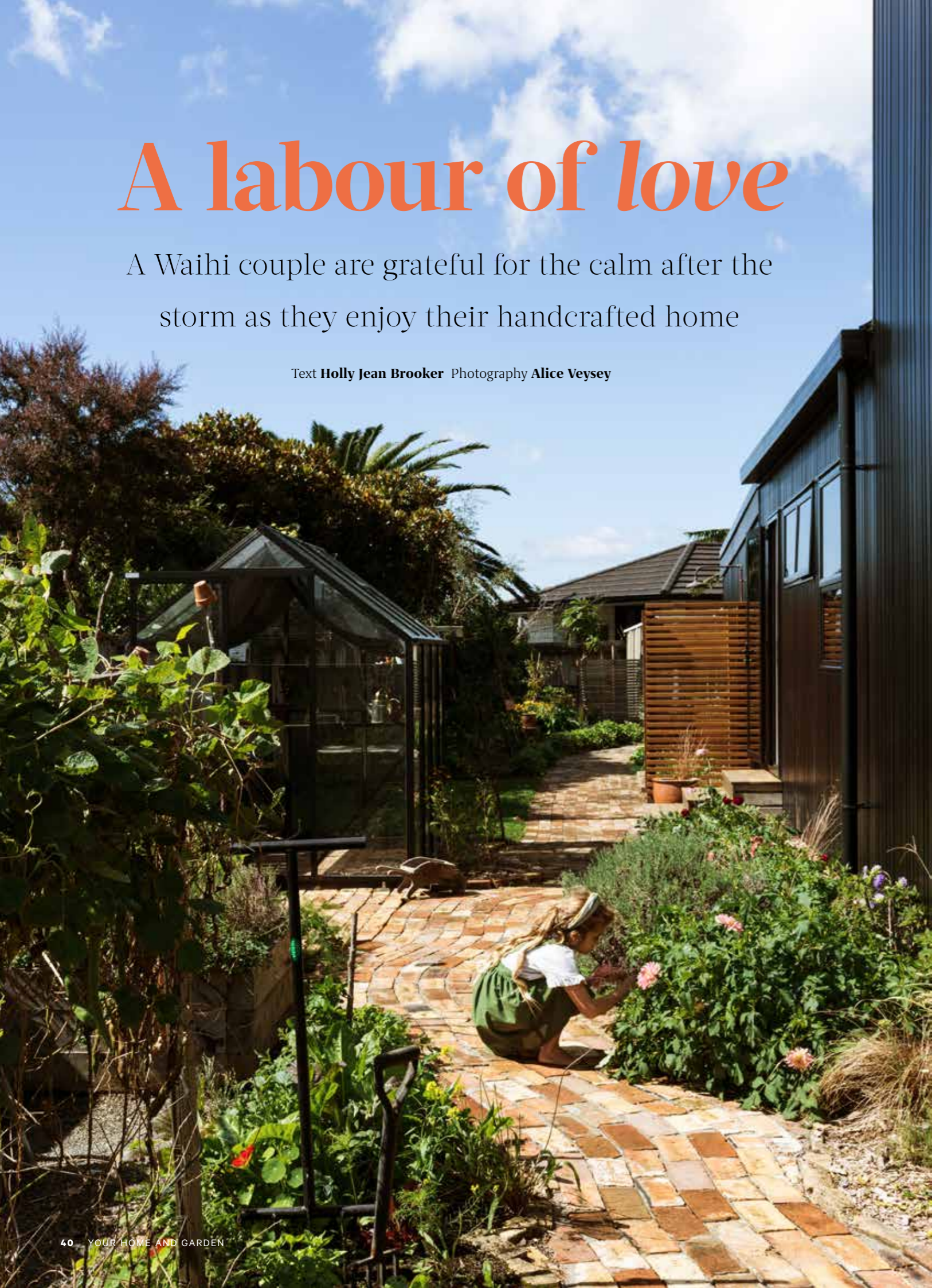


A labour of love

A Waihi couple are grateful for the calm after the storm as they enjoy their handcrafted home

Text **Holly Jean Brooker** Photography **Alice Veysey**



home profile

MEET & GREET

Asha (designer and at-home mother) and Dylan Frost (builder), and their children Koa, seven, Sol, four, and Aro the Siberian husky.

THE PROPERTY

A 217sqm new-build on an 877sqm section at Waihi Beach, Bay of Plenty.



LIGHTING Bulb garlands light up the deck and garden, while two vintage pendants create a cosy ambience over the dining table. The hanging lighting arrangement over the kitchen island was made by Asha, who draped NUD light fittings from Mr Ralph over a thick brass bar.



