

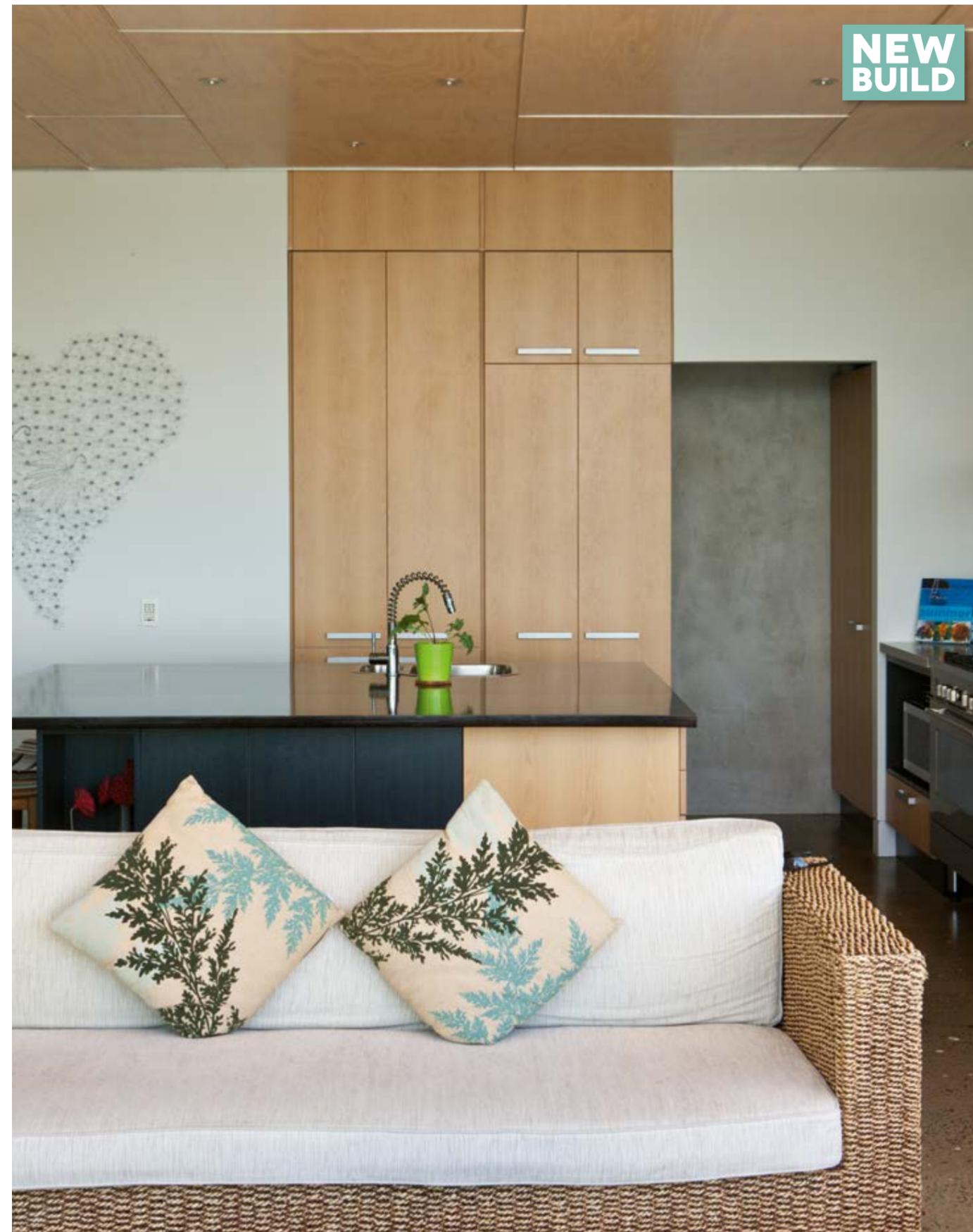
# FORWARD FOCUS

Some thought they were nuts to build on their hillside site, but this Wellington couple let that slide

Text by **Sharon Stephenson**. Photography by **Nicola Edmonds**.



