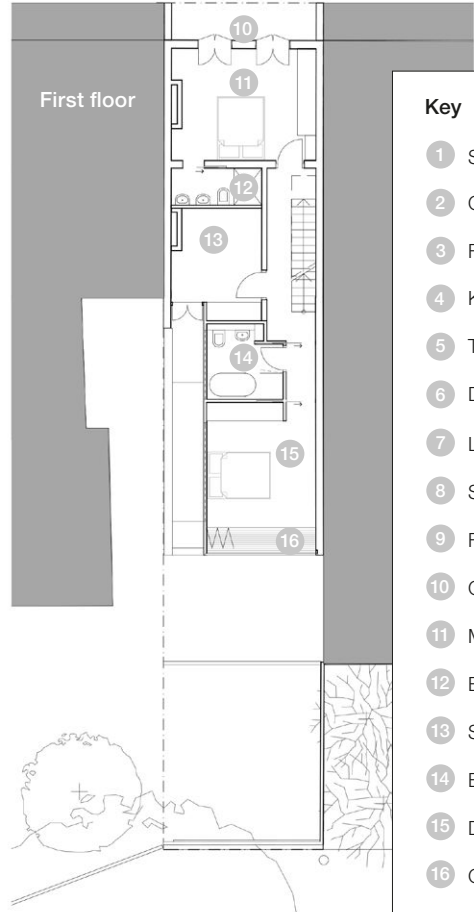
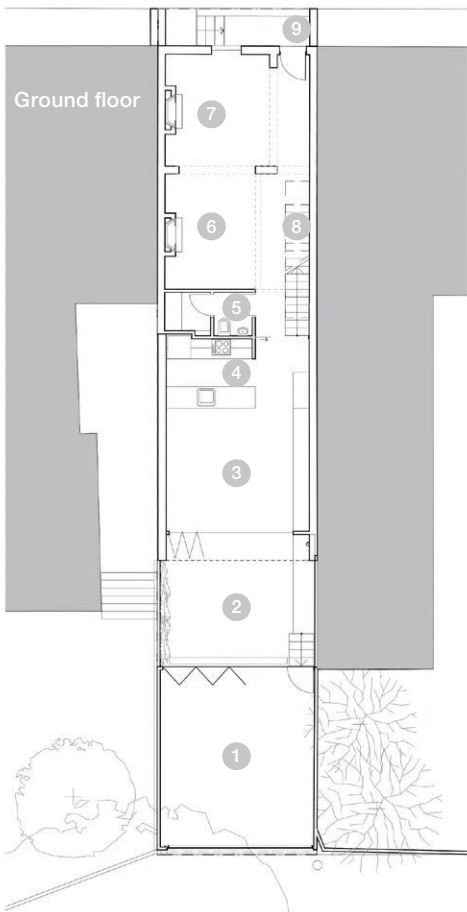




Key

- 1 Outdoor area
- 2 Kitchen / living area
- 3 Outdoor area 2
- 4 Bathroom / laundry
- 5 Dining room
- 6 Lounge
- 7 Stairs to first floor
- 8 Front entrance
- 9 Covered verandah
- 10 Bedroom 1
- 11 Bedroom 2

Original floor plan



Key

- 1 Stage
- 2 Outdoor area
- 3 Family room
- 4 Kitchen
- 5 Toilet / laundry
- 6 Dining room
- 7 Lounge
- 8 Stairs to first floor
- 9 Front entrance
- 10 Covered verandah
- 11 Master bedroom
- 12 Ensuite
- 13 Study / spare room
- 14 Bathroom 2
- 15 Double bedroom
- 16 Covered deck

New floor plan



mood – basis gave us a sense of real freedom,” Jodie enthuses. “I think we realised that this flexibility is at the core of what is important to us as a family.”

Jodie adds that her children and her husband have also recognised how important the outside connection in a home is to them, including glimpses of sky. “It may just have something to do with the way Australians live as one with the outdoors, but those connections to the sky are good for our souls.”

Being spoiled for space, Jodie says her kids fell in love with their new home almost instantly and surprised her with the elements they each fancied the most. Asher was lucky to have the upstairs rear bedroom, featuring a seamless balcony and retractable louvre screen, which made it easy to block out light and noise at night.

By day, this bedroom became the kids’ favourite playground, with the doors stacked back and the louvres retracted, so they could play and run around inside and out on the balcony, overlooking the timber screen doors to the ‘stage’, and the borrowed greenery of a large adjoining tree.

“In reality it is quite a narrow space,” Jodie explains. “But with careful detailing we were able to provide a large, open outdoor room, rather than a bedroom with a narrow attached balcony.” Having recently sold their Terrace home, Jodie says she and her family really miss that special space, “particularly due to the way it lifted our moods. The kids still refer to it fondly as the Balcony House.”

Jodie says the ‘Stage’ was another favourite place for the kids to run and play. “It gave us so much flexibility too – we would pull the timber doors across when we used the space to park the car, giving us a lovely warm backdrop to the smaller courtyard area from inside. And when we had the doors stacked back, the ‘Stage’ would act as an extension of our interior spaces.

The sale of their Darlinghurst Terrace conversion ultimately made it possible for the Niven Choi family to buy another Victorian terrace on a much larger site and in a quieter street in the same area. Jodie’s final words: “While we were all very sad to leave our first real family home and made some great memories there, we are looking forward to the excitement of creating another new home together.” 



Made for entertaining

Often the decision to stay in a home and renovate can be hard to conceive, especially when you have been living there for a long time, but once Sara and Harley Aish sat down with Wendy Jones from Refresh Renovations, the vision for extending their home became clearer.

ARTICLE Tina Stephen PHOTOGRAPHY Scott Espie

The Aish's main goal was to create a functional family home for a large family. Because they love to entertain, they wanted to see how they could accommodate guests, extended family and a growing family of teenagers.

Working initially with a design brief, renovation specialist Wendy Jones helped the homeowners formulate a list of questions about what they wanted to achieve in the renovation and highlight any potential issues or outcomes for the family. This gave them a clear understanding that helped them negotiate through the more challenging visions and plans for their renovation.

Once the Aish's knew what they wanted to achieve and had a design brief in hand, they set about creating a modern and functional family home.

"Wendy and the designers came up with plans that would work - not the easiest, as they were working with a house that has been added on to many times over the years."

With an onsite project manager, the process was clear cut, and good lines of communication meant that when issues or questions arose they were responded to quickly and effectively.

The renovation focused on reconfiguring the layout, and it was decided the home would work much better with an extended living and kitchen area. This meant that the hardworking laundry was moved to a new-built area, so that the area could be extended for an enjoyable scullery area to cater for entertaining large family gatherings.

"Once we figured out how we could possibly do this, we thought, if we're going to have renovations done, what else would help our indoor/outdoor flow and lack of storage? We decided to have the old doors onto the deck removed and replaced with double-glazed doors that would open out onto the front deck."

With an extension of the interior spaces came a need to connect the living area to the existing pool and deck. While the changes didn't sound extensive, it needed to be well considered to complement the existing structure of the home.

"The ultimate goal of blending the old home with the new was achieved by connecting the colour palette of the joinery and paint choices, and the final result is a renovation which is sympathetic to the existing home," says Refresh Renovations consultant Wendy Jones.

The existing laundry was moved and the old laundry space became a scullery to cater for much-needed preparation and storage space. Again,

this needed to flow with the rest of the home and simple additions, such as floor-to-ceiling cabinetry in light neutral colours achieved maximum storage space.

The extension of the lounge meant the living area needed to be divided into sections to control noise and warmth. This was closed off with beautiful large sliding doors that enables teenagers to have their own space away from adults.

"We have people over frequently, including the many nieces and nephews. We needed to create a more workable space where the kids could do their own thing and the noise wouldn't impact those in the main living area, as the entire living space was open-plan."

The modernisation of the home in the form of insulation, double-glazing and restructured footings, meant the home was not only more functional, but also more modern and comfortable. With future-proofing a key focus from the initial briefing stages, well thought-out power point locations and a room-by-room speaker system were installed.

After ten weeks of construction, the results of the much-anticipated renovation speak for themselves. The spatial flow of the new areas, and the ability to use them in a multi-functional way means the energy of the home has shifted. The dark underutilised areas of the home are now designated for storage or living, many with a combined use to suit a large, growing family. ■

Key details

Type of project

Home extension and remodel

Type of home

1980s

Size of property

Whole section is 575m² - 120m² for house - 40m² for pool and deck area

Years lived in

Under 10 years

Reason for renovating

Accommodate growing family and teenagers, entertaining. Scullery - create better storage and preparation space for entertaining.

Cost of renovation

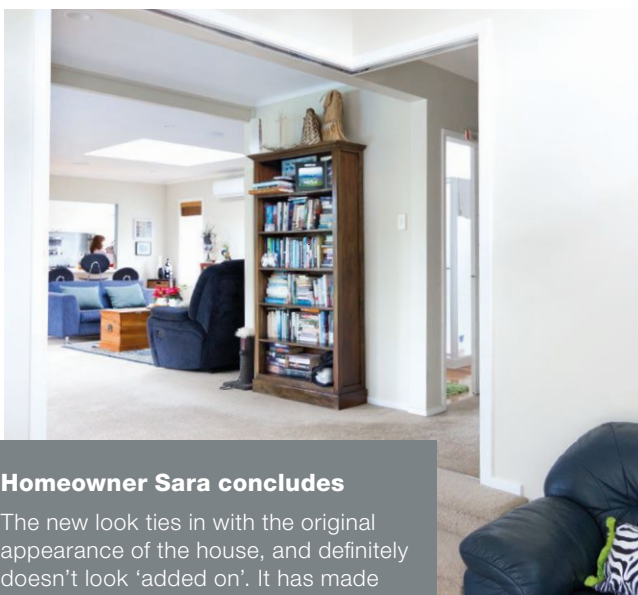
\$132,000 Incl GST



Original floor plan



New floor plan



Homeowner Sara concludes

The new look ties in with the original appearance of the house, and definitely doesn't look 'added on'. It has made our home much easier to live in and have people over, which we love to do.







Toy story

Function came first when the team at Austin Maynard Architects designed the same level extension of a terraced weatherboard home in Australia. But that didn't mean that form was neglected – quite the contrary.

ARTICLE Stephanie Matheson PHOTOGRAPHY Peter Bennetts





The brief was clear. “I wanted a light-filled home that could hide the mess a small child makes,” says senior executive and new mum Meahan Callaghan.

So when the Melbourne-based architect team set to work, they designed the house around the child. It all started with...toys.

In summary, the renovation involved an extension with two bedrooms and a bathroom above an open-plan kitchen, living and dining space. A large light well separates the original structure

from the new extension. The original façade remains, along with two front rooms of the terrace. One of those rooms has been altered to incorporate a study and a bathroom.

The extension has made a world of difference on how the family can live and play together. “It has led to a more relaxed and happy life,” says Meahan. “We are no longer feeling like we live on top of each other, or using only a small part of the house. We can spread out and use the house in a way that suits that day or that moment.”

The whole house feels light and airy and ‘connected’, allowing mother and son to talk to each other even if they are not on the same level. Elements of perforated metal in the staircase and elsewhere

make this possible and mean that the house does not have isolated rooms. Perforated metal has also been used outside the toy box: as a façade in front of the rear house frontage. The façade reflects most of the unwanted sunlight in summer, allowing a soft filtered light to penetrate the house. The lines between inside and outside have been blurred.

Undoubtedly though, the new home’s key feature is the floor, which has been utilised as modular storage space for toys in large parts. In this house, the floor literally is the cupboard. It allows the living area to be as big as possible without lining the walls with bulky cupboards. In a narrow terraced house this makes a huge difference to the width and overall sizing of the living space.



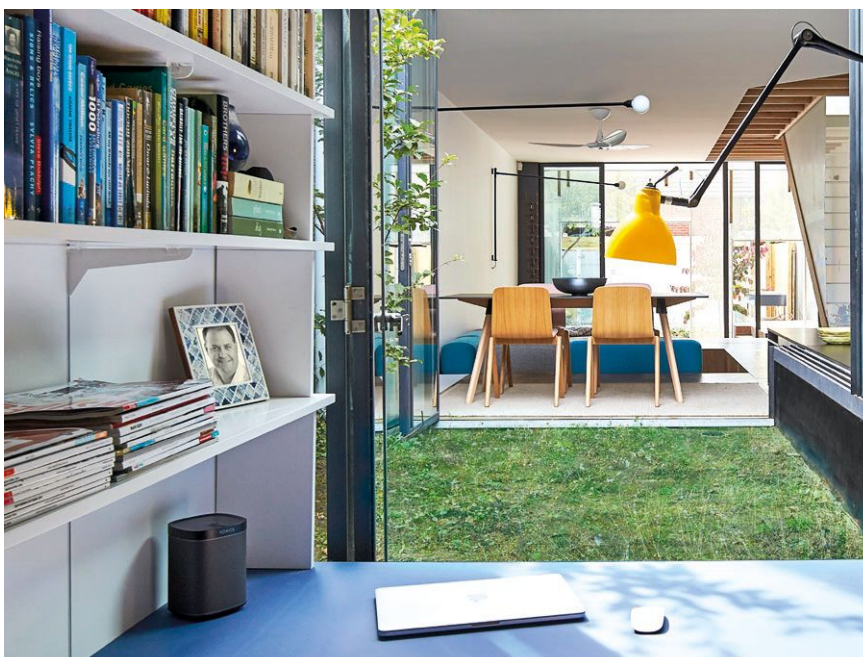
Top tips

Extending your place can literally take your home to the next level – whether you are adding to your home on the ground floor, converting a loft or excavating extra space in the basement.

