

WISE INVESTMENT

Homeowners Todd and Katie Hunter invested in landscaping early and had their hearts set on a tropical garden. "There is a lot of house on this section so we wanted our garden to make an impact," says Katie.



The Midas TOUCH

A gold door equals luxe.



A small family who missed Mount Maunganui beach life had big plans for a rundown little bach

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home profile

MEET & GREET

Katie (Kept co-founder) and Todd Hunter (interior fit-out specialist), daughter Tillie, four, and Griffin the tabby, Olive the kitten, black-and-white cat Maisy, plus two fosters.

THE PROPERTY

Former bach that was demolished for a four-bedroom, two-storey new-build in Mount Maunganui.



KITCHEN

At eight metres, the kitchen area is a generous size and makes for a great entertainment space.

DINING (opposite)

The dining table is by David Shaw, the chairs from Homage and the pendant light above the table is from Cult.

Katie and Todd Hunter are pretty good at making a quick decision when the right opportunity arises and the purchase of an old blue bach in Mount Maunganui was one of them. In 2020, Katie, Todd and their daughter Tillie were living on a semi-rural lifestyle block in Tauriko, enjoying a change of pace after many years living in Mount Maunganui. While it was great, after that first Covid-19 lockdown the sociable couple decided they'd had enough of countryside serenity and started looking for a place back at the Mount to be near friends and the social scene they loved. "We had given that lifestyle a go, and while we loved the views, we wanted to be near our mates and enjoy a low-maintenance home," Katie says.

When a rundown blue bach came up for sale on a 571sqm site near the main drag in June 2020, they moved fast. The only bidders at the auction, they didn't meet the reserve and left empty-handed.

"After the auction I went to New World and my phone rang," says Katie. "It was the real estate agent ringing to say,



Bright idea

Don't skimp on feature lighting. It plays a big role in creating ambience and drama.



“Our colour palette is pretty classic, mostly with white and timber furnishings.”

KATIE HUNTER



LIVING

The plush modular sofa is from King and the striped La Mama replica chair is a quirky touch. The majority of the cushions are from Paper Plane and the drapes are from Capulet Curtains.

‘Congratulations, the sellers have accepted your bid! We had the house!’

The Hunter’s lifestyle property, complete with alpacas and chickens, was put on the market and sold quickly and it wasn’t long before the family had moved into a rental in the Mount and were making plans to bowl the bach. “Funnily enough, the owner of that New World is now one of our neighbours,” says Katie.

The design

With the blue bach not in a fit state to restore, it gave the couple the perfect opportunity to design their dream home. Working in the interior fit-out space, Todd had loads of ideas and was able to put them into practice for his own house.

Selecting local design-and-build housing company,

Harwood Homes, Todd and Katie went to them with their ideas and the firm agreed to build them a bespoke home. Architect Peter Wale, who had worked with the Hunters on another project, lent his talents to creating a stunning entertainers’ home with a private retreat upstairs. Both Todd and Katie love modern design with straight lines and structure, and chose shiplap pine cladding on the exterior, with a combination of brickwork and Gib inside.

Working with local interior designer Kath McDonald was part of the build. “Before we met Kath, we had always admired her house as she lives a street over from us. When we found her out she was an interior designer we asked her to work on our home,” says Katie.

Todd had also worked with Harwood Homes’ builder Leon Knott before and knew he was a master craftsman and a perfectionist, which is exactly what they wanted.

The build begins

At the end of 2020, the demolition began. With plans and consents issued, in May 2021 the retaining walls and concrete slab were installed, ready for the build to begin. The Hunters split their time between living with family and renting a house nearby during the design phase and throughout the build over the final 14 months. The project kept to schedule, aside from a few minor delays due to Covid-19 and some supply issues. Katie says, “We didn’t have Gib issues, thankfully. Todd was a Gib fixer so that was a big help.”