**Right** On a clear day you can see all the way to Matiu/Somes Island and the Hutt Valley. **Opposite** The beach-inspired sofa and chairs were found at the Heartlands store in nearby Miramar while the striking wire artwork is from South Island artist Sandra McLintock and was bought on a weekend trip to Martinborough.



## KITCHEN

The Victorian ash stairs are cleverly concealed behind the pantry wall, and lead to the main bedroom and upstairs deck. The high-grade pine ceiling panels were hand bleached and varnished by Ian. In the kitchen, Ian was determined to fulfil his dream of a freestanding oven. The couple eschewed a splashback for the plain concrete wall because it adds to their industrial-style vision for the space. The media room (far right) features a drop-down screen and projector that is such a family favourite Jocelyn says they don't need to go to the movies any more.



**W**hat do you do when your architect looks at your site and tells you you're crazy? If you're Ian and Jocelyn Kebbell, you go ahead with the project anyway. No strangers to a challenge, the Wellington couple had previously renovated villas but were keen to tackle a new build.

"We wanted the space of a suburban house but with the benefits of apartment living," says Ian. They also wanted to remain in the seaside suburb of Hataitai, with drive-on access and a view.

As luck would have it, one of the rental properties they owned was on a 626-square-metre block of land that was able to be subdivided. The only problem was it cascaded down a steep, bush-clad slope. "Everyone thought we were mad to do it, but we're glad we stuck to our vision."

In the end, planning, excavating and preparing the land took two years, and included the addition of concrete beams with rock anchors that go six metres into the ground, firmly lashing the house to the hillside. "A lot of our budget was spent on structural issues," says Jocelyn, "but the upside is we've yet to feel an earthquake."

The "honest, industrial" materials they used, including concrete floors, plaster walls, macrocarpa ceilings and double glazing, also





## IN A NUTSHELL

**Who lives here?** Ian Kebbell (company director), Jocelyn Kebbell (teacher), Debbie, 20, and Steph, 17.

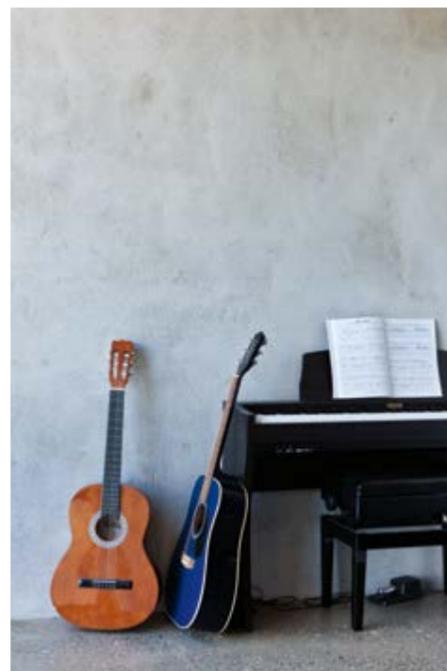
**Ian, what do you consider to be your home's best features?** The spectacular views, the natural light and warmth, and the ceilings in the main living area.

**What were your best bargains?** The one-off kitchen and bathroom fittings, the flooring effect with the glass and stones from the beach, and the use of bold colours to create the dramatic look we have achieved. You have to paint the walls anyway, so why not take the opportunity to bravely feature them?



“EVERYONE THOUGHT WE WERE MAD, BUT WE’RE GLAD WE STUCK TO OUR VISION”

**Above** The 1970s lamp was a gift from Ian's grandparents, but the couple found the replacement shade at Freedom. **Right** Daughter Steph takes full advantage of the music room on the kids' level, to practice both the piano and the guitar. **Far right** Warm browns and cool blues feature again on the kids' level. **Opposite page, top** The stairway that links levels two and three is enlivened by an artwork of hearts by artist Sandra McLintock. **Opposite page, bottom** The macrocarpa ceiling beams were personally chosen by Ian from a mill in the Akatarawas. They were then hand sawn and dried.