It's been a pretty big couple of years for Asha and Dylan Frost. The determined duo have pulled through some major setbacks, a serious health scare, becoming parents and building a house on a budget, all while living with extended family. Now blissfully settled in, the couple and their two kids are enjoying a much calmer coastal life in their gorgeous new home at Waihi Beach.

Asha, a designer, and her husband Dylan, a builder, both grew up in the Thames region. Keen to forge a new path together, they found a section near the township of Waihi and began to plan their dream home. By 2019, with a newborn and a toddler in tow, they had begun their build. Dylan was working full-time as a carpenter and spending his weekends building the family home. But life took an unexpected turn when Asha suffered an unexpected brain bleed.

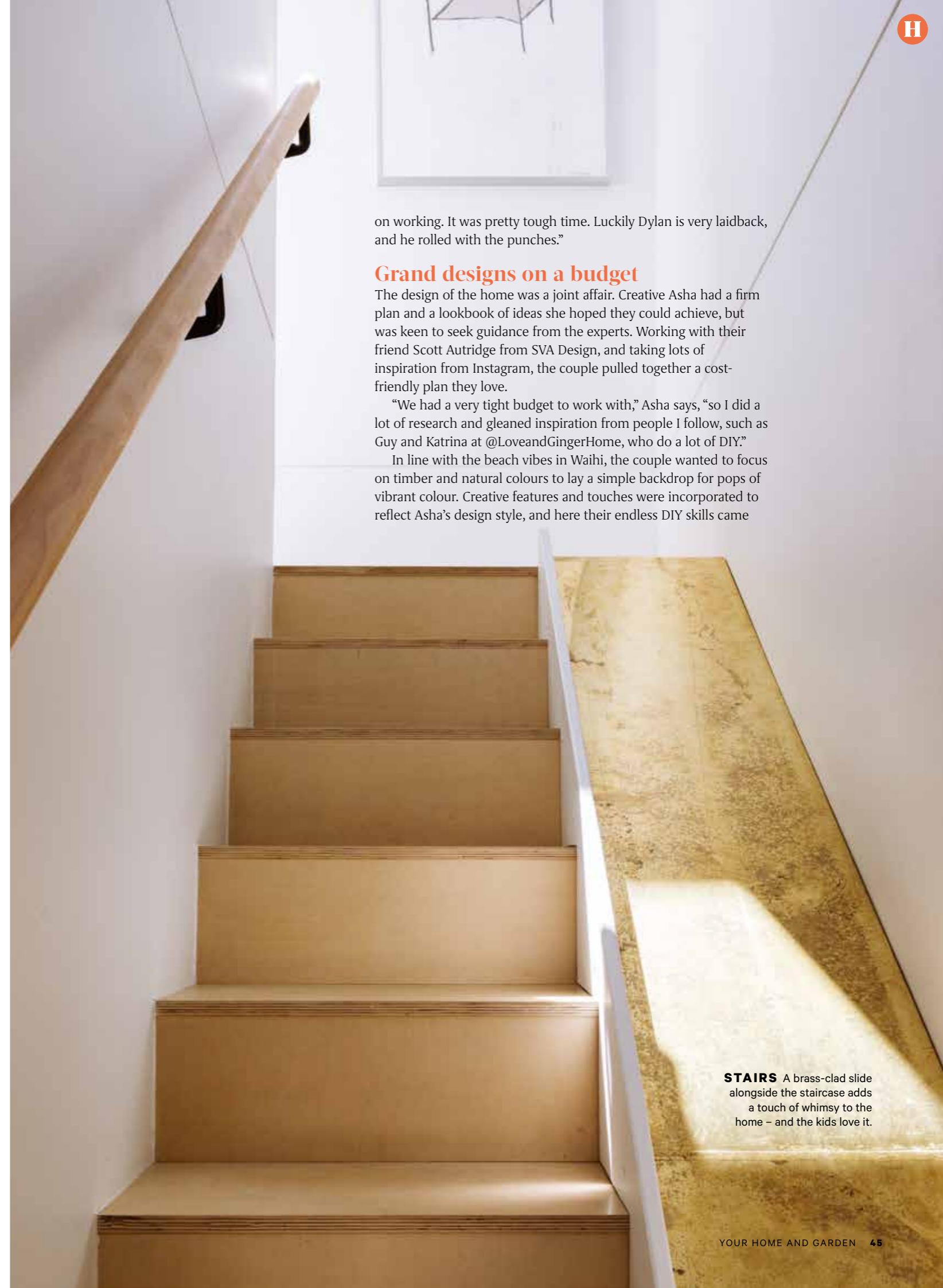
All house plans went on hold while the couple focused on Asha's recovery and healing from this major trauma. "We lived with my parents during the build, which ended up taking four years because of what happened," Asha says. "I was wiped out energy-wise and wasn't able to drive."