Working with an interior designer was something that Katie found invaluable as a busy mum and business owner. She reflects, “I loved working with Kath, having her allowed me to make the right choices. I often knew what I wanted to achieve and would present her with two

DREAM ESCAPE

With luxurious Galet wool carpet underfoot, this upstairs room was designed to feel like a retreat. “I love that I can sit in bed and see views of the Mount,” says Katie.



choices, which I needed help deciding on. I trusted her opinion.” In September 2022, the build was completed and the family moved in.

The entrance

From the street front, the bespoke shiny gold front door framed by a textured concrete brick wall gives a hint of the owners’ fun personalities. Looking up, you can see Todd’s handiwork, with a timber batten roof off the front door, discretely covered with Perspex for rain protection, and featuring dramatic strip lighting that glows at night.

Finding a shiny gold door was an exercise in determination, and saw Katie calling a local car painter for her specific request. The stylish brick wall flows from the exterior of the front door through

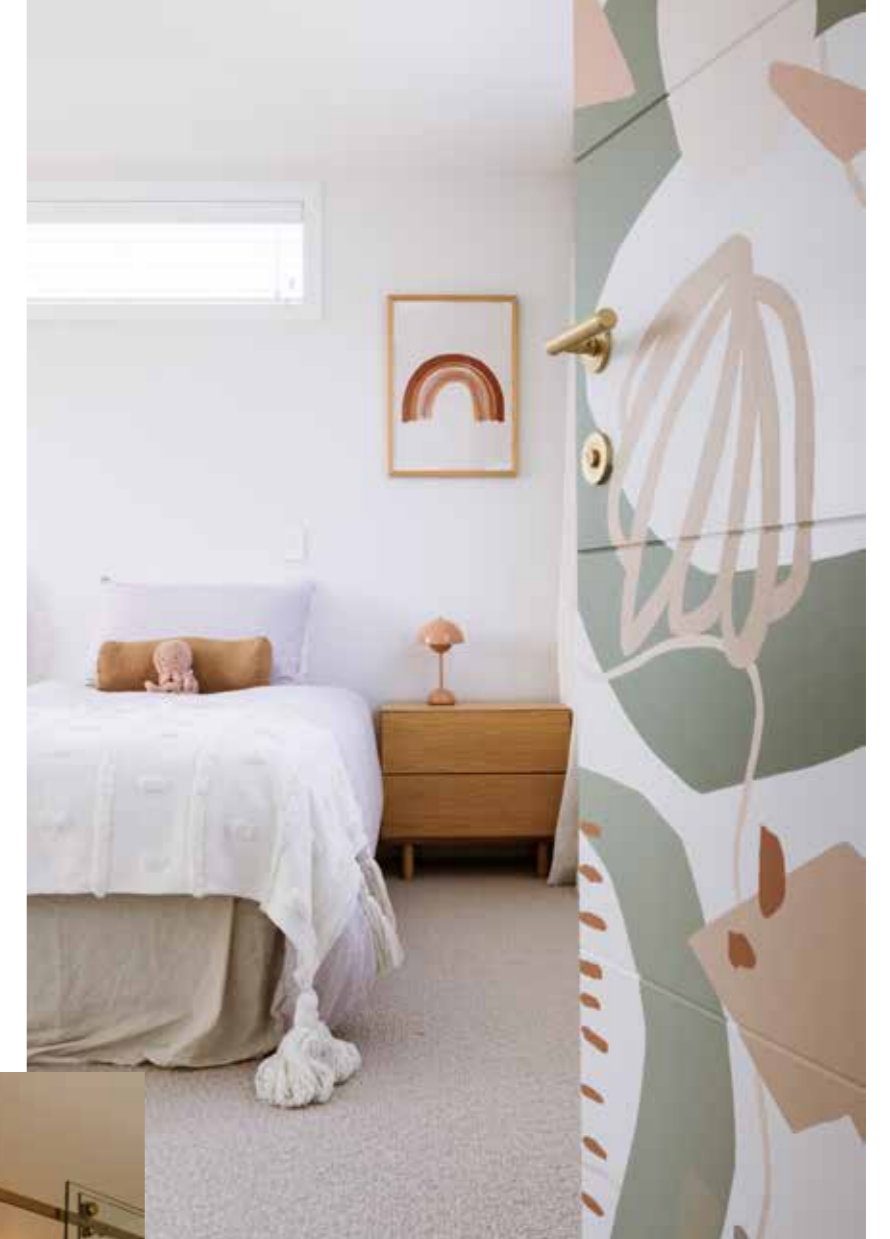
the house to the kitchen and outside to the entertaining space, with a hidden door to the right inside the entrance to the garage. Gallery-style windows line this side of the house from the entranceway as well, providing loads of light.

