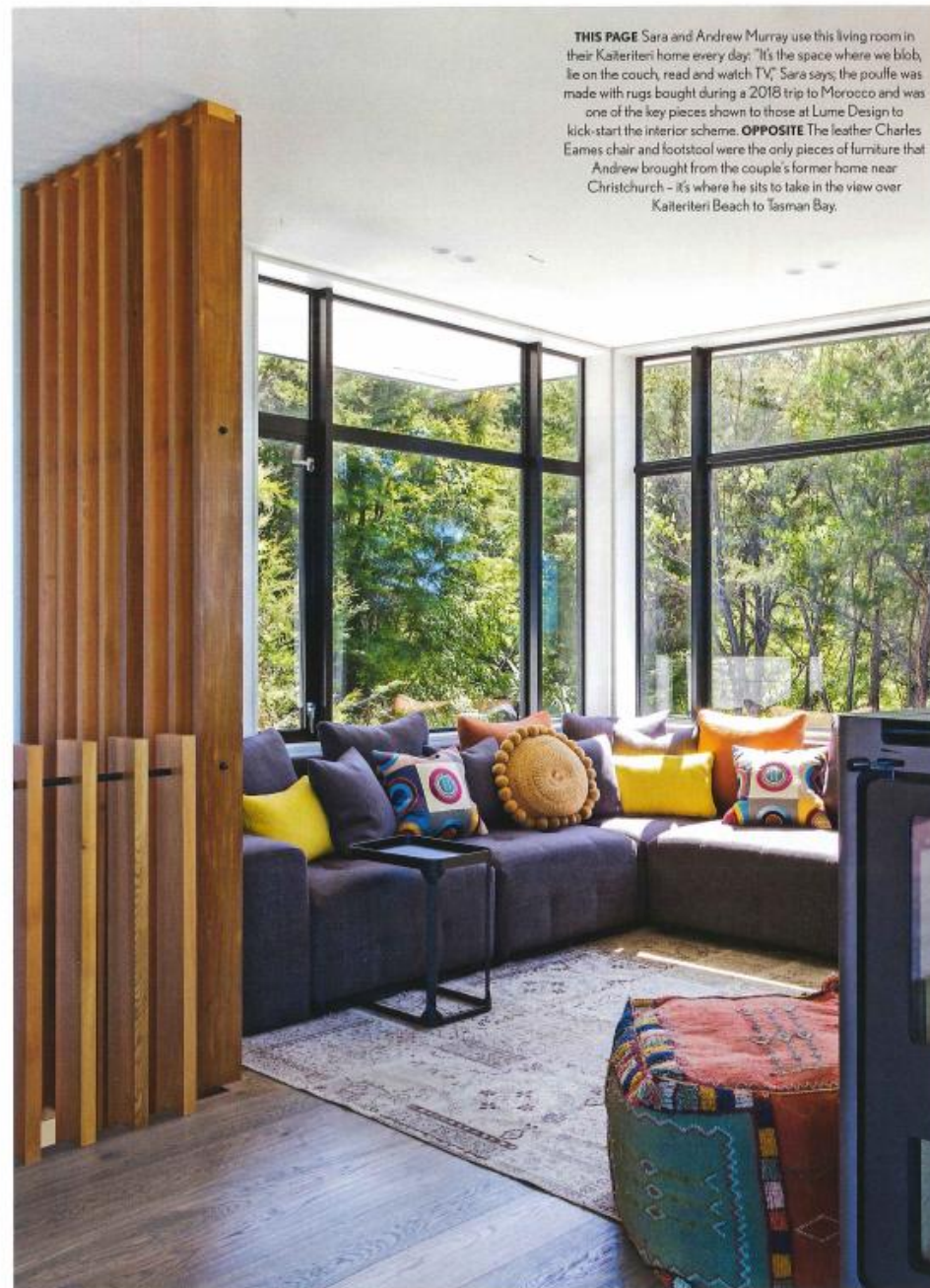


A HOME AT THE BEACH

After generations of family holidays at Tasman Bay, this couple made it permanent

Words JOANNA DAVIS
Photographs ANNA McLEOD

THIS PAGE Sara and Andrew Murray use this living room in their Kaiteriteri home every day. "It's the space where we blob, lie on the couch, read and watch TV," Sara says; the pouffe was made with rugs bought during a 2018 trip to Morocco and was one of the key pieces shown to those at Lume Design to kick-start the interior scheme. **OPPOSITE** The leather Charles Eames chair and footstool were the only pieces of furniture that Andrew brought from the couple's former home near Christchurch - it's where he sits to take in the view over Kaiteriteri Beach to Tasman Bay.



THESE PAGES The Murrays chose to have two smaller living areas with a wall in between as, particularly in winter, they wanted to create a feeling of intimacy; the dividing wall is partially made up of see-through shelving to connect the spaces; the timber pendant lights are from Accent Lighting and Sara loves that they look like kina and make beautiful patterns on the ceiling.