Meahan Callaghan, owner of the 'toy box house', shares her top tips on how to make the most of your renovation.

1. Trust your team and let them challenge the ideas you already have.
2. Be bold and playful, use colour. Let the house match who you are rather than focusing on resale value.
3. Expect lots of stressful things to happen and be patient. If it's to be done well then some bits will be challenging.





"It's about working with what you have, and finding a creative way of using this to your benefit," says Andrew Maynard from Austin Maynard Architects, who designed the project.

"Toys are usually scattered on the floor and have to be picked up. With this project we have provided a unique solution to this typical problem – by enabling the floor to swallow up all the mess and using gravity as our ally. Rather than picking toys up to put back in the toy box, we've made the floor one big toy box. Let's get a broom and sweep all the Lego in from the top and sides. It becomes a game for the child, as well as a new hiding place to play."

Using every inch of space, the concept or idea of the traditional cupboard has been taken to new heights in this renovation. And indeed the height

of the 'floor toy box' is important and has been chosen with careful consideration. Project director Mark Austin explains: "The toy box is exactly 450mm high, which is the typical height of a seat. This means that it provides comfortable seat space for adults." The kitchen bench is 900 millimetres high from the original floor level, and can provide extra seats for the dining table, which is placed on top of the toy box. A complex ensemble, but it all works together beautifully.

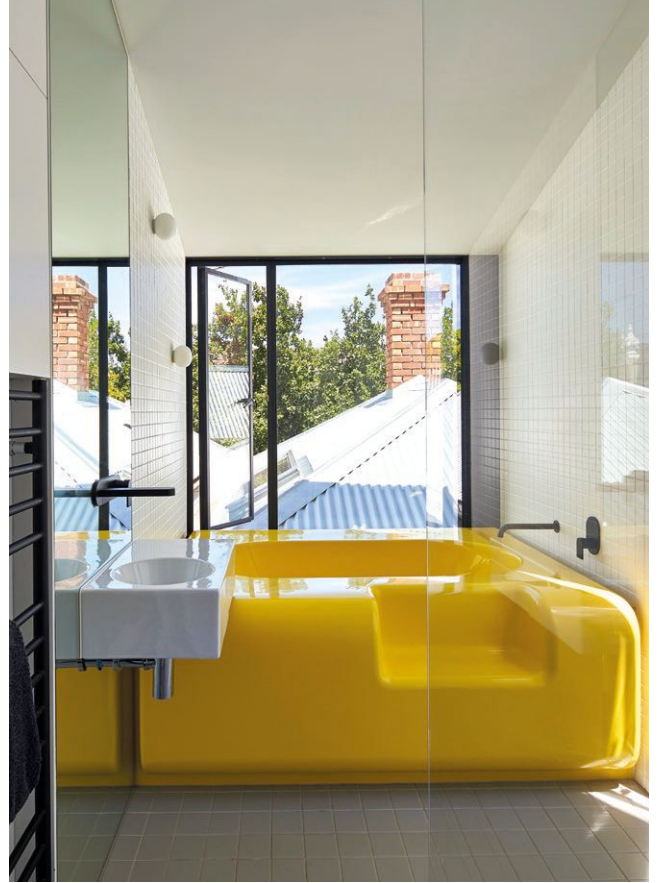
Traditional cupboards take up valuable floor space, as do corridors. That's why, again, this space has been used in an unconventional way. Last but not least, the new bathroom also adds a touch of playfulness and colour.

"Adding a bathtub to a small space creates a lot of fiddly details where grime, mess and mould can gather," says Mark. "To avoid the mess, and to create a bathroom that was easy to maintain, we made our own bathtub out of fibreglass. There are no seams or joins." A slim, continuous gutter runs along the wall to ensure that water runs around the bath to drain. Oh and by the way, the bathtub takes up almost all the space in the room and is bright yellow!

Looking further beyond the striking forms utilised in the extension, we find more and more function. This renovation had been thought through inside and out, and Meahan's architects place an immense value on sustainability. It's no surprise then that passive solar gain and passive ventilation are at play here. Roof water is captured and reused to flush toilets and water the garden. It's stored in a large water tank that has been buried centrally within the lightwell. High performance insulation is everywhere and the new roof is covered with solar panels with micro-inverters.

There is a playful twist to the home that evokes a smile and invites creativity and imagination. No better place for Woody and Buzz to make an appearance, and complete one of their Toy Story missions! This home will be a backdrop to many entertaining get-togethers – or as Meahan sums it up: "The house is fun, flexible and full of light. It's a great place to hang out..." To infinity and beyond! ■





70s fling

Danielle Brayne and Sean Thompson didn't have to look far when they renovated the bathroom of their Auckland home.

ARTICLE Sharon Stephenson PHOTOGRAPHY Scott Espie





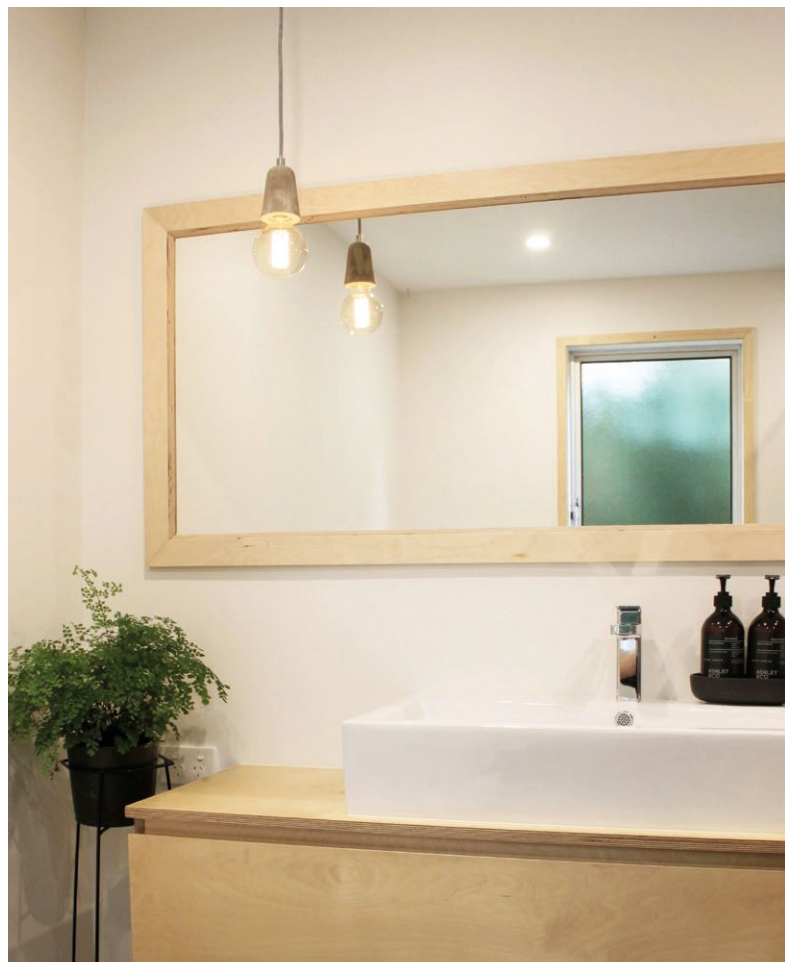
They called on Sean's sister, interior designer Lily Brooke Thompson of Ewing & Co, who waved her creative wand over the tired, 70s-inspired space.

The couple, who both work in sales, bought the Titirangi property in mid 2015. They have strong links to the area and wanted a home where they could raise their future family.

To say the 160sqm property was in need of love is an understatement: built in the mid-50s, it had suffered a series of ill-advised additions/renovations. Yet its robust bones and proximity to the bush sealed the deal.

The decision of where to start renovating was made for the couple when the building inspector noticed the hot water cylinder was leaking.

"And then a hose burst, flooding the bathroom, which forced our hand," says Sean. "It was also a good opportunity to re-pile and replace the ceiling."





Quick chat:

We squeeze in three quick questions with homeowner Danielle.

What made you decide to renovate the bathroom?

When we bought the house we knew it would be one of the first projects we'd tackle as it was very dated and dark, however when a water pipe burst after replacing the hot water cylinder, we got onto it a lot faster than originally planned! We were looking for a modern bathroom and to ensure it was suitable for the future for when we have a family.

Has the design improved your lifestyle?

We had an inkling that the old shower was leaking and water sprayed everywhere, despite our best efforts, so it's so nice not having to worry about that anymore!

Are there other areas of the house you want to change?

We're so pleased we chose the plywood features to bring warmth into the space, that we plan to introduce this feature in our kitchen and master bedroom down the track as well.

Before the renovation

Previously the 1950s inspired bathroom was dark, bulky and needed a major rethink of utilising space with little or no storage.



When it came to design, the couple had diverging visions. “Sean wanted a more Scandinavian, whitewashed look, whereas I was keen on something with more wood and warmth,” admits Danielle. Enter Lily, who was able to mesh the couple’s styles to deliver a contemporary, streamlined 12sqm bathroom that ticks all of their boxes.

Danielle and Sean had several non-negotiable ideas: they wanted the space to blend into its bush setting, to be warm and relaxing, budget conscious and have a separate shower and bath.

Their overarching brief to Lily was for a modern aesthetic, but not too modern, using natural materials.

First to go was the dark tongue-and-groove panelling. In its place, gibbed walls are painted in Karen Walker (from Resene) Half Wan White, which adds warmth to the south-facing room. The same slate grey tiles used as floor covering, also wrap around the shower wall – providing an illusion of space.

Lily’s suggestion of using marine ply to soften the space, also worked well. “The subtle used of wood pays homage to the house’s history, but at the same time it adds a textural difference,” she says.

Lily also hit on the idea of disguising the new hot water cylinder with a shelving unit made from marine ply. A special opening at the bottom of the unit provides access to the cylinder when needed.

The previous vanity, which featured dual sinks, spanned the entire length of the 2200mm wall. It was bulky and wasn’t the best use of the space. Instead, the custom-built vanity features a central sink with ample space on either side. By slightly offsetting the pendant lights to either side of the vanity, Lily was able to achieve a more sophisticated look.

The mirror was the only feature retained from the previous bathroom: it was edged with plywood to align with the rest of the design.

“We wanted our bathroom to be inviting and somewhere we’d enjoy spending time,” says Sean. “Lily gave us all this and more. It’s really set the tone for the way we’ll renovate the rest of the house.” ■

The image is a full-page background photograph. On the left, there is a wall made of horizontal blue slats, creating a modern architectural element. To the right, a large glass opening reveals a brightly lit interior. Inside, a kitchen with white cabinetry and a built-in oven is visible. A dining table with wooden legs and orange chairs is set up. The floor is made of light-colored wood. The overall atmosphere is clean, modern, and bright.

Upside of downsizing

The brief was simple; more room to accommodate a growing family, and more backyard space for them to enjoy. The outcome is the stunning makeover of a double-fronted Victorian in inner-city Melbourne that's seen the internal footprint of the house actually reduce in size, as smarter use is made of the available space.

ARTICLE Patricia Moore PHOTOGRAPHY Peter Bennetts





Creating a smaller house was never their intention, says architect Melissa Bright of award winning Melbourne architects MAKE.

"But in working through the family's brief, we found we were able to fit things in more efficiently. Then, having considered the brief down to the smallest detail of their daily lives, we showed them how we thought we could fit the things they

needed into a smaller amount of space. Those spaces are made to work harder to allow functions to overlap and respond to shifts (in needs) over time."

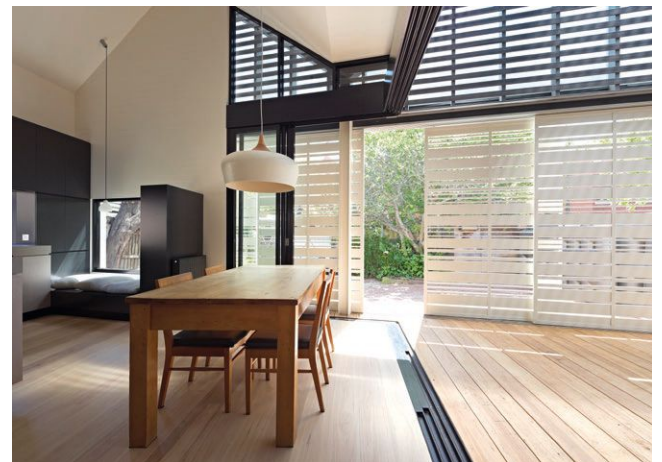
Situated in a sought-after area next to the Yarra River, where the original brick warehouses and workers' cottages have been undergoing gentrification for many years, the site is an unusual one that involves frontages on two different streets.

For the MAKE team, that was a definite plus. It allowed them to retain the heritage front, while creating a

contemporary addition that addressed the rear street. "Typically residential alterations and additions are hidden away in backyards, but we had an opportunity to treat the rear like a new street address."

Melbourne's Heritage Overlay planning regulation meant retaining the front of the house, and alterations to the rooms in that area were minimal.

"We really just tidied up and refreshed, with new bathrooms squeezed in and (new) joinery in all the bedrooms," says Mel. But the changes to the rear were



dramatic. An earlier extension was removed and replaced by a twin-gabled façade enabling MAKE's team to create new indoor-outdoor spaces. These spaces expand or contract through the use of external sliding timber screens. The use of translucent polycarbonate in the gable adds a feeling of spaciousness and is a touch of magic at night when the lights are on.

