

# Teamwork creates an idyllic home

*High above Golden Bay sits a house that has seen lots of changes. Jill Wild has the rebuild story.*

IT'S a property that is the sum of a number of interesting parts. It came from combining one of the country's most exquisite seaside sites, a pair of retired clients relocating from the North Island, a graduate architect and his mentor to end up with a team united by a common desire to create something exceptional yet modest on the shores of Golden Bay.

It's been a long journey, financed by a couple who were intent on not only building a home for their extended family, but also a home befitting the site and encompassing part of the existing structure, the design of former Nelson architect Min Hall, which they liked.

What the couple bought, in the 1990s when they were looking for an idyllic retirement spot, it was a slice of coastal frontage operating as a lodge, a business they had no interest in continuing.

Arthouse Architecture's Brendon Monk recalls it was a lodge that amounted, architecturally, to a mish mash of design and structure that had occurred over a period of time to meet varying needs.

"It had originally started as just a cottage," Brendon says, "but it had been added on to on both sides and when I really looked at the project, I had to tell the clients I thought the best thing to do was demolish everything except the last addition, a two bedroom wing which Min had designed."

Mentor Min Hall says: "The concept was Brendon's and I thought it was really good. But I'd never let a 24-year-old graduate tell a client they should demolish 90 per



**Green scene:** Established trees create a serene setting above Golden Bay.

cent of their house. It was far more collaborative and all client contact involved Brendon and me as a team, especially when it came to big calls like that."

The clients were gutsy and prepared to fund a fresh start. While Brendon and Min worked on structure and design the clients busied themselves developing the surrounds, turning sheep paddocks and fences into hectares of new and extensive garden plantings, an arboretum, carefully contouring and draining the land to accommodate natural water flow and create ponds they wanted to feature.

"We didn't give much of a brief to architect Min Hall, really just to build a home on the end of the ensuite bedrooms she had already designed using, predominantly, the same style. We didn't specify materials, angles, that sort of thing, she had such a reputation we didn't need to tell her anything," the owners say.

It's that client trust in an architectural team that enhances any project and the architects were confident they could deliver.

"I'd had a long connection with the property with four different



**Site sensitive:** Architects and owners agree that the home that has been developed responds well to the exquisite setting.

architectural projects," says Min. "The initial build was designed and built by a school teacher, a single storey with a dormer window. I came in with the second owner who extended with a similar build and the third owner when it became a lodge with major extensions including two bedroom suites for guest use.

"It was fantastic with the new owners, the place had always had a bach feel, so it was really nice to address the structural problems that existed at the site and having Brendon with a fresh set of eyes who encouraged demolition. The clients wanted quality and it was nice to look at the house as one structure."

The architectural team was also mindful of the client desire for a modest development yet a structure of design that would suit their antique furniture.

"Things went smoothly in the design process," Brendon says. "We worked from a heated concrete slab using timber framing, ply and batten with a Colorsteel roof, Butynol in some areas and cedar cladding in parts.

"By using timber we have ensured low maintenance. It was one of the first projects I did after graduating so in that respect it was challenging, but from initial concept drawings the clients liked the design and as a consequence placed a lot of trust in me."

It's a sizeable family home, more than 500 square metres of floor area, four bedrooms with a further two rooms configured as a small sitting room and parlour area, a library, substantial living room opening to the dining area and large kitchen with breakfast nook. The stud height is the full build height in the living dining area

creating a light and airy feel, accentuating the Golden Bay sun-filled location.

While large, the home fits comfortably into the surrounding four hectares of garden and trees drawing the eye seaward to the 120 metres of private beach frontage below the cliffs.

With riparian rights and a private boat launch it's a home to satisfy all family desires, from the youngest grandchild through to grandparents and friends.

Even the laundry, of commercial proportions, amply accommodates washdays when the extended family is in residence and a wine cellar gives the owners plenty of storage to ensure a good bottle of wine can be drawn for a pleasant evening of entertainment and the heated lap



**For visitors:** A guest bedroom with ensuite and direct access to the lawns and beach.

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**Extra space:** The lounge area has native timber ceilings that have been designed to create a mezzanine above without compromising the light and spacious feel.



**On top of the world:** The view from the mezzanine down to the dining area.



**Picture perfect:** The dining room opens out to the front lawn and Golden Bay.

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pool is a recreational option when the sea is too cold.

Guests arrive to the back, with its sense of traditional architectural design and as they walk through the expansive living area they are drawn into what Brendon calls a more contemporary space overlooking Golden Bay. The guest wing at one end and master bedroom wing at the other are separated by the living areas with a mezzanine connecting the house on the upper level – a clever design feature that allows for a spacious feel yet creating intimate

spaces for individual endeavours.

"It's a quiet place, the owners are quiet people," says Min, "you arrive and the property opens up before you."

And Brendon concurs. "The build is packed with surprises, little spaces, unexpected. The mezzanine with library involved a lot of thought, but it's created a very special place, light, with a view but apart in a sense."

Most recently the original Min Hall designed guest wing was updated. Brendon, with Arthouse in Nelson, was again commissioned to design the final piece of the architectural

jigsaw.

"We came from Kimbolton so it was a big change to move to Golden Bay but it's given us a wonderful lifestyle, and the rhododendrons we brought with us have done really well," says the lady of the house.

Tree plantings include a maple walk, created from the horse paddock after much slog clearing gorse and blackberry, and the meandering garden now features stone bridges.

A potager behind the house greets arriving guests, each square with a central camellia and smart clipped

buxus hedging, an area based on a French design with citrus growing robustly.

"Nothing leaves the property in terms of foliage and tree prunings, it's all mulched and returned to enhance the soil. When we arrived 15 years ago I was out working in the garden every day but now it's easy to manage and, most importantly, a pleasure all year round."

For the team that took the plunge to demolish a house in favour of creating something significant architecturally it's been a journey requiring patience.



**Precious outlook:** The sea of Golden Bay surges on the beach below the house.



**Bay view:** The master bedroom overlooking the bay.



**Fun address:** A playhouse was built for the grandchildren.

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