Sara Murray loves to stand on the deck of her Kaiteriteri home, listening to the waves rolling on to the shore and watching kayakers paddling in the turquoise waters. She can follow the curve of Tasman Bay from her Nelson birthplace to the golden beach 100m from her deck, and says that this gives her a deep sense of being at home. "I connect with the Māori concept of *tūrangawaewae*. Because we always came here as a family, and I have come here my whole life, it became our happy place."

Sara and husband Andrew raised their three sons in Ohoka, near Christchurch. Sara holidayed at

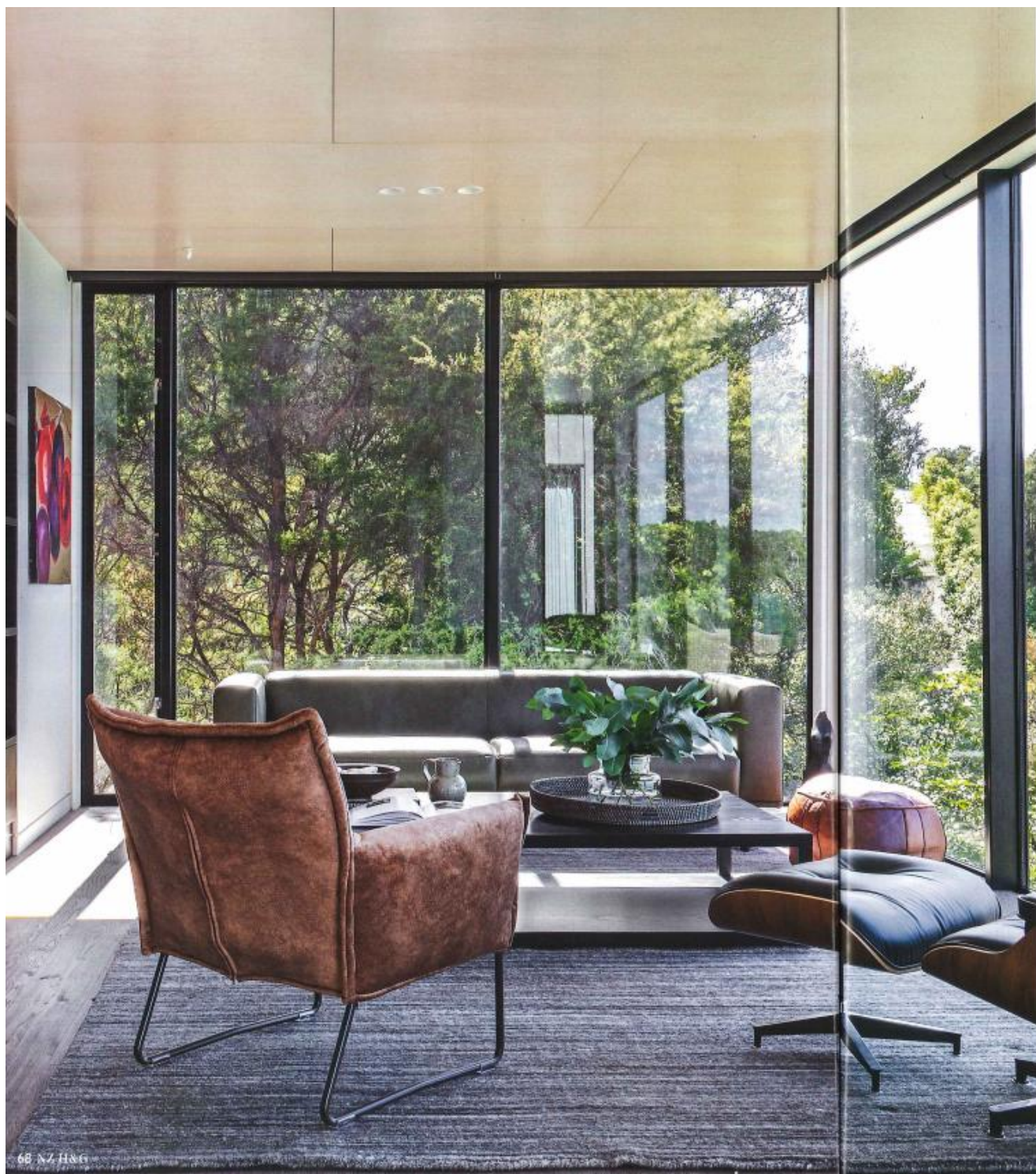
Kaiteriteri every summer as a child and wanted to carry on the tradition. "Both Andrew and I had that experience of going to the same place every year and we wanted to do that for our children."

She and Andrew rented a place in Little Kaiteriteri, one bay over, and took their boys – Ben, now 25, James, 23 and Luke, 20 – there every summer school holidays. Five years ago, the couple started thinking about how they could spend more time in the beach town.

Says Andrew: "The conversation went literally in the space of two minutes from 'We could stay one month... why not three months or six months?' Then to 'Why do we need to be in Christchurch at all?'"

THESE PAGES (clockwise from above) The kitchen was made by local firm Waimea West Joinery and the dining table was made by Woodwrights in nearby Motueka; using local expertise where possible was important to the Murrays. Because Andrew works from home, he is usually the one on the other side of the kitchen island. This decorative bowl was bought in Assisi in Italy 30 years ago – Sara loves that it looked good in both their older home in Canterbury and in this modern house; the book about the Abel Tasman National Park was the first the Murrays bought when they came to the area and is referred to regularly by their visitors.