Removing previous additions also made room for a separate two-level garage/studio, which opens on to the street at the rear of the property. Space was tight and it was important 'the little

brick studio' had minimal impact on the house and the outdoor area at the back - with sensitivity to the residential scale of neighbouring houses. This was achieved by the angled roof form, that minimises the height of the building.

The nearby brick factories and warehouses inspired the brick texture of the studio, where staggered bricks form an almost honeycomb effect as the sun moves around the building. "There is some beautiful brick detailing nearby and we wanted to make our own contribution." City planning regulations, regarding overlooking into private open space,

had to be taken into account. This required an "inventive response", to providing views to the street and house from the studio space. But at the same time limiting the view of the neighbours.

"The fins on the studio windows control the views of the neighbours, but still allow a look out onto the street and down to their own house."

Effectively, the project involved two separate elements and was undertaken in two stages. The actual house renovation – which saw the family relocate to a nearby rental – was stage



one, taking 10 months on site. Stage two included the studio, garage and pool, which took around seven months.

Mel says MAKE's greatest challenge, when reconfiguring the house, was "fitting everything in and achieving it for a pretty low budget." (The entire project, including the studio, pool and landscaping, came in under a million dollars.)

While somewhat unusual, in that the house size was reduced, the project illustrated a trend they're encouraging at MAKE; consideration of environmental impacts when renovating or building. This is resulting in smaller, more flexible houses. Indeed, flexibility is key; or "possibility for a room's function to

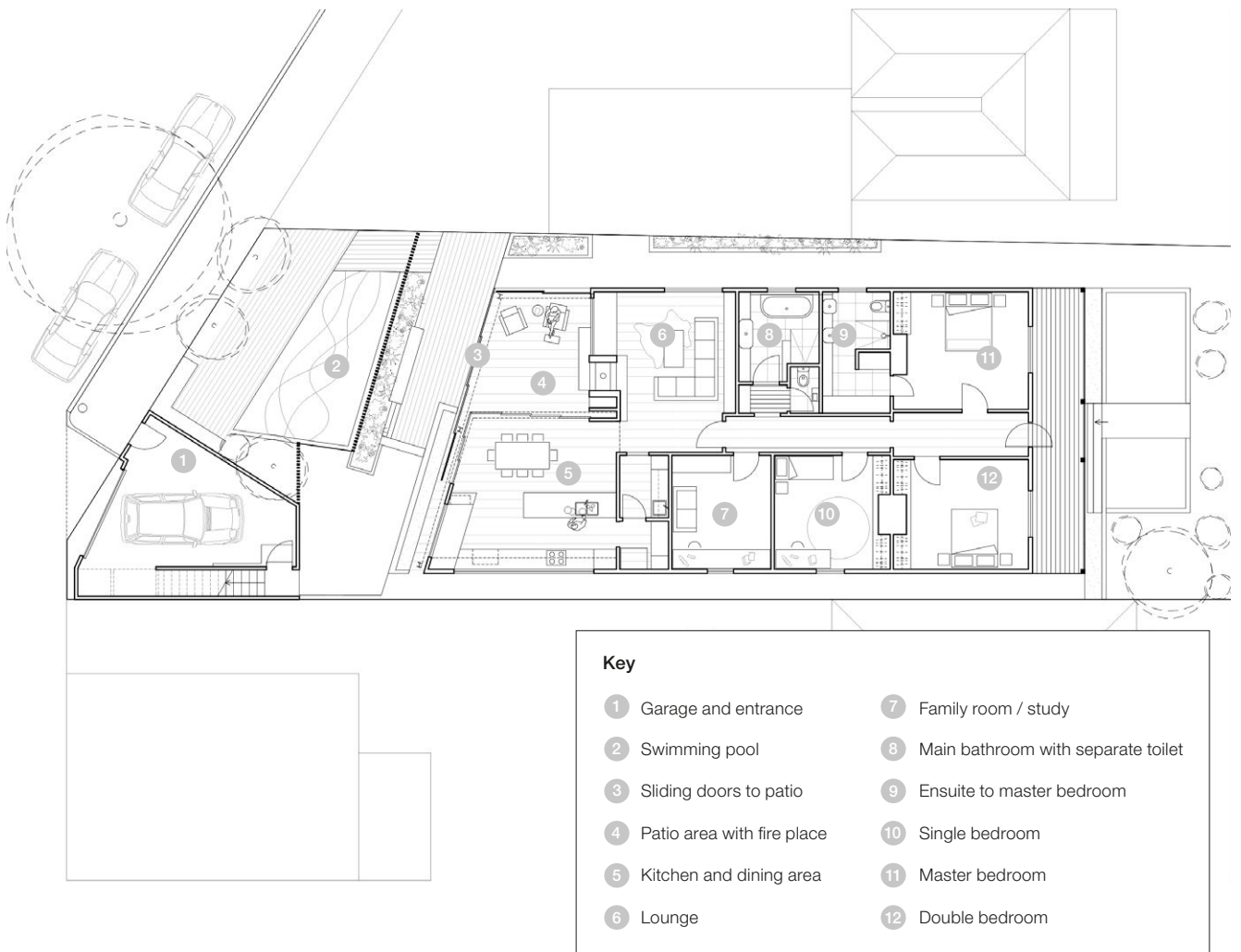
shift and change." The multi-functional spaces in this renovation are an example, says Mel.

"Screens, moveable walls and retractable doors provide flexibility and adaptability. We try to make rooms do many things. For example, the deck outdoors area is a second TV room in summer or an extended dining room for entertaining."

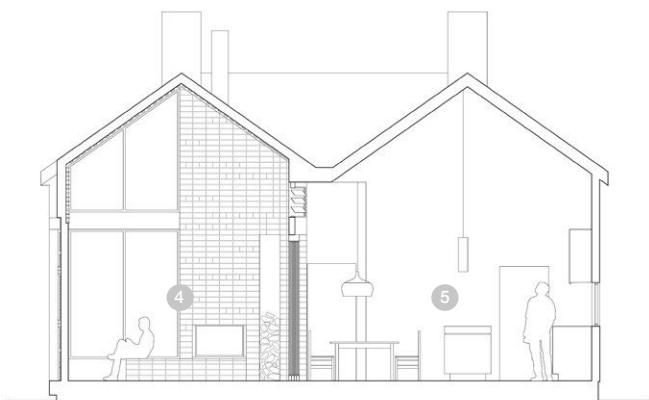
"The kitchen also works as a study, library or second living room, depending on the time of day." In winter the deck space can be made cosy with the two-way fireplace, which also heats the central living room, plus the use of the of the sliding screen system.

The studio and the 4th bedroom are what Mel calls flexible undefined spaces. The studio, with its separate access could be anything from a teenage retreat to granny flat, home office and even a commercial or residential rental.

MAKE's 'reduction' project turns the belief that it's necessary to increase the size of a house in order to create more space, on its head. Rather, they've shown that by designing more flexible spaces, a makeover can achieve the same aim, and at a more environmentally-friendly cost. **■**



Floor plan



Front of house cross section



Garage and entrance from the street

How much does it cost to warm up your home?

ARTICLE Libby Schultz Proudly brought to you by Refresh Renovations

There's nothing more inviting than a cosy home on a winter's night. And experts agree that creating a healthy haven should be your first priority when renovating. In this article, we take a look at what can be achieved within different budgets.

So, you're lusting after a new kitchen, a glossy bathroom, or an expansive new outdoor area? According to Refresh Renovations renovation specialist, Kim Reiche, you need to ask yourself the hard question. Should you be spending the money on something more critical?

"Having a warm and healthy home is paramount," says Kim. "If you're considering spending \$30,000 on a new kitchen and you haven't yet insulated your property...you really need to rethink that."

If you're lucky, your budget will allow you to do both. Re-insulating while you renovate will save you paying twice – as

wall linings are usually being opened up anyway. It's also cheaper to install new heating options, such as underfloor heating, while your builders and sparkies are already on site.

So when it comes to home heating, how does the typical home measure up? The World Health Organisation's recommended minimum indoor temperature is 18 degrees, or 20 degrees for households with young children, elderly or ill people.

Apart from the health benefits, a warm home will also raise the temperature at auction. Insulating is the number one top for adding value to your home (ahead of updating your kitchen or bathroom).

Even if you're not planning to sell, you'll recoup the money you invest insulating your home through lower power bills in years to come. So now you're convinced of the benefits, let's take a look at some of the costs involved.



To read the full renovation cost breakdown, look at Project Estimates on the Refresh Renovations website.
www.refreshrenovations.com

Basic

There are many ways to ramp up the cost factor without breaking the bank. For an entry-level budget, the priority is to ensure your ceilings and floors are properly insulated, as well as finding an affordable heating solution. Plus, there are some quick-win household tips that cost next-to-nothing.

Warm-up 101

There's a simple equation for turning a cold, damp house into a warm and dry one. According to Richard Popenhagen, an Eco Design Adviser, you need to reduce moisture, insulate and draught-proof, then heat. It's critical that you address all three, and in that order.

Kim Reiche from Refresh Renovations agrees: "We're always thinking about how to improve the thermal performance of the house. That starts with insulation and draught-proofing."

Kim completed a renovation last year in a house that was so damp, wallpaper would no longer adhere to the walls. "We relined and insulated the ceiling and walls, and replaced the window aluminium with a really good draught-proof Fletchers' product...the owners told me they never had to turn the heat pump on all winter."



If access to your ceiling cavity is difficult, use a blow-in application

Insulation basics

Everyone agrees you need insulation – but what kind? It's certainly not a case of one-size-fits-all.

"There's a huge variety of insulation available," says Kim. "It helps to get some independent expert advice, like from your renovation specialist, because their only focus is getting the right product for your home."

There are a number of different factors to consider, starting with whether anyone in your household has allergies to certain products.

"Access to your ceiling cavity is another big factor," says Kim. "If access is tricky, you might have to use a blow-in application. Or if there are any moisture issues in your blockwork, you'd install a non-absorbent polystyrene after waterproofing."

While insulation is usually installed in the exterior walls only, there's no reason why it can't do double-duty. "We recently did some sound insulation in the interior walls between bathrooms," says Kim.

Double-glazing

Regulations aside, it's always a good idea to put in double-glazing. There are two ways to approach it, says Kim.

"If your joinery is relatively new and draught-free, you may choose to retrofit the double-glazed glass only. But this is not always simple to do, and it can be expensive. If you're taking the whole window structure out, it's also a prime opportunity to reline and insulate your outer walls."

If your budget doesn't stretch to double-glazing just yet, it pays to invest in good thermal curtains. "Always make sure your curtains reach right to the floor, or you'll get a reverse chimney effect," says Richard. "The other critical thing is to use layers... whether it's net curtains, fleecy fabric or interlining."

Other quick-wins

When advising home-owners on creating a warm household, Richard Popenhagen, an Eco Design Adviser says moisture management is a key component. If you want to keep a dry home, three of the big no-no's include using an unflued gas heater, drying your washing indoors, and creating steam in the kitchen and bathroom.

Explains Richard: "When I ask people if they use their existing rangehood, 90% say they don't, because of the noise. So if you're renovating your kitchen, get a rangehood you can live with – most manufacturers now offer noise ratings – and make sure you use it!"

His other top tip is to install a quality extractor fan (of at least 150mm diameter) for your bathroom.

Thinking smart

Ella Te Huia, director of Smart Energy Homes, certainly walks the talk when it comes to energy efficiency. Her open-plan house, which is home to a family of four, boasts power bills of less than \$50 a month. This is achieved through simple energy-saving measures, along with a 2 kilowatt solar system, which cost around \$7,000 to install. "We have high-density insulation, good thermal-backed curtains, and LED lighting throughout."

To sum up, Ella Te Huia says a budget of around \$10,000 will get you a well-insulated house with some quality heating options. This includes new insulation for your ceiling and floors, at between \$2500 - \$4500 for an average-size house (or cheaper, if your insulation only needs a top-up). This budget would also cover a good quality EnergyStar-rated heatpump; plus a couple of ceramic panel heaters for your hallway.

Another popular choice for those on a budget, according to Bunnings, are micathermic panel heaters (which combine both convection and reflective heat). 

Basic options at a glance

- **The three key steps: reduce moisture, insulate, then heat**
- **Get independent advice on the type of insulation you need**
- **Invest in a low-noise rangehood and quality bathroom fans**

Mid Range

If you're adding new extra rooms as part of your renovation – or changing the use of existing rooms – it's an ideal opportunity to re-position things for maximum warmth and natural light. Our experts advise on how to use your windows for best effect; as well as comparing the cost of different types of heating.

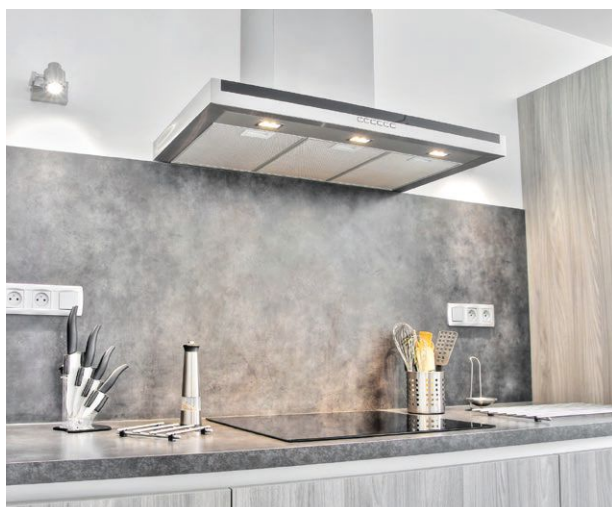
Location, location, location

To capture the afternoon sun, you'll want the main glazing in your house – including windows, skylights and glass doors – to face north. Anywhere between 20°W - 30°E of true north is fine.