Epic entertaining area

From the initial design phase Katie and Todd wanted the focus to be on entertaining and they put a lot of time into considering the downstairs space. Here a generous open-plan kitchen, dining and lounge area, complete with full-height sliding doors that open up to the outdoors, provide the ideal space for the family to relax and to host friends. “The living space is epic. Our kitchen is quite long at eight metres, which works really well for hosting, and it extends from the inside to the

PERSONAL TOUCHES

The upstairs family room, which is used by Todd as his gaming room, also features a sweet little office nook; local artist and textile designer Jasmine Kroeze painted this door to Tillie’s room (right); the pink concrete basin in this bathroom is from Creative Crete (below).



outside, with an outdoor kitchen,” says Katie. “Todd loves to barbecue and slow-cook meat, so he has his own kitchen where he can make a mess outside. We also put a cocktail bar in, which is really fun.”

The oak timber flooring was an investment. “We wanted good flooring downstairs because we wanted Tillie to live life as a child in our home. She literally scooters around the house. Timber floors can be re-skinned a few times so we aren’t too precious.”

Fiji feels

Investing in landscaping early on ensured they could achieve a resort-like outdoor space as fast as possible. “There is a lot of house on this section so we wanted our garden to make an impact. The large windows allow the garden to feel like it flows inside. It feels so spacious,” says Katie. “We were able to put a bore in so the garden could be irrigated and helps keep the lush Fiji-like feeling alive.”

Upstairs

The stairway leads up to the sleeping quarters, with four bedrooms and another family room, which has an office nook and is used by Todd as a gaming room.

The main bedroom was designed to feel like its own getaway with a generous floor size and great storage for



SIMPLE STATEMENT
 A hand-crafted concrete basin in a fun colour will elevate any bathroom.



SPECIAL FEATURES
 Todd loves to barbecue and slow-cook meat and there's a special area for him to get creative. There's also a cocktail bar downstairs and a spa pool outside (above). In the laundry, the well-designed utility area features a handy rail to dry clothes (right). The shiny gold door, which was painted by a local car painter, makes an impact on the street front and offers a hint of the owners' quirky personalities (below).



functionality. Tillie's bedroom is at the opposite end of the house from her parents, highlighted with a bespoke hand-painted door by Jasmine Kroeze. "Fun" is an accurate word to describe Tillie's bathroom, which features bold green tiling, a concrete basin and terrazzo tiled flooring.

"Our colour palette is pretty classic, mostly with white and timber furnishings," says Katie. "But we love colour so there are pops of colour throughout the home."

Perfect planning

The garage was planned to perfection, with a part of this space containing an art area for Tillie. The other half of the garage is seen as "the working side", where Todd's man cave, outdoor shower and fish-filleting bench are located.

Having recently moved in, the Hunters are thrilled with their new home. The location is perfect for a short stroll to the local bars and the beach, and the layout works perfectly for their family.

Katie is full of compliments for their architect, builder and interior designer who helped to bring their vision to life. In fact, having relationships with these key specialists was really important for the couple's peace of mind throughout the entire design and build process. "The end result is that we are now in a home that's exactly how we designed it." ●