

Waiheke Wonder

A dated holiday home on Waiheke Island has become the primary residence for a design savvy family.

Words **Soraya Nicholas** Photography **Thomas Law**





“The house had a great feel, even before the renovation, but Bryce could visualise the end result right at the beginning,” explains Jules. “We wanted to make the house more functional, and really brighten it up, and it all worked out so well.” Despite being modest in size, the home suits the family of four, and the girls spend hours outside on the lawn or in the pool. “Having lived in a house with no outdoor living space, we couldn’t believe how much time Jessica and Sophie spent outside when we first moved here.” The swimming pool is one of their favourite features, and they also have a park and playground beside the house which they love.

While the overall aesthetics of the home were important to Bryce, he was also very focused on being as environmentally conscious as possible.



ABOVE Jules sits down in the living room to relax. The shelves on the far wall are a unique feature in the home, made from old recycled floorboards. **BELOW** Despite the floor plan being compact, opening up the spaces to establish one large living area has made the home feel much larger.



BRYCE AND JULES ARDERN HAVE LIVED on Waiheke Island for fifteen years now, and it is a lifestyle they adore. But until their recent move to a former bach, they were living with their daughters, Jessica (11) and Sophie (9), in an upper level house with no ground floor living.

It was when Bryce was in the process of building a commercial premises for his architectural design business, Ardern Unique Design & Build, that the couple were presented with an opportunity to move house. “Bryce was actually renting the bach while his premises were under construction, and the landlady hinted that she might be interested in selling,” says Jules. Bryce immediately saw the potential in the dated house, despite the chocolate brown kitchen complete with an orange bench, and they decided to purchase the home and renovate.

ABOVE Jessica and Sophie love the pool and jump in for a swim at every opportunity. **TOP LEFT TO BOTTOM** Two of the bedrooms open out directly to the view, and Jules says they never tire of sitting in bed and gazing out. The interior was painted Wattyl Alabaster throughout, to create a light, restful palette.





Q&A

with Bryce Ardern

What was your design brief?

The previous bach here was in a reasonable condition, but in a 70's style, with lots of smaller rooms shut off from the sea and northern sun and pool. The overriding brief was to modernise the floor plan by opening up all the rooms, providing a free flowing connection of living spaces that could easily be used by our family.

We were able to make the kitchen the hub of the home by relocating it in the centre of the cross shaped living areas in the square house, enabling all living areas to get views and the sun. Now, the pool has become the focus of the alfresco living area

Was it difficult designing for yourself, as opposed to a client?

Not really, but we didn't want to lose that beach-bach appeal, so I had to restrain myself with some ideas which upon reflection weren't needed anyway.

Favourite design elements?

We love the demo Kauri floors, which were also used to make the kitchen bench tops and lounge shelving. Also, we particularly like the kitchen, vanity doors, plumbing and light fittings, which were all salvaged from a demolished home on Waiheke.

Favourite room?

The kitchen, with its connection to the sea, northern sun, pool and backyard.



ABOVE The kitchen is entirely recycled. Bryce saw potential in an old kitchen from a local house that was being demolished, and decided to salvage it and rework the cabinetry. **BELOW** Modern plantings and contemporary cladding has transformed the house from an old bach into a stylish permanent residence.



They tried to retain everything they could in the home, and recycled where possible to limit their impact on the environment. “The kitchen is probably one of our favourite features of the renovation, as it’s so nice to think we gave an old kitchen a new life.” The modern looking kitchen was sourced from a local house that was being demolished, and Bryce up-cycled it, adapting the design and materials to suit their own kitchen space. The timber shelves in the living area were also recycled, having been floorboards in a previous life. Outside, even the established fruit trees were salvaged from a nearby property to avoid destruction, and now provide the family with pears, apples and peaches.

Bryce and Jules describe their home on Waiheke as “simple and relaxed”. While it has the unmistakable, relaxed feel of a holiday home, it is also very much a family abode, and the entire family love living in such a tranquil spot all year long. ■

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