East-facing windows get the morning sun; so choose your glazing based on how much heat or shade you want in those rooms. South-facing windows receive minimal sun, so should be relatively small, while still allowing for light and ventilation.

But don't be too much of a sun-worshipper, warns Ella Te Huia, director of Smart Energy Homes. "It's possible to have too much glass and too much sun...causing glare and overheating."

In particular, you'll want less glazing facing west, because the late afternoon sun can cause the worst overheating. "As a rule of thumb, any west or south-facing walls should not have more than 30% glazing."



Remove moisture and condensation with a good rangehood in the kitchen

Extra-insulated

Should you upgrade your insulation now, or wait until you're ready to renovate? Our experts say you should make ceiling and floor insulation a priority, regardless of your future renovation plans.

In a non-insulated home, around 40% of heat is lost through the ceiling. Floors account for 10%, but are easier and cheaper to insulate, so are well worth doing.

For everything else, it's more cost-efficient to tackle as part of your renovation. Exterior walls, which account for around 20% of heat loss, are tricky to retrofit. Likewise, with windows; it's easier to install new double-glazing than do a retrofit.

If you really want maximum value from your insulation, Ella recommends bumping up the R-value of your ceiling insulation.

What's underfoot

Another tip, says Ella, is to supersize your underfloor insulation. "If you're building on a concrete slab, some Building Codes require polystyrene of between 60mm-100mm thickness. But I always recommend to clients to increase that to 150mm...the difference in price is only around 10%, but you'll reap the benefits."

If you're building a timber-framed floor, ask your insulation provider if they offer a high-density or 'maxi' version. With these products, the fibres have been compressed together to form a very tight and semi-ridged material. "High-density might cost around 15% more than standard insulation, but will pay for itself in energy savings within 3-4 years," says Ella.

Time to circulate?

There are essentially two types of ducted ceiling systems. A 'heat transfer system' takes heated air from the living areas, and circulates it to colder parts of the house. It's best suited to homes that have a wood burner that puts out a lot of extra heat. Eco Design Adviser Richard Popenhagen says the best systems feature insulated duct pipes, and a fan that runs with minimal noise.

A 'roof space ventilation system' is something different. It relies on heat forming in the roof cavity, which is then circulated to other rooms in the house. Richard says these systems may not suit every house, particularly if you live in a colder, wet climate.

"If you get a week of cold rain during winter, there may not be any hot air in the ceiling to circulate. Research is showing that, in some cases, they may even be chilling off the house."

To remove moisture and condensation, says Richard, invest in a good extractor fan for the bathroom and a rangehood in the kitchen.

Heating costs compared

So you've sorted your energy-efficient room design, insulation, and ventilation. The next big question is: what kind of heating will you choose? That will depend on both your budget, and your personal cosiness preferences. In terms of cost to run, a real fire or heat pump are front-runners.

Says Richard: "The two cheapest forms of heating are a modern energy-efficient heat pump; or a wood burner, providing you have access to cheap or free firewood." Most expensive (and unhealthy) of all is an unflued LPG heater.

Reticulated natural gas is the cheapest source of central heating. Any plug-in electric heater – whether it's a fan heater, oil-filled column, radiant panel, or convection heater – costs the same kilowatt to run. **❌**

Mid range options at a glance

- Beware of over-heating your home with too much west-facing glass
- Ask your insulation manufacturer about their 'high-density' product
- Heat pumps and wood burners are most cost-efficient to run
- Unflued LPG heaters are the most expensive (and unhealthy)

High End

With a high-end budget, you'll be able to combine luxurious comfort, touchpad convenience, and enviable environmental credentials. We take a look at central heating, solar power, and the latest in home automation.

Whole-house heating

So you want a home that's consistently warm throughout? There are two main ways to centrally heat your home. You can either warm up the floor, or spread the heat into other rooms via the ceiling.

Hydronic underfloor heating is best installed as part of a renovation, as the hot water pipes are laid in the concrete slab. You then heat water using your preferred source of energy – gas, heat pump, solar, or a diesel boiler. Ella says hydronic heating is cost-effective for large areas, but for small spaces like a bathroom, it's cheaper to go electric.

If you have ceramic tile floors, you can keep things cosy with under-tile heating. Where electric cables are laid between your floor foundations and your tiles.

Ducted central heating transfers warm air to rooms throughout the house. The heating unit generates warm air that is pumped through duct grilles located around the house.

Lastly, if you have a decent-sized wood-burner, you can use that for central heating. You can spread the warmth via a heat transfer system (see previous article); or by heating water-filled radiators.

Going off the grid

It's pure, clean, endless and free...what's not to love about solar power? SkySolar managing director Nick Freeman says the number of households making the move to solar continues to grow.

Although power companies have dropped their buy-back rate in recent times, a solar system can still pay for itself within 5-7 years. The team behind SkySolar have developed some ground-breaking technology that allows home-owners to use more of the solar power they produce (rather than selling it back to the grid).

Ella recently advised a home-owner who has installed a 10-kilowatt solar system and wind turbine – and will be among the first in New Zealand to own a Tesla PowerWall.

Produced by the same company as the famous Tesla electric car, the PowerWall is a wall-mounted lithium-ion battery that stores solar power for the home. They were launched in April last year, at a cost of around US\$3500 each.

Home & hearth

For sheer romance and visual appeal, there's one source of home heating that's a clear winner.

"A fireplace is the heart of the home and it's also a beautiful piece of furniture," says Christina Cairns of The Fireplace.

Christina says the fireplace should always be the focal point of the room. Although there's been a recent trend to wall-mounting the television above the fireplace, she says this is not recommended by TV manufacturers.

Eco Design Adviser Richard Popenhagen says the next generation

of ultra-low emission wood burners – which burn in two chambers – are set to become increasingly popular.

No modern designer home would be complete without some kind of outdoor fireplace. One of the newest models at The Fireplace is the multi-talented Jet Master Quadro; which combines a wood fire, BBQ/grill tray, a pizzeria box, and a pot-hook for cooking South African-style potjiekos.



The Fireplace have a large range of heating indoor and outdoor sources to warm up your home

Smart thinking

Do you switch out your interior decor between summer and winter? Next time you bring out the cashmere throws, consider swapping out your light bulbs as well.

As Kim Reiche from Refresh Renovations explains, you can adjust your home's 'colour temperature' with the type of LED bulbs you use. Lights less than 3,000 Kelvin units are yellowish brown and create a warm ambience (while those over 5,000K are a cooling brighter white).

"It's a big thing in Europe...home-owners will often change out their light bulbs from winter to summer."

Home automation systems give you finger-touch control over the way you heat your home. As well as pre-programming everything to run more efficiently (such as automatically adjusting the temperature before you arrive home), it can network with other comfort-creating devices (like lowering your window shades at the hottest time of day).

There are several smart home hot water controllers available in the market to help you manage your homes water heating. **■**

High end options at a glance

- Consider using thermally-broken joinery with your double-glazing
- Hydronic heating is cost-effective for heating large floor areas
- Avoid wall-mounting your television over the fireplace
- Change the colour temperature of your lighting for winter

\$30,000 - \$100,000

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How much does landscaping a garden cost?

ARTICLE Libby Schultz Proudly brought to you by Zones Landscaping Specialists

It goes without saying that a garden can make or break the overall look of your home. So whether you have two green thumbs - or can barely keep a pot plant alive - it's something every home-owner must turn their mind to. We talk to the experts about what's involved in a garden make-over, and what you can expect for your budget.

A neatly-mown lawn and thriving plant-life makes a great first impression; while nothing screams neglect like half-dead pot plants at the front door.

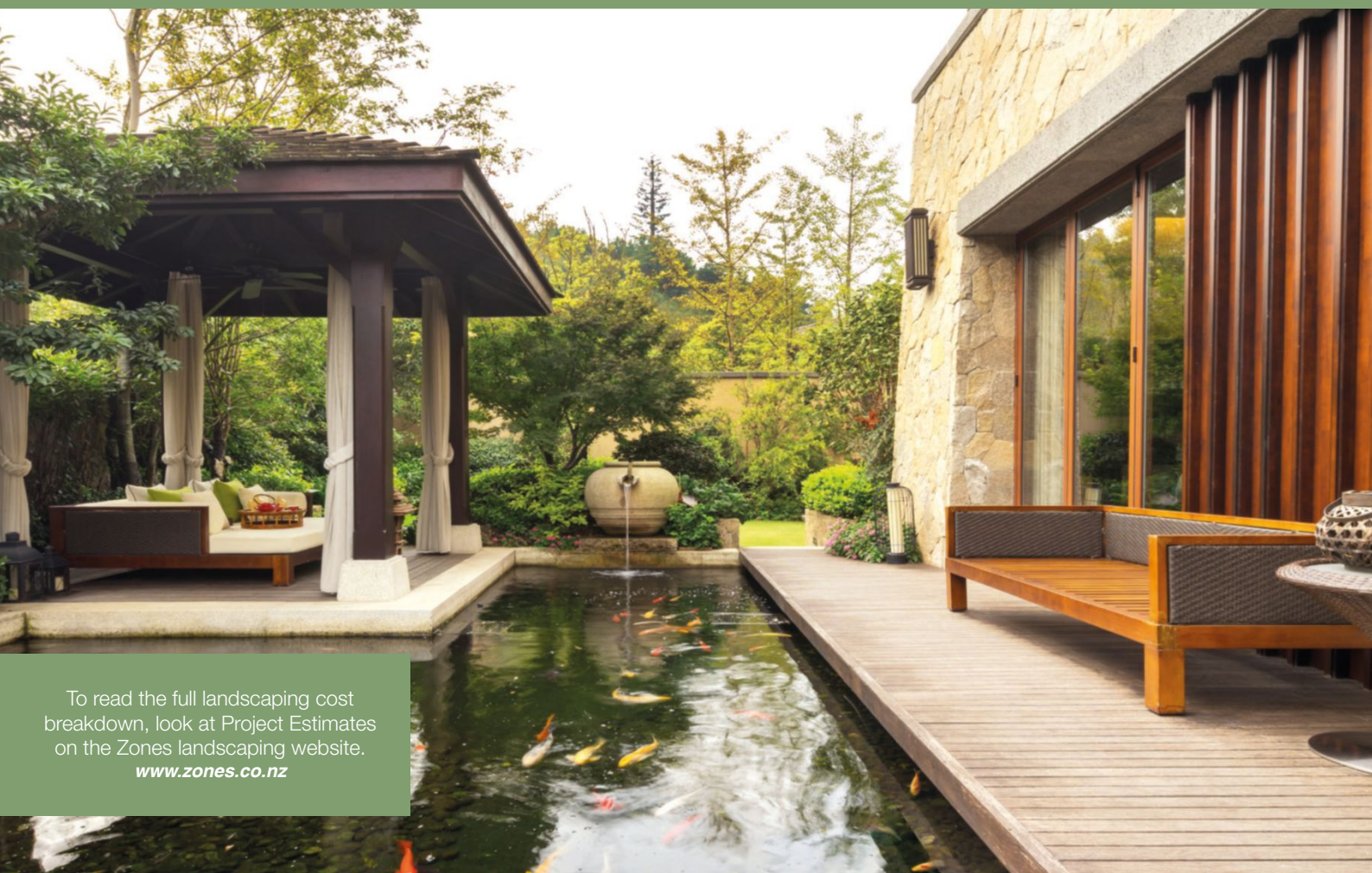
Whether you're playing for keeps, or preparing for re-sale, a great garden makes a big difference to the value of your asset. *Realestate.co.nz* says buyers want that all-important indoor-outdoor flow, as well as the instant curb appeal that comes from a great-looking front yard. "We've had many clients tell us their garden was a big selling factor," says

Nichola Vague, an Auckland-based landscape architect who works with Zones. "Creating attractive outdoor spaces with a well-structured layout is definitely a good investment."

So if you've already ticked off those other big sellers like the bathroom, kitchen and insulation – it could be time to turn your attention to the outdoors.

Regardless of budget, our experts advise that you should always invest in the basics – improving your soil, sorting out your drainage, and getting the structure of your garden right. It's also good to have an overall vision and plan at the outset, even if you can't afford to do all the work straight away.

In the following pages we look at what's involved in landscaping your garden, along with some typical costs - whether you're planning a simple make-over, a mid-range mission, or a big-budget affair.



To read the full landscaping cost breakdown, look at Project Estimates on the Zones landscaping website.
www.zones.co.nz

Basic

Worried that your budget is too small to have an impact? The good news is, you can make a start using whatever budget you have. Gardens can be a work-in-progress, spanning several seasons or even years. Once you have an overall vision for your garden, a good first step is to start work on the basics like structure and soil.

Staging things out

If you have a smaller budget, you may not afford to complete the work all at once. But it's more cost-effective (and exciting) to get your overall vision at the start. "We often recommend to clients with a limited budget that they complete their landscaping project in stages," says landscape designer, Kirsten McCarthy, of Kirsten Sach Landscape Design Ltd.

"Once you have your overall plan, you might want to start by creating a beautiful front entrance. Or maybe focus on finishing the areas you'll use the most, like your outdoor entertaining space." That way, you can enjoy the new parts of your garden while you save up or organise finance for the next stage.

To stretch your budget further, you should also allow more time for your plants to grow. Landscape architect Nichola Vague says less mature plants are always more affordable. "A smaller budget is more about planting well, and letting it grow. It will just take a bit longer...but gardens are meant to be a work in progress."

