

Go with the flow

This family dwelling has a wonderful ease to it that was well worth the wait.

WORDS
Leanne Moore

PHOTOGRAPHY
Helen Bankers

Words and photography: Cave Bureaux



THE PROJECT

Fashion buyer Rebecca Hawthorn and her builder husband Paul renovated this four-bedroom home in Auckland's Meadowbank for themselves and their children Isabella (9) and Miller (7).

KITCHEN & DINING Solid oak flooring finished with Pallmann Magic Oil set the tone for the décor throughout the house, and well-considered lighting was integral to offset its dark charm. Above the Transom dining table from Designers' Collection, with chairs from Città, is a Capella pendant from Light Plan.



LIKE A GOOD CUP OF COFFEE, REBECCA AND PAUL Hawthorn gave the redesign of their Auckland home time to percolate. The couple spent five years imagining how to transform its 1970s layout to meet the needs of modern family life, until last year, when they were ready to begin the major makeover, stripping the two-storey home of its dated features, switching the living area from upstairs to ground level and adding a new pavilion-style wing.

“The layout was all wrong for how we wanted to live,” says Rebecca. “The main living was upstairs, which was a nightmare when the kids were little because they always wanted to be outside and it was difficult to keep an eye on them from inside.”

Rebecca and Paul have created their own private oasis. “I really wanted the home to have a flow from the inside out,” says Rebecca. Previously the living area was positioned to take advantage of the harbour views. One of the benefits of getting to know the site well before renovating was that



they realised they could have ground-floor living and retain their view of Rangitoto. “We’ve ended up with the best of both worlds,” says Paul.

The entrance remains in the same spot, but the main living area is housed in the new north-facing addition that catches all-day sun. The sudden expansion of the generous living area from the entryway often catches visitors off guard. “Everyone enjoys the surprise when they come around the corner into this space,” says Paul.

This area leads to a resort-style garden and swimming pool, and when the doors are open there’s a seamless connection between inside and out. “I love that I can be at the kitchen bench and watch my kids in the pool,” says Rebecca. “And they love being able to run inside to grab something to eat before heading back out to play.”

The interior is sophisticated and glamorous, but relaxation and practicality are also strong themes. Making a comfortable >



“I love that I can be at the kitchen bench and watch my kids in the pool. And they love being able to run inside to grab something to eat before heading back out to play.”

OPPOSITE & ABOVE Miller, Rebecca, Paul and Isabella enjoy a snack in the kitchen designed by Colleen Holder Design. “I’ve always wanted to do a black kitchen – I like the glamour and drama of such a dark palette,” says Rebecca. “Our brief was to have a super-functional space with a central island bench that would serve as a breakfast bar, workspace and cocktail bar.” Sleek powder-coated aluminium shelves with oak dowelling are among the design details in this space, which also features an artwork Rebecca created by having an image originally intended for fabric applied to a canvas.



ABOVE LEFT The oak veneer cabinetry in the kitchen continues into the adjoining sunken lounge. Rebecca found the patterned cushion on a trip to Noosa, Australia; the velvet cushions are from Città. **ABOVE RIGHT** Floor-to-ceiling glass stacker doors from Aluminium City allow an easy transition to the resort-style outdoor area. **OPPOSITE LEFT** A patchwork vintage rug from Source Mondial is a standout piece in the lounge, where a Stovax Riva Studio wood-burning fireplace set into folded steel tiles by Powersurge provides warmth in winter. **OPPOSITE RIGHT** Part of the stairwell is encased in copper panels created from the home's original downpipes. Additional custom-made copper tiles were added to create a striking feature wall. An artwork by local artist Flox draws the eye towards the landing.

The children can retreat upstairs to their own relaxation zone for pizza and movies while the adults crank up the music and dim the lights downstairs.



home for their children Isabella and Miller was key for the couple. There are times when the house is immaculate, and days when it has a more laid-back, lived-in look. "We want it to have a relaxed vibe that suits our family life," says Rebecca. "I wanted to create a place where the children were happy to bring their friends, and so far it's working really well." When Rebecca and Paul are entertaining, the children can retreat upstairs to their own relaxation zone to gather in the playroom on the oversized sofas for pizza and movies while the adults crank up the music and dim the lights downstairs. "Having [spaces that work] so well for both adults and children is one of my favourite parts of our home," says Rebecca. An international fashion buyer, Rebecca's often surrounded by colour and patterns, so at home she prefers more muted tones and allows texture and thoughtfully chosen objects to provide subtle detail. The home's décor was built around the dark oak flooring, which was Paul's idea. "He saw it at a



supplier's and loved it," says Rebecca. She discovered the copper lighting, and everything else fell into place from there. The couple worked with architect Paul Clarke from Studio2 Architects, but brought a lot of their own ideas to the table. "He was our second architect – because the first one didn't want us closely involved in the project," says Rebecca. "Paul was great – he took our ideas and then added his magic to them. We love what we've ended up with." This is the second renovation for the couple; their first project together was giving a new lease of life to a bungalow in Onehunga. "Paul and I work really well together," says Rebecca. "He's not your average builder – he's actually a gifted designer who can imagine how something will look, and he's got the talent to build it as well." The pair enjoyed the process so much they reckon they have a few more renovations in them. "But," says Rebecca, "for now, we just want to enjoy what we've created here." 🏠