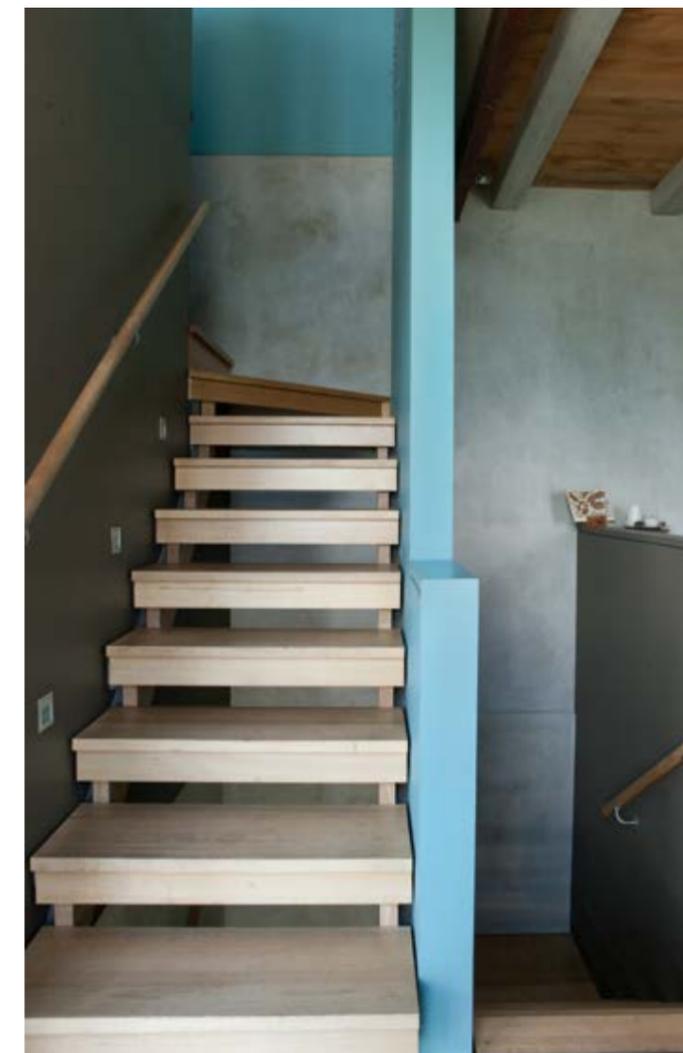
help to retain heat, and although the couple installed underfloor heating, it's only been used a few times since they moved in on Christmas Eve 2008.

The house is divided into four areas, and it's the third floor that's the hub of this home. With east-facing views across Shelly Bay and Evans Bay, it's easy to see why Ian and Jocelyn didn't want anything to obstruct the view. That meant extra engineering to cantilever the top floors instead of using centre posts.

Lovers of open-plan layouts, they also wanted to create distinct 'zones' – TV, dining, lounge and cooking – which they've done via the judicious placement of furniture and lighting. The kitchen island features oodles of storage and the plan is to eventually replace the plywood top with stainless steel to match the benchtops.

Ian, who project-managed the build, can claim much of the credit for the home's concrete floors, which glitter with pieces of coloured glass and small stones. "We spent ages collecting them near Miramar Wharf, and when the floor was laid, we wandered around in gumboots scattering them."

Walk up the Victorian ash stairs and you're in the main bedroom, which opens onto a deck where the couple eventually plan to install a spa pool. This floor is the only one with carpet, which contrasts nicely with the feature wall's striking black wallpaper. "It was pretty expensive, but I love the 1960s vibe, so decided to splurge on it," says Jocelyn.



“I LOVE THE 1960S VIBE OF THE WALLPAPER, SO DECIDED TO SPLURGE ON IT”



They've kept the artwork to a minimum to better showcase the walls throughout the house, which feature splashes of pistachio and brown, a trademark of architect John Mills. They've cleverly mixed old and new, incorporating furniture from their previous villa with modern pieces, such as the bright chairs in the media area.

The second floor is given over to the couple's teenage daughters, Debbie and Steph. The dedicated library/music room is the perfect spot for Steph to hone her music skills. The bottom level features the entryway, which leads on to Ian's spacious office. Here, the industrial feel of the home is most evident, the exposed steel beams having gained the required level of patina with age.

