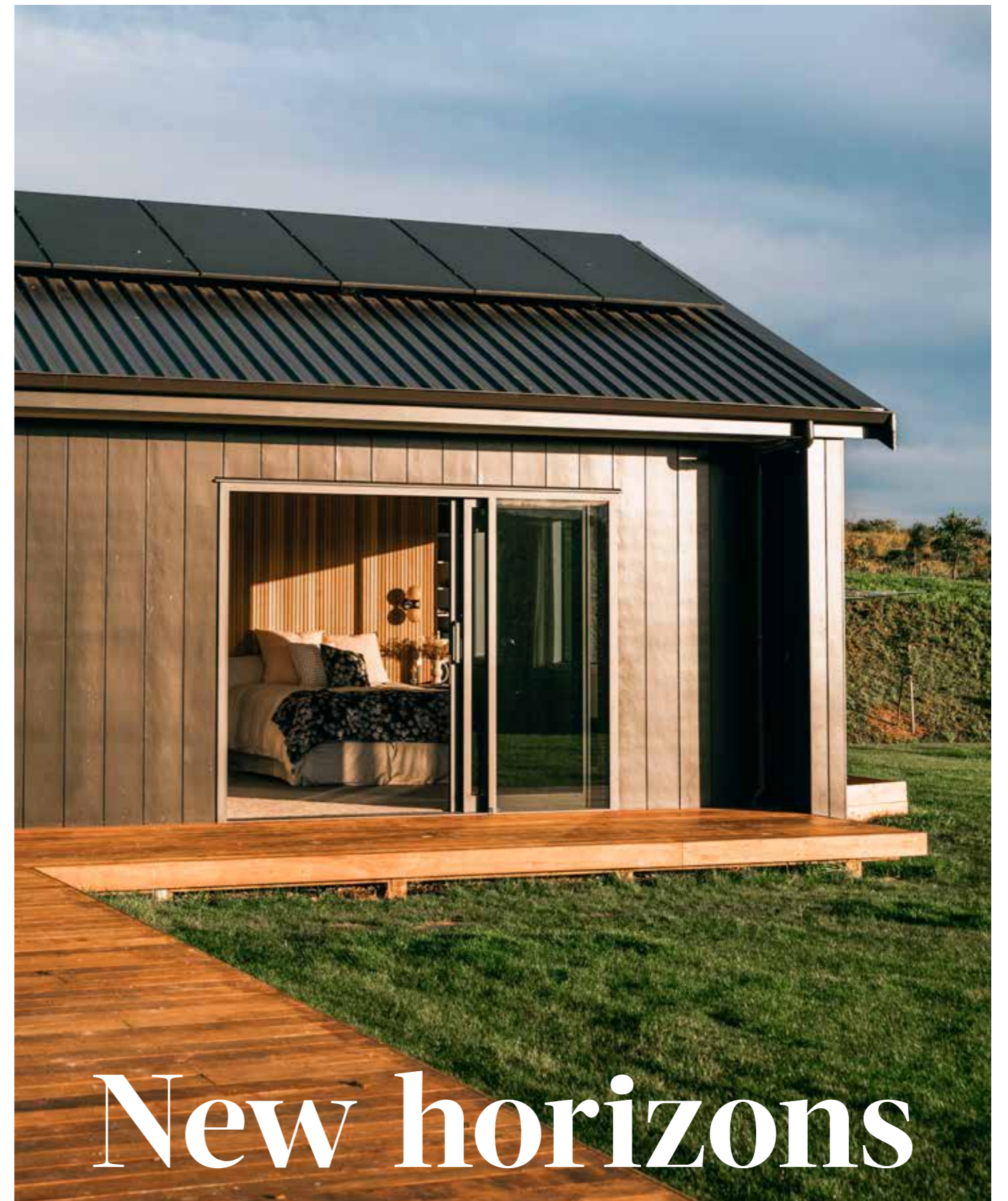


KITCHEN

The sage-green kitchen features Melteca cabinetry in Possum Pearl, a sleek rangehood built into the floating shelf, and a white tiled splashback.



New horizons

A forward-thinking couple designed and built their home around the movement of the sun

Text **Holly Jean Brooker** Photography **Florence Charvin**



ASK AN EXPERT
Interior designer Toni Gale helped with the design plans, the natural colour palette, and designed the bespoke coffee table.