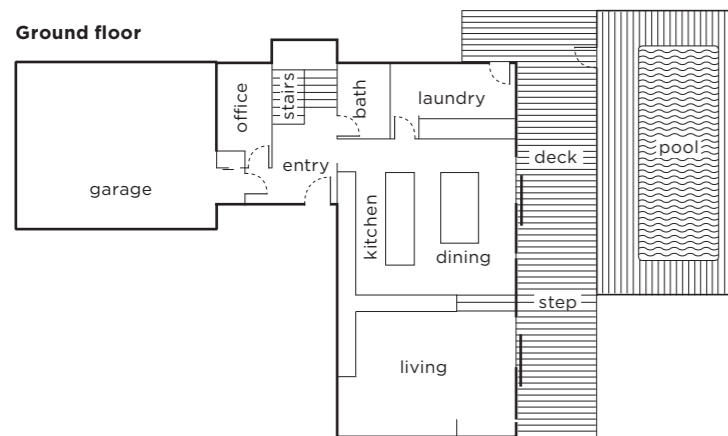


MASTER BEDROOM Here, custom-built oak shelving eliminates the need for bedside tables. The pendant lighting is from ECC, the upholstered bed is from Designers' Collection and the bed linen is from EziBuy. **OPPOSITE** The downstairs powder room is pure sophisticated glamour. The tiles are from Tile Space, the brass mirror is from Home Industry and the oak benchtop was custom-made.

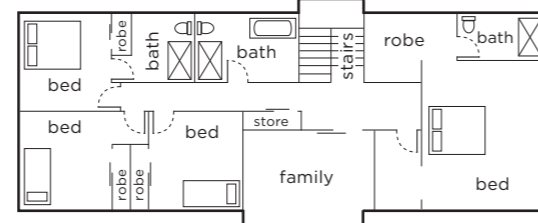




Ground floor



First floor



ABOVE LEFT The main bathroom includes a custom-built oak vanity topped with Caesarstone in Sleek Concrete. The basins and tapware are from Robertson Bathware. **ABOVE RIGHT** A vintage bench seat from Corso De' Fiori creates a focal point in the upstairs hallway. **OPPOSITE LEFT** In the couple's ensuite, twin basins from Robertson Bathware sit atop a custom-made oak benchtop. The curves of the basins are repeated in the Press mirrors by Tim Webber Design. **OPPOSITE RIGHT** The main bathroom also boasts a deep, free-standing Barcelona bath by Victoria & Albert.



EXTERIOR The pool provides hours of fun for Miller and Isabella. “There were a lot of good times over summer,” says Rebecca. She and Paul are pleased they started their landscaping before the renovation project kicked off as they’re already able to enjoy having a well-established garden, including this bay tree hedge.

DESIGN DETAILS



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT Handwoven linen **cushion cover**, \$65, cittadesign.com. Capella **pendant light**, \$2439, lightplan.co.nz. Drop **pendant light** by Graypants, \$535, ecc.co.nz. Citadel **towels**, from \$7 each, cittadesign.com. Olio **teapot** by Barber Osgerby x Royal Doulton, \$129, everyday-needs.com. Bistro **chair**, \$399, cittadesign.com. Peace lily **plant**, \$36, plantandpot.nz. Mai **basket**, \$28, freedomfurniture.co.nz. Tonk **stool**, \$400, stclements.co.nz. Segment **coffee table**, \$890, cittadesign.com.

ASK THE BUILDER:

Paul Hawthorn of Building Elements

So, Paul, what was it like having your wife as a client? Thankfully, Rebecca and I have very similar taste. We learned from our last renovation that bouncing ideas off each other challenges us to come up with better solutions; the outcome is always more complete than the result we would have achieved alone. Rebecca has a degree in interior design and is exposed to lots of design ideas in her job in fashion, and I deal with spatial solutions all day as a builder. Together that’s a really complementary skill set.

What advice do you have for those considering a renovation? Take the time to find the right team. It’s really important that you have a great relationship with your architect and builder. You

need to trust them completely, because their advice will guide you through one of the most significant spends you’ll ever make.

The other great thing we did, which I’d highly recommend, is establish our hedges and gardens while we prepared other aspects of the project. Once we had the footprint of the building worked out, we got planting advice from a landscape designer, so while we completed the finer details of the project and worked through budgets and consents, we were able to make the relatively low-cost investment of buying plants and spend our weekends in the garden. This meant the hedges were reasonably well-established when it came time to enjoy our outdoor spaces. Our architect used to laugh when he came on site because it seemed as if we were working from the outside of the property in, instead of the more typical method of building first and landscaping last.