Having a long-term plan will keep you focused, says Nichola, and ultimately save you money. "Keeping to a plan is particularly important with planting. It will prevent unnecessary purchases, especially if you tend to just grab things from the garden centre at weekends."



Invest in quality soil and mulching for durable planting on a small budget

Some landscaping specialist companies will provide the project management necessary to coordinate the designer, landscapers and tradespeople into one package; so the homeowner only has to deal with one company or person for the entire process.

Getting the basics right

Just like a well-designed home, a professionally-designed garden will have good bones and a sense of flow. The hard landscaping creates the 'rooms' within your garden; while the planting acts as the paint, carpet and soft furnishings.

Kirsten explains: "Your designer will help you get the structure right – by creating your garden spaces, defining your edges,



Purchasing less mature plants is more affordable

and carefully choosing the placement of your plants." And just like a house renovation, you need to check your foundations before you build anything. This starts with the quality of your soil. If you're in Auckland, you are virtually guaranteed to be working with clay soils and poor drainage.

"Unless you only want to grow cabbage trees and flax, you really have to invest in soil and mulching," says Kirsten. "This is a surprise cost for many people, but it's just not something you can skim on. Without good soil, your plants will always struggle or may not even survive." Expect to pay around \$100 per cubic metre of good garden mix; with the average-size garden requiring around 10-15 cubic metres. Mulch is additional.

Good drainage is another biggie – unless you're prepared to have a soggy, unusable lawn for half of the year. Your designer will advise on the best drainage solutions for your property.

The hard flat truth

Of course, garden budget is extremely dependent on the size of your garden – and whether it's flat or sloping. "As soon as you get into retaining, it takes your budget to another level," says Nichola Vague. "But turning a sloping area into a flat space is always money well-spent. I think unusable lawns are a real waste of space – it's one of my bugbears! Lawns should be functional spaces...not just another area to mow."

So let's say you spend around \$30,000 on an average-sized flat section, starting with a blank canvas. What can you expect to get for your money?

According to Nichola Vague: "For that budget you can expect a small amount of hard landscaping, a lawn, basic decking and planting. It will be fairly simple, but you'll have a nice well-structured garden." 

Basic options at a glance

- **Complete your garden in stages (working to an overall plan)**
- **Focus your budget on those areas you'll be using the most**
- **Where possible, turn sloping lawn into usable flat space**
- **Save money by buying smaller plants instead of more mature ones**

Mid Range

As a very approximate guide, around \$80,000 represents a solid mid-range budget for an average suburban garden of 600-800 sqm. Within this, you could expect to achieve new lawns, good planting and structure, some raised beds, a dedicated entertainment area, and perhaps a feature or two such as a spa pool or built-in fireplace.

Laying the groundwork

Whatever your budget, the first rule of landscaping is 'know thy site'. "A successful garden is one that you're going to want to use," says landscape architect Nichola Vague from Zones Landscaping Specialists.

"Spend some time in your garden and note where the sunny spots are, where the wind comes from, and any issues such as wet areas due to poor drainage."

When it comes to style, Nichola recommends creating your own moodboard – using magazines or online sites such as Pinterest and Houzz – to build a picture of what you like. Visit your local garden centre, join in local garden tours, or just have a good snoop around your neighbourhood.

"See what's growing well in your area, and what isn't," says Nichola. "That gives you a good guide to the type of garden that will thrive in your environment."

Vertical gardens and green walls are trending right now – but Kirsten McCarthy, of Kirsten Sach Landscape Design Ltd, warns that they need to be done properly.

"We're getting a lot of clients asking about green walls. But they're not cheap to do, because they need to be fully irrigated and engineered. If you're not prepared to put in an irrigation system, my advice is not to bother."



Save space with a vertical living wall with an irrigation system installed

A question of budget

Just as with home renovations, you need to have some idea of your available budget from the outset.

If your garden structure and soil is already established, you may only need to spend around \$6,000-\$7,000 for a 'plant-only' makeover. But as soon as you get into hard landscaping, you're in another level of budget altogether.

You'll need to consider the big-ticket items such as site preparation, drainage, irrigation, decking, screening, paving, retaining walls, and boundary fencing.

If you want to create those all-important flat lawn spaces, you'll probably need retaining walls. The most common materials are wood, concrete blocks, or gabions (large cage-like structures filled with rocks). Wooden structures and gabion walls can be cheaper options. Depending on your wall's height, position or surcharge, and/or resource consent, you may need to add the cost of building consent.

Our experts have some tips on giving the retaining wall a stylish lift. "To improve the look, you could clad your wall in a nice timber, stain or paint it, or screen it with planting and climbers," says Kirsten.

You can also make your wall do double-duty as a seating ledge, adds Nichola, by keeping it to a maximum 450mm height and adding a wide cap.

The demolition yard

Another hidden cost, warns our experts, is the amount of removal or demolition required. You could potentially spend up to \$10,000 pulling out an old deck, digging up paths and removing trees – before you even get started on your new design. If you need machinery just to clear out your section, you'll need to consider costs for the digger and dumping costs.

Faced with the cost of prep work, you may feel tempted to 'work around' your existing garden structure instead. That's not usually a good idea, warns Kristen McCarthy.

"Resist the temptation to keep any existing tiling, decking or paving that's looking dated. You might save money, but it will drag down the whole look of your new design".

Laying down the lawn

Now you've built that nice level lawn area, how will you get it green? There are a range of options: seeded lawn, hydro-seeded (which has a better strike rate), and ready-lawn (the kind you roll out).

Another alternative is artificial turf, says Nichola Vague, "for areas where you want the soft green look, but don't want to mow it." As a rough guide, you can budget on installing around four plants for every square metre. A mid-range budget gives you more options when it comes to planting.

"You can afford to add in some specimen or feature plants, combined with a more standard palette. A larger budget will also allow you to include more mature plants, so the look will be more instant."

If you use a project manager, you won't have to pay the retail prices that you see at your local garden centre – they will be able to source quality materials at competitive prices. **1**

Mid range options at a glance

- Create a moodboard of ideas for your future garden
- Budget on installing around four plants per square metre
- Don't under-estimate the cost of removing your old garden
- A new lawn costs around \$3,000 - \$5,000

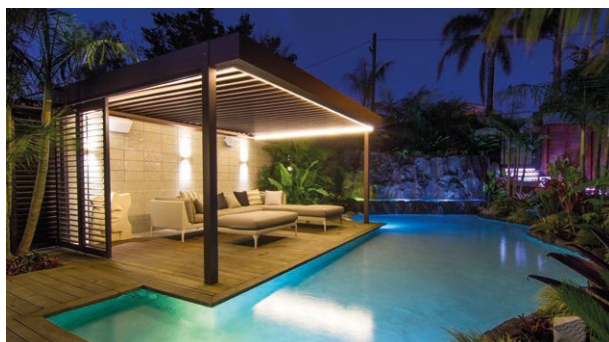
High End

So, you want the kind of garden you see in glossy magazines? Our experts have some ideas for getting your dream underway with a sense of luxury and high-spec materials and features.

Materials matter

What's the difference between a budget garden and a high-spec one? Our experts explain it's a similar equation to building a house. Putting size and scale aside, it all comes down to the quality of materials you use. "Instead of a pine deck, for instance, you might choose a beautiful purple-heart timber. Instead of concrete garden edging, you might have granite," says Kirsten McCarthy, of Kirsten Sach Landscape Design Ltd.

The same applies to garden accessories. Running water features are ideal for urban living, adds Kirsten, as they are great at helping to mask road noise. Other features of luxury gardens will often include full outdoor kitchens, built-in fireplaces, and outdoor sound systems.



Use feature lighting and water elements to achieve a resort style finish

Resort-style chic

Nichola Vague has first-hand experience of unlimited budgets, having previously worked in the Middle East designing gardens for luxury resorts and palaces.

"With a high end budget, the client can start to access some of the things they do in resorts." Any resort worth its five stars will incorporate two key elements into their design, says Nichola. "You'll always see fire next to water at top resorts. At home, think of installing fire bowls next to your swimming pool, or gas torches leading the way to your water feature."

Other luxury concepts include multi-level areas – whether you're digging down, or building raised platform structures. There is always a mix of shared open spaces, as well as multiple private areas. "Translating this to your garden at home, you may want a wide open space where you can watch the kids run around; plus, a dedicated entertaining area, and a few quiet nooks where you can sit and chill."

Your landscaping specialist can provide clever solutions for functional areas; such as where to put the washing line or garden shed.

Ask the specialist

If you're willing to invest a lot of money, you'll probably get your landscaping specialist involved in some capacity. "It's important to integrate your garden with your home's architectural style," says Nichola Vague.

"You might want to pull walls out from the house into the garden, for instance, or create an attached pergola. Your landscaping specialist can also help with designing other garden structures that complement the house. For example, you might want to build a kids' playhouse that can be turned into a pool-house later on."

On the subject of pools, they're obviously a significant cost to incorporate in your outdoor budget. "An in-ground pool never comes in less than \$80-\$100,000, once you have all the required pool fencing," says Kirsten.

Sustainability

As they say, sustainability starts in our own backyard. It's good to incorporate as many environmentally-friendly features as you can.

A 'rain garden' is specifically designed to have a positive effect on managing stormwater. Using certain drainage methods and specially-chosen plants, the stormwater is both cleaned and reduced in volume.

And no matter what your garden budget, there's no excuse to waste water on the end of a hose. For the relatively low cost of around \$6,000-\$10,000 for a small garden, you can install an irrigation system that links to a stormwater tank. "Good irrigation is critical, especially in the first few years when your garden is getting established," says Nichola.

Plentiful plants

If you're prepared to pay for it, you can grow virtually anything.

"You might have a high density of feature plants, and create a layered effect, which is more expensive to establish," says Nichola. You can also afford to buy very advanced specimens, so your garden will look established from day one. There are even suppliers of ready-formed hedging. Large or unusual specimens will probably be sourced by your team from a specialist 'big tree' company.

A well-designed garden often looks stunning at night when artfully lit. Landscaping specialists can create a lighting plan for you, as well as supply the hardware and electrical services. Kirsty says the current trend for copper accessories and outdoor art is also being seen outdoors.

"You can get beautiful copper or chrome outdoor light fittings for lighting up your feature trees."

Finally, don't forget to budget for ongoing maintenance of your masterpiece garden. "No matter how beautifully designed your garden is, if there's no maintenance, it will eventually fall over," says Kirsten. ■

High end options at a glance

- Aim for a cohesive design that links your garden to the house
- Create a sense of luxury with high-spec materials and features
- To boost your garden's sustainability, consider installing a rain garden
- You may need to factor in ongoing professional garden maintenance

\$100,000 +

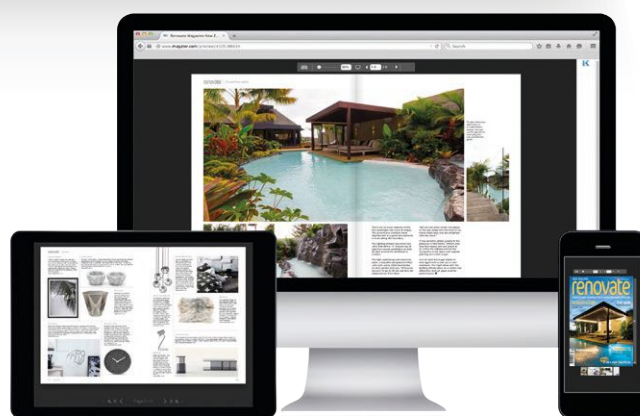


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1. The prizes featured in this magazine are as stated and are not redeemable for cash. 2. Competition entries go from 1 June 2016 to 31 August 2016. The winners will be drawn and notified by phone, or email, and names of the winners may be published in the next issue of Renovate magazine. 4. Entry is open to New Zealand residents only. 5. Staff and immediate families of Traffic New Zealand Limited, advertisers and suppliers are not eligible to enter. 6. All entries become the property of Traffic New Zealand Limited and may be used for promotional purposes. 7. Entry into the draw is deemed acceptance of these terms and conditions. 8. The promoter is Traffic New Zealand Limited, PO Box 37-941, Parnell, Auckland 1151. 9. The decision of the editor is final and no correspondence will be entered into. 10. Products may have been used for reviews or photo shoots. 11. Subscriptions are non-refundable.