Although the decision was made quickly, the execution was years in the planning. "The timing wasn't very good to leave Christchurch until our children left school and home," Andrew says. "So it became a longer term plan."

Choosing a private location close to the popular beach was a challenge. "We didn't want to be on the wrong side of the road, with thousands of people walking up and down but we wanted to have direct beach access," Andrew says. The section they found is uphill from the main beach, and had half a dozen motel units built in the 1960s.

For three summers they "camped" in their 36sqm motel unit, which Andrew says was near-derelict. "No one had been in for years. There was rat poo

everywhere. It was basically smoked glass, pink carpet, pink velour furniture." The teenagers slept in tents on the lawn.

Sara says it was a difficult section, on a steep site and with a power line running through it. "Not only that, but it was the main power line to Kaiteriteri. Trying to get it moved was a major."

Excavation work took several months and the couple was up against a deadline as Sara had taken a job as senior education adviser with Nelson Tasman Kindergartens. Andrew, a company director and education consultant, was more flexible as he works from home when not travelling.

It was important to the Murrays to use local expertise where they could, so they engaged Nelson-



LEFT The second living area is the more formal space and is cantilevered over the lower storey to give the feeling of being seated amongst the trees; the Murrays enjoy sitting here, listening to tūī, bellbirds and kererū.

RIGHT The glass balustrade allows uninterrupted ocean views; Sara and Andrew use this deck as their breakfast spot and spend a lot of time watching the comings and goings at the boat ramp and along the shore.

THIS PAGE Sara was driving past Wallace Cotton when she saw the bedding in the window and decided it was perfect for the master bedroom as the gold reflects the colour of the sand on Kaiteraki Beach. **OPPOSITE** (clockwise from top left) The guest bedrooms have different side tables with a focus on texture as with this rattan example. Interior designer Melissa Merzin from Lume Design was worried Sara and Andrew might find the Lens Green tiles from Nextdore for the downstairs bathroom too bold but they are delighted with the look. The architect redesigned the stairs after Andrew found a photo of floating stairs that he loved; they are lit underneath to accentuate the floating effect at night. Sara wanted to add personality to the upstairs powder room, now wallpapered in La Palma in Sepia by Catherine Martin for Mokum.

'The house is about being cool and quiet'



based David Wallace from Arthouse Architects and builder Jason Inch from nearby Motueka.

Interior designers Lume Design were also involved, and asked the couple to name pieces they couldn't do without. Andrew chose his black leather Eames chair, now positioned for the full ocean view, while Sara chose a pouffe made from fabric brought back from Morocco and an antique gold mirror inherited from her mother.

It was important to Andrew to make a home at the beach, rather than a "beach house".

Sara loves colour and wears a lot of it herself. She says that in comparison, the house is toned down to fit in with its natural setting. Against the hill, the house recedes into the canopy of the bush. It has many windows to capture the view, so there's



THESE PAGES The house was designed by David Wallace of Arthouse Architects and has cedar cladding to help it blend into the hillside which is covered in mānuka and kānuka trees; a walkway runs from the lower deck down to the road opposite the beach.

HOMES

THIS PAGE (from top) The Balinese sideboard was bought from Cuchi and the ornaments next to the vase are shaped from harakeke (flax). Sara and Andrew's cat Pipi has become a local fixture, wandering along the road to the camping ground, into the Kaiteriteri Store and even across the road to the beach.

not much wall space for big artworks. "The view is all gold and hot," Sara says. "So the house is about being cool and quiet."

Andrew, a self-professed "real boatie", joined the Coastguard in preparation for seaside living. He often stands on the deck between video meetings and work calls, and "supervises" the in-shore area.

Sara says he likes to give a commentary on boat movements, to look out at his own boat and to see how many fish people have caught. "We get to watch quite a lot of divorces taking place," Andrew adds.

The house's main bedroom and all of the living areas are on the top floor, with three guest bedrooms downstairs. The architect pointed out that many clients would add a separate living room downstairs for guests but Sara and Andrew prefer to engage with visiting friends and family.

"From a relationship point of view, we can actually talk to them," Andrew says. "You get to have real conversations."

Says Sara: "Whenever friends come and stay they say 'I don't want to go home' and I think 'Ah, we are home.' It's just so relaxing."



Q&A

My decorating inspiration: I'm excited by a range of indigenous art and styles, including tangata whenua, Moroccan and Indian.

One clever idea for other homeowners: One of the best things we did was put in a laundry chute from our ensuite into the laundry directly below. It saves lots of up and down on the stairs.

Favourite family treasure: Pipi the cat, although I don't recommend you build a new house and get a kitten at the same time. At this point it's more a question of what hasn't she scratched.

A must-see for visitors to Kaiteriteri: You've got to get out on the water while you're here. Going up the Abel Tasman National Park and dropping in on myriad little golden-sand beaches is perfect. Short walks or longer walks, you take your pick. Also, the seal colony on Tonga Island is a great stop-off as you boat up the Abel Tasman.

Sara Murray