"We were staying in Kopu, just out of Thames, so there was a lot of commuting for Dylan, who carried





LIVING AREAS & KITCHEN Asha nabbed the Kindred Road couch in a half-price sale. “We love it. It’s really practical and hard-wearing and it looks great with the timber.” In the scullery, a pegboard painted in Resene Double Lemongrass was inspired by a photo Asha spied on Instagram. “I am not a minimalist,” she says. “I wanted to add colour and texture to the space.” The dahlias are from Petite Flower Farm, Athenree.



on working. It was pretty tough time. Luckily Dylan is very laidback, and he rolled with the punches.”

Grand designs on a budget

The design of the home was a joint affair. Creative Asha had a firm plan and a lookbook of ideas she hoped they could achieve, but was keen to seek guidance from the experts. Working with their friend Scott Autridge from SVA Design, and taking lots of inspiration from Instagram, the couple pulled together a cost-friendly plan they love.

“We had a very tight budget to work with,” Asha says, “so I did a lot of research and gleaned inspiration from people I follow, such as Guy and Katrina at @LoveandGingerHome, who do a lot of DIY.”

In line with the beach vibes in Waihi, the couple wanted to focus on timber and natural colours to lay a simple backdrop for pops of vibrant colour. Creative features and touches were incorporated to reflect Asha’s design style, and here their endless DIY skills came

STAIRS A brass-clad slide alongside the staircase adds a touch of whimsy to the home – and the kids love it.

into play, along with a bunch of clever hacks to keep costs down. “We were aiming for \$300,000 but I would say we ended up at \$400,000, including labour,” says Asha. “I’m too scared to do the final tally.”

Living large

Downstairs, the open-plan living area is designed for family living, with kitchen, dining and lounge leading out to a large deck. Asha’s designer eye for colour is evident in her choice of an orange couch from Kindred Road and a vibrant pair of blue armchairs, which were a thoughtful wedding gift from friends who discovered them at the Seagull Centre recycling depot in Thames and had them recovered for Asha and Dylan. “I was so touched by their huge efforts to make something so special for us,” says Asha.

Reusing or upcycling furniture is a common theme for the Frosts. The plywood media cabinet was originally a rough firewood shelf, until the couple decided to repurpose it by painting it, adding doors and attaching it to the wall.

The dining table was salvaged from Asha’s godfather’s workshop. Layers of diesel grease were no deterrent to the industrious couple, who sanded back the legs and added a plywood top. “I love sitting at it, knowing there is a little piece connected to him in my home,” Asha reflects.

The use of timber is repeated in multiple ways in this space, with the couple opting for pine ply flooring, a fresh take on traditional timber floorboards. But it didn’t happen without a hitch. “The first flooring we laid was a cheaper product, a bleached birch plywood,” says Asha. “It went mouldy and started delaminating quickly. We were gutted.” Rolling with the punches, the Frosts found an easy solution. “We ended up putting another floor on top of it, in a high-quality ply, which is great and really hard-wearing for the kids.”

Kitchen inspo

Being a high-use area, the family-friendly designer kitchen was a room the couple were happy to invest in. “I spend 99 percent of my life in the kitchen and didn’t

STORAGE There’s no shortage of storage throughout the home, with ply a favourite material. The custom shelving units are perfect for displaying Asha’s many artworks and mementoes. “Sometimes a mishmash of styles works,” she says. “If it brings you joy that’s all that matters. Do exactly what you love and it will come together and be uniquely you.”



GARDEN Asha is slowly transforming the outdoor areas into a food forest and ornamental garden, complete with paved brick pathways and a glasshouse.



want to go cheap on anything," Asha says. "I had designed what I wanted and contacted a few kitchen companies in Thames, but no one got back to me."

So when she read in a magazine about Motide, a husband-and-wife-run Raglan company making stylish natural kitchens, she contacted them with her concepts. "They got back to me straight away with a design I loved," she says. "It was meant to be." Key

to Asha's vision was a solid timber benchtop partnered with ply cabinetry, with specific storage allocated to different kitchen needs. A keen gardener, she also wanted a built-in bokashi composting system.