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WRITTEN BY
Nicole James

COMPILED BY
Rebecca Sayle



Glowing gem

'Shine bright like a diamond' is made literal with the diamond cut glass lightbulb from Flux Boutique. Straying away from the smooth lines of a traditional bulb – the angles make interesting reflections and adds shine to your interior. Hang them in a cluster for the finest look for just \$39 each. www.fluxboutique.co.nz

Go grey

The fresh designs coming out of The Warehouse are always worth a second look. This Living & Co cushion in Dakota Grey is a stunning example of how the latest trends are becoming available at affordable prices. Pair with other neutrals or get funky with neon pops of colour. Just \$10 from The Warehouse. www.thewarehouse.co.nz



Sleep scandi

Who says pillow cases have to be boring? Design Ministry brings us these bold geometric prints in black and white. Make a statement at the head-of-the-bed (and match with your own duvet cover.) Superette sells the standard pillowcase set for \$95. www.superette.co.nz



Bold beard

This bold mixed media print uses various arrangements of art to create a medley of colour shades. It may not be something for the ultra-conventional home interior – but we say 'go for it' as a focal point for any entranceway or living room. It's a giclee high quality digital print on 300gsm watercolour paper for only \$90 from Ally Mansell. www.allymansell.bigcartel.com

Great galaxy

If you are into collecting stylish mugs for you and your friends to sip out of – the galaxy mug by Rita Mu is something for you. A hand thrown stoneware clay is put together with an unglazed outer surface for a fine-looking raw effect. It's imperfect textured handle makes it the perfect casual mug with a point of difference. Get yours for just \$45 from Hello Polly. www.hellopolly.com.au



Easy elegance

This sustainable bamboo stool with a white UV matte finish top is a perfect, affordable barstool. At just \$50 it makes it easy to get a few matching stools for each of your kid's bedrooms or as plant stand in your living room. Go get your Solano Bamboo Stool from The Warehouse. www.thewarehouse.co.nz



Sit sill

If you are after an industrial or lofty vibe for your home – you can't go past the ladder storage unit. It makes a statement with its beautiful black finish and makes storage easy with the ability to access it at every angle. Store pot plants, candles, vases or our favourite option is to use it as a bookshelf. Freedom Furniture has them for just \$89. www.freedomfurniture.co.nz

Real raw

Raw concrete is in. Whether it's unpolished concrete floors, a one-off feature wall in your home, a concrete textured kitchen bench, or concrete accents to decorate your space – they all ooze industrial style. The Clock Concrete from Flux Boutique is an affordable way to introduce it into your interior for just \$50. www.fluxboutique.co.nz



Cool collapse

A design to make your life that little bit easier. In a solid NZ pine wood – the Harvey fold away seat is there for when you need some extra seats and packs away flat for when you don't need it or require extra room. Great for small spaces and can be used as a table as well. The natural finish will brighten up any room and can be yours for just \$95 from Mood Store. www.moodstore.co.nz



Yellow yarn

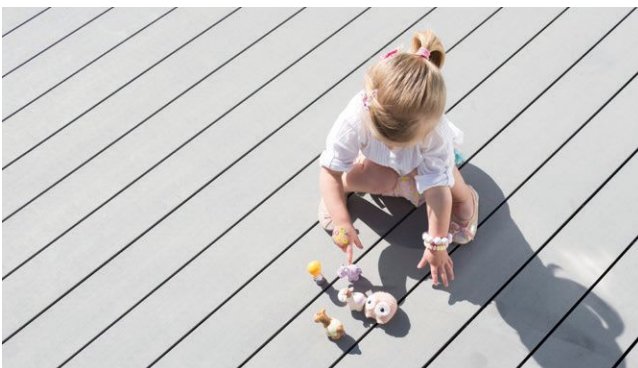
It's not often that we go daringly bold. But a splash of rich earthy ochre is harmless in our eyes. With a muted mustard tone – it will look glorious in your living space. The not-so-chunky knitted throw finished with a tassel fringing to add a layer of interest. For only \$99 you can get the Coleman throw from Freedom Furniture. www.freedomfurniture.co.nz



Under foot

‘Solid composite decking’ and ‘porcelain stoneware pavers’ are the latest buzzwords when it comes to low-maintenance, long-wearing outdoor flooring solutions. Here’s why they are all the rage.

ARTICLE Anya Kussler IMAGES BiForm and The Tile Depot



Composite decking

Composite decking, an alternative to wooden decking, has been used in countries like the US and Canada for around 30 years and has recently been introduced into New Zealand and Australia. Consisting of a combination of recycled wood fibres and recycled plastic (usually at a 50:50 ratio), composite decking is super-robust and resistant to decay, giving it a much longer lifespan than wooden decks.

BiForm solid composite decking, available as boards and tiles, is a premium, eco-friendly composite flooring product that's also super low-maintenance.

Being 'solid', it won't crack, warp or move like many of the hollow products on the market – and, unlike timber decking, it comes in a range of prefabricated natural timber colours, so there's no need to stain or paint it. Better still: it's easy to clean, and the only TLC it needs is a few soap washes per year.

One of BiForm's main points of difference is that their products were specifically developed to withstand the high UV conditions in New Zealand and Australia. BiForm Managing Director Tau Aupa'au explains: "The plastic content is the key here – our products contain only 30 per cent

recycled HDPE plastic, compared with the standard 50 per cent."

And the proof that their formula works is in the 'decking'. Following extensive testing by the Building Research Association of New Zealand (BRANZ), BiForm is currently the only BRANZ-appraised composite decking product – and one that carries a 25-year transferable warranty to give consumers the security that it will last the distance.

What's special, too, is that BiForm was created to help save the rainforest, and with human safety and the health in mind. "Our products are made from 60 per cent waste timber fibre – offcuts





that have been ground to powder – so no trees have to be cut down,” Tau says.

What’s more, it’s slip-resistant (making it ideal for entrance ways), plus it contains mould inhibitors and is free from formaldehyde and other harmful chemicals found in treated timber. “And you don’t have to worry about nails popping up and potentially hurting someone,” Tau adds. “That’s because a hidden clip fixing system holds the boards together, and it’s also easier and quicker to install than timber.”

BiForm solid composite decking boards come in two sizes and six versatile natural timber colours, ranging from a light driftwood colour to warmer hues like cedar, while the tiles are available in three shades.

Suitable for any outdoor area, the boards can be installed straight on to a timber structure or butanol waterproof membrane.

The tiles, in particular, are an ideal choice for an apartment, especially ones with multiple balconies and a lack of proper deck space. They consist of a plastic underside base made with inbuilt connecting tabs that are quick and easy to install via a ‘quick-click’ system.

Porcelain stoneware pavers

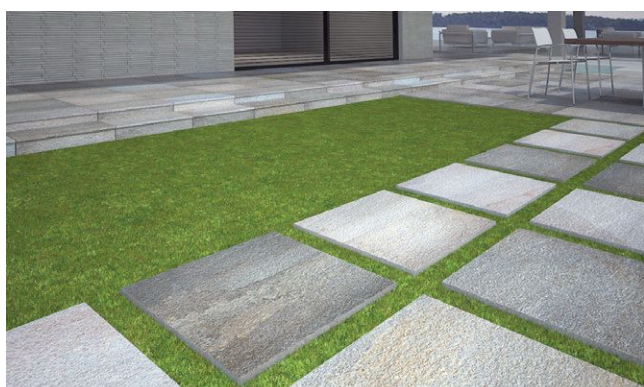
An elegant alternative to traditional concrete or expensive high-maintenance stone pavers – 20mm porcelain stoneware pavers are slowly but surely coming of age since they

emerged around six years ago. Slip-resistant and extra-durable, they’re easy to install and maintain, and they’re also extremely versatile.

You can use them in all exterior residential applications, be it to frame your swimming pool, or make your terrace or driveway look the part. “The 20mm profile is also great for creating a seamless indoor-outdoor flow,” adds Mike Sydall, General Manager of leading NZ tile supplier, The Tile Depot.

The tiles can be installed by dry-laying them onto gravel or sand, as pavers onto grass, or onto an elevated deck jack system.

“These options make it easy to change the design and re-install the tiles,”



Mike explains. "And dry-laying them prevents efflorescence, mildew and mould from forming, so they're easy to maintain." In order to create a more permanent floor there's also a fourth option: to install the tiles using traditional adhesives.

The tiles are made from ultra-fine clay and are inherently non-porous due to their high density, which makes them highly resistant to stains, water and wear and tear.

Their 20mm thickness also means they can handle high pressure and makes them ideal for any exterior applications and heavy pedestrian traffic. They don't require sealing either, and can easily be cleaned with a broom and a hose.

In terms of cost, 20mm porcelain tiles are dearer than concrete pavers, but far more affordable than, for example, natural stone products.

"Thanks to digital inkjet technology, there are now more stone replicas on the market that have the low-maintenance benefits of porcelain," Mike explains. "As long as you can prepare a flat surface on your back lawn, you can transform your yard one porcelain paver at a time." ■

A new approach to decking



Mid Grey



Cedar Brown



Driftwood



Chocolate



Camo Grey



Camo Brown

Decks designed for New Zealand conditions

BiForm Solid Composite Decking has been specifically developed for New Zealand's harsh weather conditions.

Combining timber and plastic, it brings out the best of both elements, creating a durable decking alternative that is built to outlast and out perform regular decking timber. No oiling staining or painting required.

As New Zealand's leading supplier of composite decking, BiForm is pleased to offer our transferable 25 year limited warranty.

Why Choose BiForm?	bi form	Timber
Low-maintenance	✓	✗
No need to stain or oil	✓	✗
Branz Appraised	✓	✗
UV-tested and resistant	✓	✗
Environmentally friendly	✓	✗
Won't crack or warp	✓	✗
Uniform length	✓	✗
Hidden fixing system	✓	✗
Anti-fungal	✓	✗
Family safe (no splinters)	✓	✗

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COMPILED BY Rebecca Sayle

1.



2.



3.

4.



5.



6.

7.



8.

Marble accessories

1. Marble candle with copper lid, \$89, Hardtofind www.hardtofind.com.au | 2. Marble wall clock, \$679, Mildred&Co www.mildredandco.com | 3. "Forrest floor" art print, €89, Silkebonde www.silkebonde.dk | 4. Axis side table, \$650, Weekend Trader www.weekendtrader.net | 5. Copper box with marble lid, \$32, Urban Home www.urbanhome.co.nz | 6. The basic step, \$189, Superette www.superette.co.nz | 7. Marble round tray, \$310, Mildred&Co www.mildredandco.com | 8. Square carrara marble coasters and copper nest, €27.51, Etsy www.etsy.com



Industrial designs

1. Light bulb string, \$69, Urban Home www.urbanhome.co.nz | 2. Mayson Coffee Table, \$599, Freedom Furniture www.freedomfurniture.co.nz
 3. Chunk concrete candleholder, \$125, Mildred&Co www.mildredandco.com | 4. Oscar table lamp, \$129.95, Milk & Sugar
www.milkandsugar.com.au | 5. Concrete cube stool/table, \$179, Indie Home Collective www.indiehomecollective.com | 6. Industrial
 clothing rack, \$260, George & Willy www.georgeandwilly.com | 7. Tractor stool, \$199, Freedom Furniture www.freedomfurniture.co.nz

The insiders guide:

Building a timber fence

Standing between you and the outside world, a strong and sturdy fence will protect your property and help create your own personal haven.

ARTICLE Stephanie Matheson



What's involved when building a simple timber fence?

Step 1

Once your landscaping specialist has established your boundary line, your landscaping specialist will set up a string line attached to pegs.

Step 2

The end post positions will be selected, post holes dug to an adequate depth and posts fixed into place by adding concrete. Your landscaper will ensure they are set on a base of gravel.

Step 3

Your landscaper will attach the rails, either between the posts or to the face of the posts and will need three rails if the fence is higher than around 1.2 metres.

Step 4

The palings will be nailed on to the rails, with or without spaces as per your fence style. It's important to use a string line at the top of the palings and your landscaper will ensure that the palings are level and plumb.

Different types/options

Most fences are built from timber and are either left to grey naturally, stained or painted. A host of different styles are available, but the most common type is a simple post and paling fence. Other options include tongue and groove fences, stone walls and metal fences.

What to be aware of

When choosing your fence design, there are certain points to consider including issues around privacy, boundary definitions, legal obligations and council requirements. You will have to consult with your neighbours on how the fence should look and be installed if it's a shared boundary.

Glossary of terms:

Posts

Fence posts are concreted into the ground to hold up the fence.

Rails

Rails are attached to the posts horizontally and make up the structure of the fence that the boards or palings can be nailed on to. Rails can be fixed between the posts or on their face.

Palings

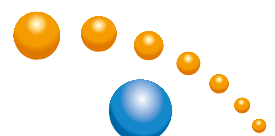
The front facing boards that make up the fence are called palings.

Battens

Some fences have thin lengths of wood (battens) nailed over the gaps between the palings.



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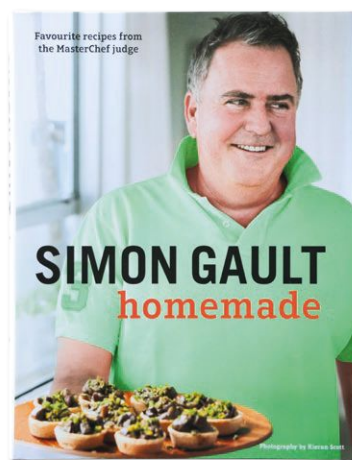
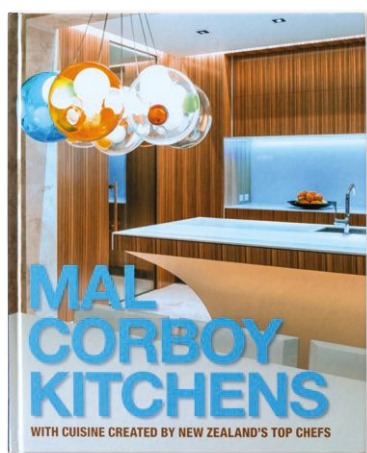


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Mal Corboy Kitchens

By Mal Corboy
RRP: \$60.00
Mal Corboy 2014
www.malcorboy.com

Mal Corboy is Perth-born Auckland resident award-winning kitchen designer – and coincidentally a good friend with MasterChef NZ judge and restaurant owner Simon Gault. They have paired together to produce a book of inspirational kitchen designs completed in parts of New Zealand and Australia, complemented nicely with beautiful succulent dish recipes from Simon and his team of chefs.

Mal Corboy shows his signature style with well-placed functional yet ambient LED lighting, seamless cabinetry and storage, along with splashes of colour to liven up the space for cooking.

We like its multi-purpose approach. Use it as a book for your coffee table or recipe book propped on your window sill.

