

TAKING THE LEAP

With a brilliant Golden Bay site and an eye towards retirement, Nelson architect David Jerram enjoys the all-too-rare luxury of designing a home for himself and his family.

TEXT GERARD HINDMARSH PHOTOGRAPHY PAUL MCCREDIE



INSIDE

PICTURE PERFECT
Jerram had the luxury of time on this project. He and wife Liz bought the property nine years ago, for its incredible views over the Tata Islands to Farewell Spit and its easy access to the safe, golden sandy beach below.

It's often said that the homes architects design for themselves are the true expression of their creativity, unfettered by the usual constraints of client demands and tight timeframes. This has certainly been the case for David Jerram of Nelson architects Jerram, Tocker + Barron, who last year won a regional architecture award for this Golden Bay beach house. In their award citation, the New Zealand Institute of Architects described the home as "a bold response to a prominent site ... an experimental project, combining passive solar principles and boyhood fantasies to create a unique holiday house".



HOT COLOURS Above The surrounding pohutukawa and eucalyptus trees provided the red and orange colour inspiration for the interior. The kitchen is dominated by a shiny red splashback and the touches of strong colour continue through the dining and living area.

Jerram, his wife Liz and their two sons are regular visitors to Tata Beach. They bought the property on an elevated, bush-clad section with views over the Tata Islands to Farewell Spit and back onto the estuary and hills behind, nine years ago. David initially thought about altering the existing 1990s house, but finally decided to shift it off the site and start anew. Progress was slow, but on reflection, Jerram says that wasn't a bad thing. "We had no time constraints," he says, "so I kept putting the project aside for paid work, which proved a plus in the end because it let me re-define my ideas until I knew what I wanted."

When Jerram was ready in March 2007, he engaged local builder Simon Grant, removed the old house, and construction of the new 260 square-metre house started. While many houses with stunning

views are visually intrusive, Jerram used a number of techniques to ensure his house sits lightly upon the hillside and blends in with the bush backdrop. The layout has been deliberately angled and fractured, a technique often used in camouflage, while the roof is twisted and broken in two so it can't be visually interpreted as a large expanse. "Even the over-hanging eaves are deliberately thin to ensure a feeling of lightness," explains Jerram. "Overall, the roof could be interpreted as two large leaves that have gently settled upon the hillside."

Jerram kept many traditional bach features like exposed concrete block walls and pared-back interiors. The layout is based around walls which progressively angle towards the Tata islands and views to the beach, while the roof angles up to let in

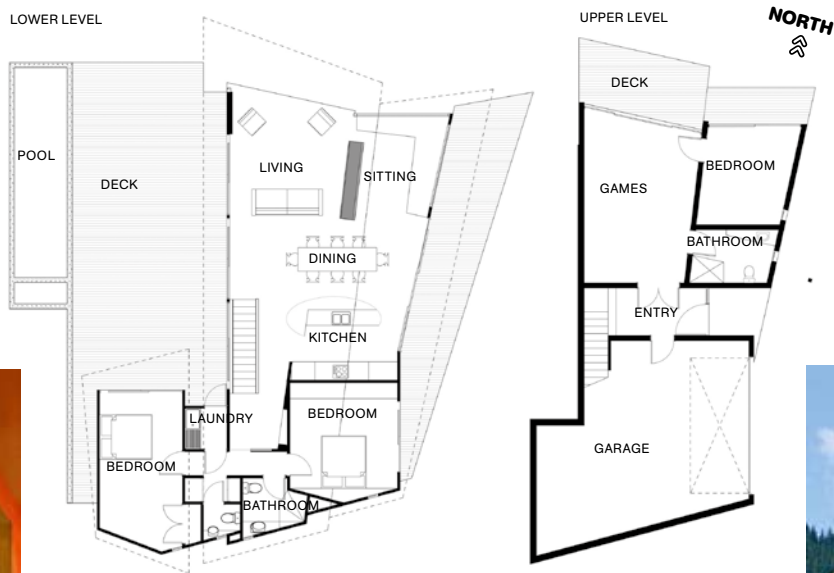


With its prominent site and spectacular vistas David's design needed to make the most of the view without being dominated by it

INSIDE



SNAPSHOTS Clockwise from top left Black is the predominant interior colour to foil the high levels of light that flood the house; the steel balustrade is a series of panels that will age??;the roof lifts gently towards the sea and north. Jerram relaxes on his sheltered deck; stairs lead down to a separate lower level featuring bedroom, bathroom and family room.



INSIDE



the last of the evening sun and follow the slope of the hillside behind. It also lifts gently towards the sea and the north.

Downstairs a double garage, entrance, family room, bedroom and bathroom were designed as an independent area for visitors and extended family. In the upstairs living area, floor-to-ceiling picture windows are tilted outwards to avoid reflections when viewed from the sea, giving the house a greater sense of transparency. Black is the predominant shade for the main living room and is a foil to the high levels of light and colour that flood the house. "The windows let in so much light, the black compensates for it and frames the views," Jerram says. "At night you are bathed in pools of light amongst complete darkness without any distraction. It's wonderful." The highlights of bright colour earned the house a Resene Colour Award, and red and orange match the flowers of the pohutukawa and ficafolia eucalyptus trees.

Sustainability was an important consideration and polished concrete floors and block walls provide thermal mass in north-facing rooms, augmented by double-glazing and insulation, supplemented by a heat pump for cold, cloudy days. Exterior and interior linings are Hoop pine and plywood and joinery timber is either plywood or plantation-grown Tasmanian Blackwood. All the house's water comes from the roof, stored in tanks and fed through taps that are low-flow and water-efficient. Roof mounted solar panels heat the pool water too.

Jerram says he learnt a valuable lesson doing his own place. "I'm always telling my clients, 'be realistic about budget!' This place ended up costing us more than we initially thought," he says. Liz Jerram points out there have been a lot of pleasant surprises too, like how much they've used the pool and outside shower. "It'll be our permanent home when we retire. We're so lucky to get what we both really wanted." •

BED, BATH & BEYOND
 Above left ???
 Centre The main bedroom
 opens onto a deck ???
 Right The windows were
 angled to avoid reflection
 when viewed from the sea.