High school sweethearts, Laura and Shaun Andrews have had a few adventures in their 12-plus years together. Their latest exploit led them to rural Hawke’s Bay, where they started a successful solar power company, built a new home, and are about to have their first baby.

The couple, originally from Blenheim, have lived around the country, from Christchurch to Whangārei, before shifting to Hawke’s Bay seven years ago. After studying as a child and family psychologist, Laura sidestepped into a sales job, and discovered she loved it. When Shaun was relocated to Napier, Laura saw a gap in the commercial and residential solar power market and took the chance to launch her own business, Ecoefficient Solutions. It’s grown so much Shaun now works full-time in the business.

Launching their own business did mean an investment in time and money, so the couple kept living costs low by renting a small flat for six years while they slowly saved for their own home. With a deposit finally ready, the hunt for a home began, but they hit a road block, says Laura.

“It quickly became obvious that it was going to be really hard to find something affordable that didn’t need a major renovation. We went to a few open homes and thought we would have to spend \$800,000 to purchase, and then another \$300,000 to renovate, so we began to consider the idea of building a new home.”

On the land

They swapped going to open homes for drives around the area to check out land. In early 2021, they hit gold in



home profile

MEET & GREET

Laura and Shaun Andrews (owners of a solar power company) and their springer spaniel Sage.

THE PROPERTY

Contemporary three-bedroom new-build in rural Hawke’s Bay.



Top tips

- + Use a trustworthy builder who you can rely on to help guide you.
- + Work with an experienced interior designer as they help with some of the biggest decisions.
- + Do as much as you can during the build process because you may not have the resources to complete any of the projects after moving in.
 - + Spend time visualising and mapping out each space with the builder, interior designer and experts involved so you can feel comfortable when making each decision.
- + Enjoy the journey.

“We liked the location and we liked the feel of the property – it felt very farm-like and quiet.”

LAURA ANDREWS



Crownthorpe, a 15-minute drive from Napier, when they came across a 3000sqm rural section in the Matuku Native Farm Park development.

“We liked the location and we liked the feel of the property – it felt very farm-like and quiet,” says Laura. “We aren’t city people, preferring the rural lifestyle, and we loved that each section was designed to capture the sun.”

Natural design

Laura and Shaun worked with David Reid Homes, who offered flexible bespoke designs for a completed home within budget. They had a general idea of what they wanted for the home, says Laura. “We wanted natural tones inspired by nature, like greens and blues. Peaceful, calm and spacious.”

Working with David Reid Homes and interior designer Toni Gale, from Tones & Co, they worked through many initial design plans, landing on a modern design with a classic Kiwi layout, comprising of a hallway from the main entrance, with bedrooms off the walkway, and an open-plan kitchen and living area at the end of the home. A clean, contemporary design in a natural colour palette would ensure harmony with the expansive

rolling hills surrounding this modern abode.

To create a luxurious and spacious feel, all of the ceilings were designed on an angle for extra height. Almost every room was designed around the movement of the sun to ensure natural light would fill the breakfast patio in the morning, the dining and main bedroom during the day, and the kitchen in the afternoon and evening.

Outside, the couple opted for weatherboard in black, with both cedar timber and white plaster wall features to add a unique style to the home.

With the concept design and layout decided on, they left the rest to Toni. “I initially worked with them with their spatial planning and overseeing the floor plan, getting the flow just right and making sure they were making the most of the sunshine and amazing views. From there, one thing led to another and I helped them design their kitchen and select materials including their floor coverings, tiles and colour scheme,” Toni says.

Last-minute swap

The kitchen is a place of function and elegance, with soft ambient light during the day and evening sun in the later hours, a last-minute decision suggested by the builders that they don’t regret.

COOL CURVES

(above left) The Marilyn boucle curved sofa is from Little & Fox. Haast Half Dulux paint features throughout the house and the fireplace area (above right) is painted Dulux Haast Double with texture added for a wash effect.

EVENING STAR

(opposite) The deck is in a prime position to capture evening warmth and is a relaxing place to be when dining outdoors.



BATHROOMS & LAUNDRY
ABI Interiors tapware make a sleek design statement and the vanity countertops are made of Melteca. The laundry (right) has an exterior door leading to the outdoor washing line.



“When we worked on the original design, we had planned for the kitchen to be on the eastern side with living on the western aspect. But the builders convinced us to swap it, so the kitchen and dining space would be able to take advantage of the evening sun. This was a great decision. We love that this area opens out onto the deck to capture that evening warmth,” says Laura.