Reviewed by Nicole James

Simon Gault homemade

By Simon Gault
RRP: \$60.00
Penguin Books New Zealand
www.penguin.co.nz

As one of the judges of MasterChef New Zealand and owner of multiple award-winning restaurants - Euro and Jervois Steak House just to name two - Simon Gault has a wide range of experience when it comes to cooking and food.

Producing dishes ranging from delicate and tasty tapas right through to mouth-watering steak, Simon has put together a bunch of recipes that will provide an impressive restaurant result, while not taking too much time in the kitchen away from your family.

Get cooking and prepare your next dinner party with one of Simon's favourite dishes!

Reviewed by Nicole James

Read more book reviews and enter online to be in to win a copy of our featured books at www.renovate-mag.com.



Kitchen Kulture

RRP: \$115.00

Gestalten

www.shop.gestalten.com

What do we get out of this beautiful publication? The kitchen is now the new living room. Seeing the ongoing and developing trend of the kitchen being the hub of the home – Kitchen Kulture shows us the way in which we can bring better food experiences with family and friends through kitchen design layouts with multi-functional spaces to cater to varying homes.

From vintage and rustic through to industrial and modern styles – Kitchen Kulture have it down with flawless imagery and unique ideas to show you the full potential of what a twenty-first century kitchen can bring to your lifestyle.

Reviewed by Nicole James

Contemporary living space

By Gingko Press

RRP: \$89.99

Sandu Publishing Co. Ltd

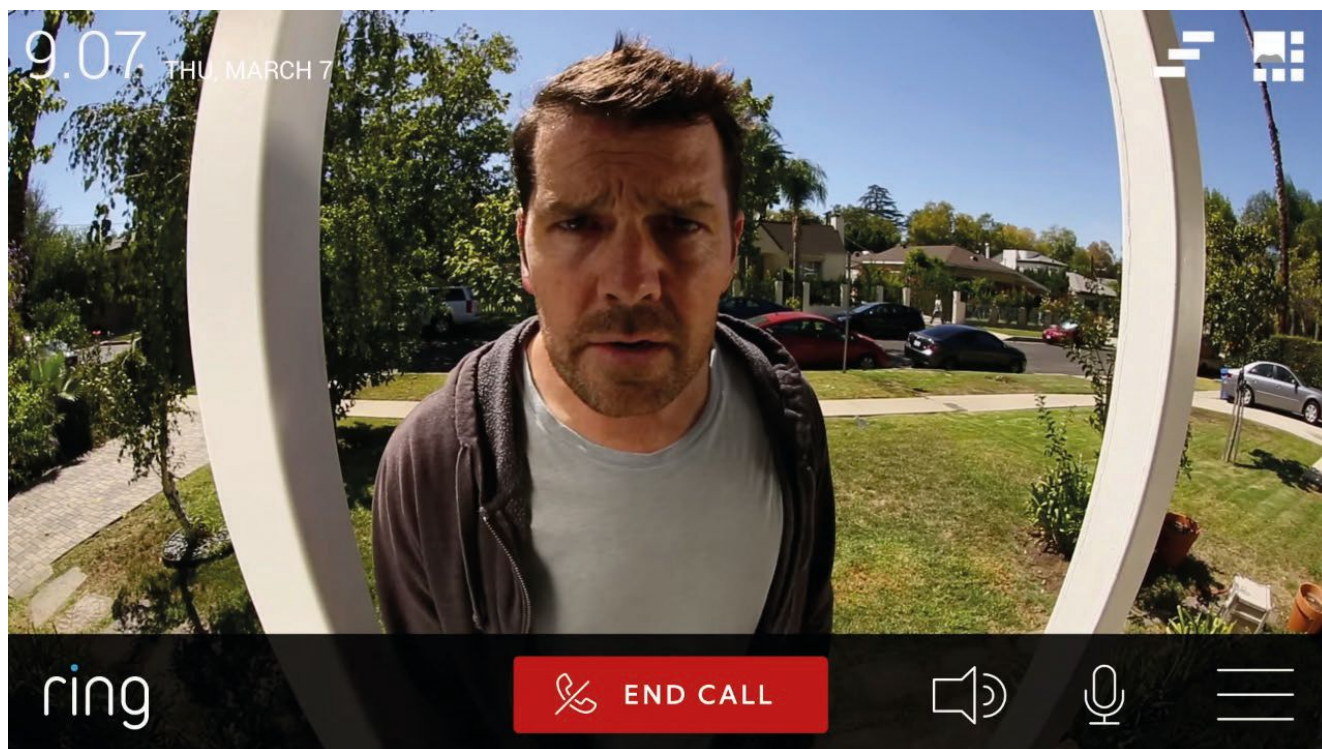
www.sandupublishing.com

Portugal architect João Tiago Aguiar introduces this gorgeous contemporary book discussing the “general economic chaos” that has led homeowners in all parts of the world to not sell and move, but further remodel and refurbish apartments and one or two-level homes that people already have today.

You can see how architects are adapting to this new way of thinking by flicking through each page, looking at plans and awe-inspiring photographs of apartments, office buildings, housing blocks, and commercial units being refurbished and transformed into modern and contemporary living spaces by “renowned professionals worldwide”.

It's amazing to see how architecture and design is transforming - home by home.

Reviewed by Nicole James



Answer your doorbell using your smartphone from anywhere in the world

Product Review

ARTICLE Gareth Poley

Meet Ring, a video doorbell that lets you to stay connected to your home – even when you’re not there, or if you’re like me, would sometimes rather not go downstairs to meet the unsolicited person at the front door.

We live in a world where everyday appliances and devices are getting smarter - our homes are becoming more connected and automated, so why should the humble doorbell be any different?

I am trying to think of the best way to sum up what Ring has done to the doorbell as we know it and all I keep thinking about is the show, “Pimp my ride” - Ring has seriously “Pimped my doorbell”.

No longer does my doorbell just ring the chime in the hallway when someone presses it - it now has HD video, motion sensors and many more bells and whistles that until recently I never even realised I needed.

I have been using the Ring Video Doorbell for a little over a month now and here are some of my favourite features.

Answer your doorbell anywhere

Now no matter where we are in the world (provided we have an internet connection), when anyone pushes the



door bell it alerts everyone in the house on our iPhones and Apple watches.

There have been two particularly interesting times when this has been useful...I was once out walking our dog, Sailor, when our food delivery arrived

twenty minutes early. When they rang the doorbell, it alerted me on my phone and I was able to chat with him and let him know to please wait and I will be home really soon. When I arrived from behind him walking up the driveway, you could tell he was confused. No my friend, teleportation has not been invented, but video streaming doorbells have!

A friend of mine was in Sydney too when a courier arrived - he was able to answer the doorbell and chat to the courier man standing at the front door through the doorbell from Sydney – Isn’t that neat?

Easy installation

It couldn’t have taken me longer than twenty minutes from unboxing to using the Ring Video Doorbell. I got some serious man points around the house for my DIY skills, but if I am honest, it’s the team at Ring who deserve the kudos for making it so easy.

When you open the box, you will find not only the Video Doorbell, but a very handy

little toolkit including a mounting bracket, spirit level, screwdriver, drill bit, micro USB charging cable and of course the screws and anchors.

Ring impressed me right from the start; I have never received a product with such an impressive tool kit to help with installation.



Ring comes with a complimentary tool kit

The team at Ring have really given a lot of thought into simplifying the process for getting started which creates a really good first impression. Simply download the iOS app (also available for Android) and connect the Ring Video Doorbell to the Wi-Fi network using the app. Once set up on your iPhone, it instantly downloads the app to your Apple Watch and configures itself there too...smart!

If you have an existing doorbell hard wired to your home, pop that off and connect the existing wires to the Ring Video Doorbell, and affix the video doorbell to the wall or door frame. You're now set up and ready to go!

When someone pushes the doorbell, it will still chime using your existing doorbell chime in your home, but it will now also alert you on your smart phones and smart watch too if you have one.



If you do not have existing doorbell wiring in place, no need to worry, you don't have to pay an electrician to add wiring to your home as the doorbell can be used on battery mode.

From what I can tell, the only feature that you do not have access to if you don't hardwire the video doorbell, is Liveview. So if being able to open up the camera at any time without waiting for someone to press the doorbell is important to you, you may want to fork out to get the wiring done.

Liveview

Liveview was released shortly after I started using the video doorbell, and to be honest, when we set it up, it was a feature that was lacking at first.

If your Ring Video Doorbell gets stolen, don't worry - Ring will replace it... for free!

Every single one of us in the house commented that this product is awesome...BUT it would be so much better if it could be turned on at any time without having to wait for someone to ring the doorbell or set off the motion sensor, so we were all very pleased when they made the announcement about the new feature.

Now we can be anywhere in the world and use our doorbells built in camera to check on our property - essentially using the camera on the doorbell as an IP security surveillance camera.

Motion detection

Not everyone presses the doorbell so it's good that Ring have added the motion sensor to alert us when there is activity outside the home even if the person does not press the button.

When I have used other IP cameras in

the past, I have been inundated with alerts no matter how many times I tweaked the sensitivity settings to a point where I would turn the alerts off.

But Ring is different - Ring has got it right, we only get the motion alerts when there actually is motion and not only that, we can set up zones that we would like the camera to monitor and alert us to only when there is motion in that zone.

This is useful for example if the street is in view of the camera, you wouldn't want to get an alert every time a car drives past your house. You're able to exclude that section of view from the sensor and instead have it only alert you if someone is actually on your door step or in your front garden #KeepOffTheGrass.

Night vision

Imagine being home alone at night and answering the door in complete safety and comfort. With Ring's built-in night vision and HD camera you will have a clear view of who is at the door any time day or night.

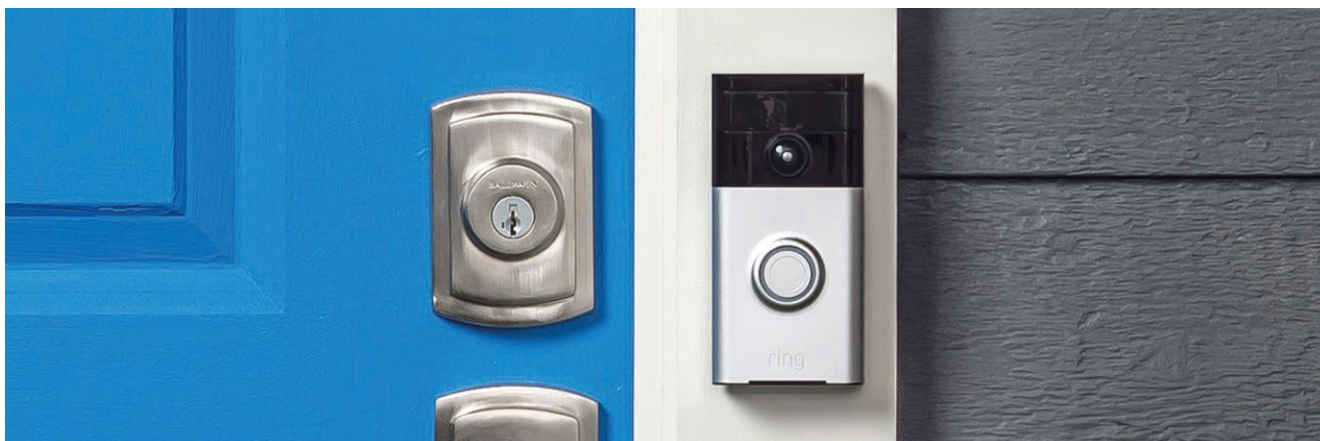
Multiple users

Once you have set up your new video doorbell, Ring offers you the option to invite more people to use the app by simply entering their email address.

I sent the invitation to everybody who lives at the house and did not need to assist them with setting it up on their phones - the links and information provided in the welcome email are clear enough for them to work it out on their own in a matter of minutes.

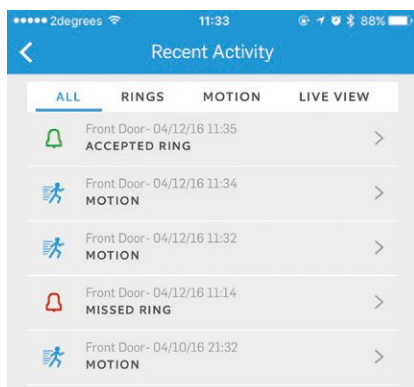
Cloud storage backups

I quite like this feature, it allows us the ability to look back on video clips of people who were at the front door with peace of mind knowing that the clips are securely stored in the cloud should we need them to share with the police or neighbourhood watch...or in our case with friends when they're funny - and it's surprising just how many funny



occurrences you would have missed being away from home and not having one of these installed.

Although the cloud storage feature is a paid option, currently it will only set you back \$3 per month; so for what it offers, I'd say it is a worthwhile investment.



Look back on recent activity to share any incidents with police, neighbourhood watch or friends and family

Lifetime purchase protection

For some, there may be a bit of apprehension to install a doorbell that costs close to \$400 on the front of the property in clear site for burglars to see.

Never fear though as the Ring Video Doorbell attaches to its mounting plate using proprietary screws for security - someone would need to have a special screwdriver to fit these screws to be able to remove it undamaged from your house.

Furthermore, if your video doorbell gets stolen, don't worry - Ring will replace it. For free.

HD Camera - 720P

Have you ever seen news reporting, "Have you seen this person" while showing a picture of nothing more than pixels and thought to yourself: "My phone takes clearer pictures than bank's surveillance camera!" Great news, the Ring Video Doorbell is equipped with a 720p HD Video Camera to record clear footage of people on your property.