Down a few steps is the wine cellar, something Ian had long wanted, and to the right is the garage, which needed to be big enough to house the couple's touring and road bikes, kayaks and other sports gear. The couple opted for a durable Japanese panel effect on the garage door, which not only lets in light and is a good fit with the Titan board exterior, but was aligned with their desire to use a new material in each house they develop.

So what's next for this challenge-loving couple? Although they enjoy living in this house, they say if the right section came up, they'd be keen to repeat the process... ●

Find out how they got the look on **PAGE 157**.



## BATHROOM AND MAIN BEDROOM

The main bathroom on the second/kids' level reflects the modern look the couple loves. The tap and shower fittings are one-offs, bought from a sample sale. In the main bedroom, the couple chose Resene 'Cross Country' for their walls from a palette provided by their architect. The wallpaper is entitled 'Flock' and comes from Resene's Modern Living collection.



Clockwise from left Jocelyn and Ian enjoy the view from the balcony outside the living area while daughter Steph looks out from her bedroom below; a telescope is perfectly positioned to take in the stunning views in the dining area; the couple chose Resene 'Monkey' for the exterior colour treatment because it helps their home blend into its surroundings. "It's difficult to spot our house if you look across from Shelly Bay," says Ian.



## BUILDING TRICKS

**Stay closely involved** with the project from start to finish. It's your house, so even if you have the best architect and builder in the world, you still need to make sure you have input into every decision.

**Vet your contractors carefully.** Don't just take your architect or builder's word. Make sure you reference check them and ask to see samples of their work.

**Stand up for what you want.** Jocelyn was very firm about not wanting a supporting beam to obstruct the view in the living room: "It might not be possible, but if you speak up, then there might be a way to get what you want."

**Check out sample sales** for bargains and one-offs. Ian estimates he saved about a third of his budget on bathroom fittings by doing so. "Not only do you save money you also get unique pieces," he says.



**QUICK TIP** Natural materials such as pine ceilings and concrete floors go well with blues and greens.



'TOTO' PAINT BY RESENE.

'OXLEY' PAINT BY RESENE.

to dry for  
**Tea towel, \$11.90,**  
from Citta Design.

### working style

DeLonghi 'Icona' **coffee machine, \$399.99,** from thehomestoreonline.co.nz.



**GO TO POT**  
Plant **pot, \$24,**  
from Collected.

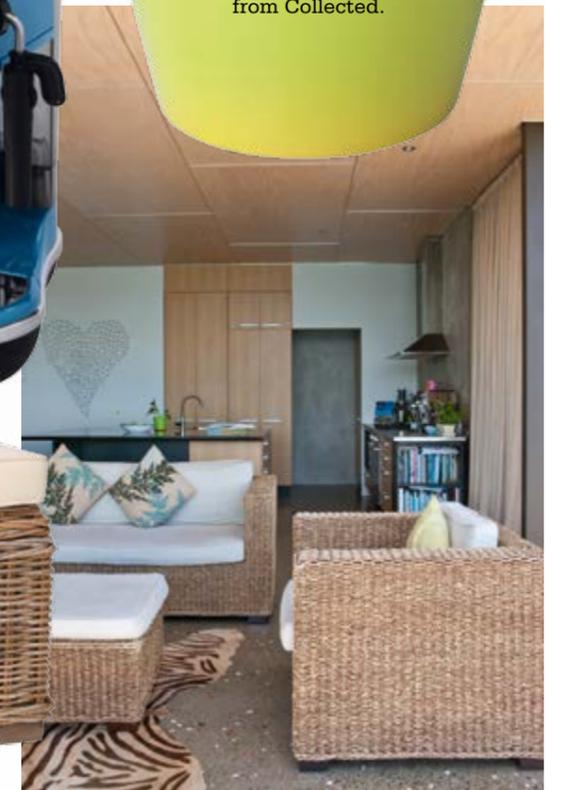
# MAKE IT WORK your way

LIFE'S A BEACH WHEN YOU DECORATE WITH NATURAL WEAVES AND HUES

**CLOSE MATCH**

RATTAN 'KUBU' STORAGE **POUF,** \$474, FROM CITTA DESIGN.

Styling by Viv Burrowes. Product photography by Bauer Media Group Studio.



Like what you see? Turn to pages **157** and **160.**