They opted for a sage-coloured kitchen and Melteca cabinetry in Possum Pearl, with sage-green tiles in the scullery. White handmade tiles from Jacobsen’s feature in the kitchen and back in the scullery, they’ve used neutral white cupboards to add to the consistency. To streamline the area, they had the rangehood built into the floating shelf by joiners Sydaz, with clean lines and minimalism as the focus. Open shelving provides a place to showcase their favourite things. “I’m really short and can’t use high cupboards, so there’s no point having them,” says Laura.

The couple often work from home so the dining table is also their WFH hub. The lounge next door can be closed off with a sliding door, making it a quiet place to unwind. It’s also perfect for entertaining with dinner parties, giving visiting children space to

hang out in the lounge or watch a movie while the adults enjoy socialising around the dining table, or dining outside.

Rooms to indulge

The main bedroom was designed as a serene haven, an extra generous-sized luxe space to unwind and retreat. “Because it’s just the two of us, we could splurge on space and wanted our bedroom to feel spacious,” says Laura. The large windows give expansive views out to Lake Runanga from the western side, and when the sun is setting the views are as picturesque as a painting. Luxurious sheer double-tracked curtains enhance the drama and elegance, while a bespoke timber design feature doubles as a headboard.

With space to spare, they built their ensuite the same size as the main bathroom, as this is the area they mostly use. The room is fully tiled in Cinca mosaics in grey/green from Artedomus with double shower and ABI Interiors brushed copper shower head and tapware.

Again, no regrets on the extra space here. “I love the size of the ensuite, the double shower is so convenient for getting ready in the morning, and the space feels so calm,” says Laura.



CLEVER IDEA
This bespoke timber feature wall adds textural interest and acts as a headboard.

TAKE NOTE

The walk-in wardrobe can be accessed from both ends and was custom-made to suit the couple’s individual needs and heights.

home truths

WHAT AREAS OF YOUR RENOVATION DID YOU SAVE ON? SPLURGE ON?

We saved on our four stone benchtops by using offcuts. They are all unique and beautiful. We splurged on our kitchen and scullery, as well as our custom-made bathroom cabinets as we couldn’t find anything that we loved.

ANY RENOVATION OR DIY DISASTERS?

We didn’t have time to do any DIY, and I am thankful we didn’t, as we recently tried to paint our new work premises and it was a disaster. We had to call in the experts.

ANYTHING YOU’D CHANGE?

The only change would be to make the space in the kitchen larger, but at the time that was around a \$50,000 expense we couldn’t afford.

THE MOST MEMORABLE EXPERIENCE YOU’VE HAD IN YOUR HOME?

Living in the country meant lots of mice and cockroaches made it inside during the build, so the first week of living here involved an infestation of both. That was bad. We quickly got the house sprayed and put down traps so there are no more issues. This is a lovely, cosy home and we moved in just before winter. Cranking the fire up at night in the lounge was such a satisfying feeling.



ON THE EXTERIOR

The couple opted for weatherboard in black, with cedar timber and white plaster wall features.

The walk-in wardrobe is able to be accessed from both ends and was custom-made to suit Laura and Shaun's individual needs and heights. Every room in the home has a generous wardrobe, and there's extra storage in the laundry and office.

The price is right

Having a dedicated room for laundry that is both beautiful and functional has been a pleasant surprise for Laura, and there's the added benefit of being able to shut the area off so any mess is out of sight. Toni encouraged the couple to source stone offcuts to use for laundry and bathroom benchtops, so they were able to get quality for a reasonable price. An exterior door in the laundry leads to the outdoor washing line, another functional win.

Waiting for baby

With plenty of space for the couple's future children to run around, the property is surrounded by rolling hills and native plants. The Andrews have planted 160 trees to keep to the easement requiring 85 percent of everything planted to be natives. They also replaced the old lawn with quality grasses to give it a more manicured feel.

Today, with the hard work behind them, the couple are making the most of the lazy afternoons in front of the fire in the lounge, enjoying some down time before their baby arrives. "It's reassuring to know that we will be bringing a new baby into our family home which is warm, dry and comfortable. For now, we think we've designed it perfectly, but ask me in a few years when we have a toddler running around and we'll probably wish we had thought it through a bit more," says Shaun. ●

"We will be bringing a new baby into our family home which is warm, dry and comfortable."

SHAUN ANDREWS