If you take a look at the Ring website, you can view videos from actual Ring customers where the video captured has been useful to share with local law enforcement.

www.ring.com/cloud-recording

Find out more

The Ring Video Doorbell is available at Harvey Norman and Placemakers stores nationwide and online, as well as online with Noel Leeming.

The RRP is \$399.95 per unit.

Website: www.ring.com

View more product reviews at www.renovate-mag.com

Home Security Tips

Snap - Free Online Asset List

When claiming insurance you must be able to prove you owned any stolen items claimed for. Keep receipts, warranties, valuations and a list of serial numbers in a safe place.

Better still - create and store an asset list of property serial numbers! Snap is a free online asset list tool that allows you to access your serial number list, from anywhere, at any time should you need it. Recording serial numbers in advance offers peace of mind if burglary occurs. It can assist the police and your contents insurance claim, and makes it easier to track your stolen property.

Take photographs or videos of jewellery, art works and other precious things.

Read more online at: www.snap.org.nz

Identify and mark your valuables

Burglars are less likely to steal items that are permanently marked because they're hard to sell. Engrave valuable items with your drivers licence number, car registration number or phone number.

If you have engraved your valuable property or recorded the serial numbers of items, Neighbourhood Support can provide you with a warning sticker to put on a window. The sticker will discourage most criminals from taking your property because they know there is a greater risk of getting caught or traced if they handle and attempt to sell identifiable goods.

Read more online: www.ns.org.nz



Ring Video Doorbells are available in a range of faceplate finishes to match your homes style

Renovate Directory

A **Aeroviews** www.aeroviews.co.uk

Allegion www.allegion.com

Ally Mansell www.allymansell.bigcartel.com

Aura Home www.aurahome.com.au

Austin Maynard Architects www.maynardarchitects.com

B **BiForm Decks** www.biform.co.nz

Billy Wolf www.billywolfnyc.com

Blush Flowers www.blush.co.nz

Brio www.brionz.com

BRITA www.betterwithbrita.com

C **Carly Flynn** www.carlyflynn.com

Central Heating NZ www.centralheating.co.nz

Citta Design www.cittadesign.com

Country Road www.countryroad.com.au

D **Devi Heating Systems** www.devi.co.nz

E **Endemicworld** www.endemicworld.com

Ewing & Co www.ewingandcodesign.com

Etsy www.etsy.com

F **Flux Boutique** www.fluxboutique.co.nz

Freedom Furniture www.freedomfurniture.co.nz

G **Gestalten** www.shop.gestalten.com

H **Hardtofind** www.hardtofind.com.au

Heat Pump City www.heatpumpcity.co.nz

Hello Polly www.hellopolly.com.au

Home Ideas Centre www.homeideas.co.nz

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Houzz www.houzz.com.au

Hunting for George www.huntingforgeorge.com

I **Indie Home Collective** www.indiehomecollective.com

InSinkErator www.insinkerator.co.nz

K **Kirsten Sach Landscape Design Ltd**

www.kslandscapes.co.nz

M **MAKE Architecture** www.makearchitecture.com.au

Mal Corboy www.malcorboy.com

Master Plumbers www.masterplumbers.org.nz

Mastercraft Kitchens www.mastercraft.co.nz

M **Mildred&Co** www.mildredandco.com

Milk & Sugar www.milkandsugar.com.au

N **Niven Choi** www.nivenchoi.com

NZ Sauna www.nzsauna.co.nz

O **Overall Photography** www.overallphotography.com.au

P **Parex Industries** www.parex.co.nz

Parnell Gallery www.parnellgallery.co.nz

Penguin Books www.penguin.co.nz

PSP Limited www.psp.co.nz

R **Refresh Renovations** www.refreshrenovations.com

Renovate Magazine www.renovate-mag.com

Republic Home www.republichome.com

Rhianna May www.rhiannamay.co.nz

RING www.ring.com

Robertson Bathware www.robertson.co.nz

Roomie NZ www.roomie.co.nz

S **Sandu Publishing** www.sandupublishing.com

Schweigen www.schweigen.com.au

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Slowdown Studio www.slowdownstudio.com

Solarcity www.solarcity.co.nz

Stuart + Carlyon www.stuartcarlyon.co.nz

Superette www.superette.co.nz

T **Tal Engel** www.talengel.com

The Fireplace www.thefireplace.co.nz

The Market NZ www.themarketnz.com

The Mood Store www.moodstore.co.nz

The Tile Depot www.tiledepot.co.nz

The Warehouse www.thewarehouse.co.nz

U **Urban Home** www.urbanhome.co.nz

USGBC www.usgbc.org

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Weekend Trader www.weekendtrader.net

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WINTER

PROPERTY MAINTENANCE

The House

- Keep your home healthy by ensuring it is well ventilated; open windows daily to keep fresh air circulating and to release stale air. A well ventilated home will reduce condensation, which causes mildew. Installing a heating unit will also help to minimise condensation and any related problems.
- If your home is prone to condensation, open cabinet doors (under the sink etc) overnight to allow warm air to circulate.
- Check that your hot water cylinder has a cylinder wrap. If not, cover your cylinder with an old blanket to retain heat. Wrap pipes with heat tape or similar to insulate.
- On a windy day, check your home for air leaks, particularly around windows and doors. Use a lighter, match or a stick of incense to locate a breeze. As a temporary measure leaks can be caulked; however, long term window framing may need to be replaced.
- If cold air leaches in under your front or back door, add a new door sweep.
- Monitor your guttering and downspouts for any sign of damage, particularly after a storm. Remember to also keep an eye on roofing and gutters on garden sheds, freestanding garages etc.
- Keep a check on drains, ensuring they do not block, as water must always flow freely away from your home.
- While winter is typically not the best season for painting your home, it's wonderful to add a splash of colour at this time of year. It's usually easy to book in a professional painter as their work slows down in winter. Alternatively, you could paint a couple of rooms yourself. However, adequate ventilation is imperative, so choose rooms that you can easily close off.
- Retouch and spot paint walls an interior doors where required with previously-used leftover paint.
- Consider replacing any broken or outdated light shades – it's a relatively inexpensive alteration, which can instantly modernise your home.
- Repair leaking outdoor taps.

Garden

- Stake all plants (if you haven't already done so) in high wind zones.
- Make repairs to supporting structures used for runner beans, peas, tomatoes etc, in readiness for spring.
- Remove any tree branches broken in winter storms. Ensure plants, which come in contact with your home, are kept in check.
- Bring your lawn mower undercover for servicing. An older mower will benefit from a rust treatment, adding years to its life.
- Start planning your spring and summer garden and research the types of seeds and plants you may want to get.

General lifestyle

- Refresh window wiper blades on your car and replenish washer fluid. Ensure that only washer fluid is used, as it doesn't freeze.
- Avoid accidents on slippery pathways by replacing bulbs in exterior lights as soon as they expire.
- Replenish your home emergency kit as required.
- Cover outdoor furniture or store it in a garage or shed. Consider installing an outdoor heater so you can sit outside and make the most of early spring evenings. 

Home is where the hearth is



Are you into the modern gas fire flames? Or more for the traditional open fire wood? Duncan Stuart shares with us his experiences of do's and don'ts.

COLUMN by Duncan Stuart

When it comes to home heating, I'm a sucker for open fireplaces. I don't mean those modern ones with the ceramic logs and the instant ignition at the touch of a button; I mean any good old-fashioned wood-burning fire, which takes half an hour to get started. It's a primal thing; man and fire. I love the crackle and drama of a fire as it roars into life, burns brightly, then subsides gently into glowing embers.

A hundred years ago, when I was 10, it was often my job as a kid to bring in the firewood and get the fire started. First I would tear and crumple newspapers and lay them across the bottom of the grate. Next the twigs and kindling. Now for a couple of artfully placed smallish logs of sweet smelling macrocarpa or pine. I was ready.

Now the ceremony of the beehive matches, snicking a redheaded match against the striker pad. It would flare with its diabolical sulphurous tang. Quickly, I would light the edges of the crumpled up Howick Post and watch as the orange and blue flames ate gradually at the edges.

It was like watching the opening credits of Bonanza.

Gathering heat, and momentum, the flames would start attacking the twigs and kindling, and now these too would be devoured. By now the fire was beginning to roar, and with that roar came the sizzle of the damp logs. Yet I knew precisely how much kindling to stock in the grate, and how much it would take for the fire to gradually, inevitable, claim the heart and soul of those logs.

Or at least I thought I did. In reality about 50 per cent of the time those logs never caught. Running out of kindling I would begin to anxiously peel bark off the macrocarpa and add these gummy strips to the remnants of the fire.

"You got the fire lit yet?" asked mum from the kitchen. "Just about!" I would confidently reply.

By now the fireplace was a smoky mess of twiggy embers, and if it was blowing a southerly outside, then half the smoke was puffing out from the fireplace and into the living room: huge wafting clouds of sour newspaper fumes.

It wasn't always this way of course, but my fire lighting failures occurred just often enough for me to never, ever, forget.

Yet in 2003 I did forget. We had purchased a villa to renovate, and we prized the Victorian brick fireplace. We even did the right thing, which before September 2005, was to buy a steel open fronted fireplace that complied in terms of thermal efficiency.

But I remember distinctly the winter's day we first lit the fire. Naturally I assumed the job, and put my extensive experience of fire lighting to the task.

It wasn't blowing a southerly that day, it wasn't blowing at all. What I'd forgotten was that the fireplace had an adjustable flue vent, and you had to open it up wide when you lit the fire, then gradually close it down as the fire grew hotter and less smoky. Doing it properly meant that the modern fireplace would throw cascades of warm air back into the lounge: an invisible upwards Niagara of heat.

But that first time, I threw the lever into the wrong direction. It was like learning to drive and trying to take off in top gear. The fire coughed, threw a billow of smoke, and for a week the stench of burnt newspapers pervaded our freshly renovated home.

We got better at it, and enjoyed many beautiful evenings mesmerised by the crackle of macrocarpa and, later, the glowing embers that marked bedtime.

Modern closed wood burners are more efficient. And those gas burning faux fireplaces are almost as good as the real thing, and don't spit dangerous sparks onto the living room rug. Underfloor heating has no mess, and no drama, and the whole house gets heated evenly and comfortably. With modern systems you don't have venting issues or the build-up of damp.

But those evenings of playing cards with Dad by the shimmering glow of the flames, or toasting marshmallows on a stick on a winter's night while listening to Pete Sinclair count down the Top 20: these are magic memories. I doubt I would have had these if we had had a heating system compliant and approved by today's local council. ■

"...those evenings of playing cards with Dad by the shimmering glow of the flames, or toasting marshmallows on a stick on a winter's night..."



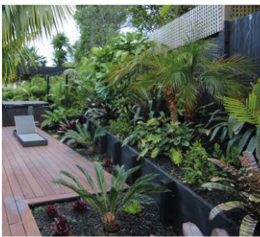
Zones - Landscaping Specialists

Zones can provide you with landscaping solutions that are designed to enhance the things you love to do outside. Whether it's cooking or eating outside with friends and family, playing backyard cricket with the kids, reading a book in the sun, or pottering around the garden, we can design and build a landscape to suit.

Landscape design



Planting



Lawns



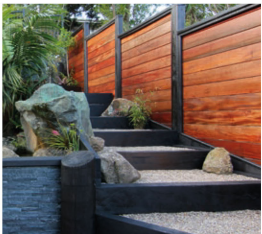
Decks





Other solutions to enhance your lifestyle could include outdoor rooms and kitchens, gardens and planting, a new deck or patio, swimming pool, new lawn, driveway, irrigation or rainwater systems, retaining walls or fencing. We can also maintain your outdoor zones with a friendly and professional service customised to your needs.

Fencing



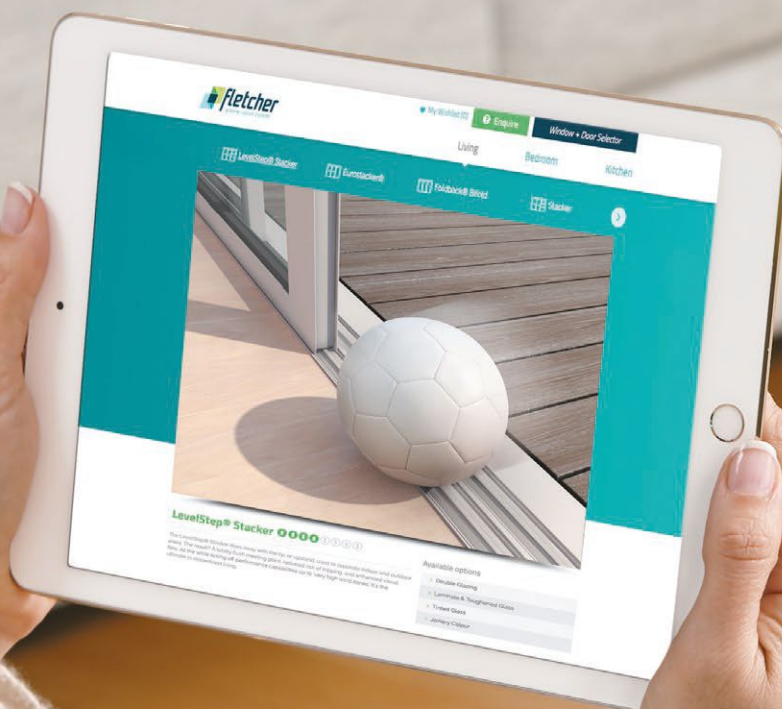
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