The result is pure perfection. The Motide team handcrafted the benchtop from brown barrel eucalyptus, adding a matching solid timber shelf above the sink so Asha could display her collectibles. The





LAUNDRY The cabinetry in the laundry room was crafted by Dylan to Asha's design, including clever touches such as an ironing board that flips out from the wall.

STUDIO Asha enjoys having a separate studio space where she can work on art and design projects away from little hands.

white-painted ply cabinetry feels crisp and clean, while pantry foods and extra kitchenware are tucked out of sight behind a bleached birch ply sliding door in the scullery. Open shelving on the end of the kitchen island is a practical spot to display books. To save on cost, the kitchen is tiled with low-priced white gloss tiles from Mitre 10.

Tile style

The kids' bedrooms and family bathroom are downstairs, with the bathroom featuring a Japanese-style shower the couple created using inspiration from Instagram and some clever thinking. "We built a shower platform next to the bath using vitex timber decking sitting on an aluminium frame that we had made by Outdure," says Asha. "It has a stainless-steel tray in the bottom with drainage. The timber boards are removable so you can lift them out and clean the tray. It's so much easier than a typical shower."

The vanity was made using macrocarpa salvaged from Asha's father's shed, which Asha describes as "a treasure trove of goodies that we can help ourselves to", and the basin was also found in the shed.

Dylan and Asha laid the concrete-look lino from Flooring Xtra themselves. "I'm amazed at how often friends come upstairs and say, 'Wow, you have concrete flooring up here.' I tell them to think about that for a minute, before they click that it's lino. It looks so real," says Asha.

The white gloss tiles from Mitre 10 are the same as those in the kitchen. The floor-to-ceiling tiling was a labour of love and commitment from Asha, who took over the job when Dylan didn't follow her instructions. "After showing my wonderful husband many pictures of how I wanted them laid subway-style, he laid the ensuite tiles straight on top of each other," Asha says. "I wasn't impressed so he took them off and started again. I had to sack him and his mates from grouting as their attention to detail wasn't the best. So I took over tiling. After kindly drop-off I would go home and work as hard as I could, then be back for pick-up at 3pm. It was a big job and probably not the ideal way to start my tiling career."

Upstairs, the main bedroom features large-scale windows offering sweeping views of Waihi Beach and the lush farmland around the Golden Valley area en route to Whangamatā. A feature wall built with bleached birch ply separates the sleeping space from the open walk-in wardrobe and ensuite, with light grey carpet by Godfrey Hirst soft underfoot. A large bookshelf, made by Dylan using old tongue-and-groove timber also rescued from Asha's father's shed, showcases Asha's love of reading.

The bench in the ensuite was also crafted from a large slab of macrocarpa found in that treasure trove of a shed, and secured to the wall using large Bowmac brackets traditionally used for house bracing, which the couple sprayed black. A mango-coloured concrete basin from Concrete Nation adds a colour pop that Asha loves.

Step outside

Outdoors, the vitex timber deck shaded by timber panelling made from battens is a favourite spot for the kids to hang out. A trapeze bar and swing add to the fun.

The lawn is framed by vegetable gardens, where Asha has slowly been creating a food forest and ornamental gardens with the help of friend and gardening guru Mel



BEDROOMS Splashes of colour and quirky details give the bedrooms a playful mood. "I thought I was going to have a neutral, earthy house with whites and natural wood, but my kids helped me add colour for a bit of fun," says Asha.

"Art is everything to me. It brings so much joy. Always buy the art. You will never regret it."

ASHA FROST



BATHROOMS The couple designed and constructed the Japanese-style shower flooring themselves, and also laid the oversized pavers in the base of the outdoor shower. The checked Baina towels in the ensuite (right) are from Sunday Homestore, Waihi Beach.



homes. The couple were weighing up board-and-batten cladding, but realised that investing a little more in Nu-Wall would work out better long-term, with no ongoing maintenance repainting the boards. They also liked the clean lines created by its lack of visible fixings, while its weather-tightness makes it the perfect product for the coastal climate.

“It was the first time Dylan had used this product, and installing the eight-metre-long aluminium sheets on the second level wasn’t easy,” Asha says. “I think he has nightmares about it, but it was worth it.”

Even for easy-going Dylan, the build has been testing at times. “Completing the upper storey and finally being able to see the view without having to stand on ladders and scaffolds was so satisfying,” he says.

“The winter was rough. It was wet and windy, the windows arrived late, the tarps were flapping, the iron ripped off the roof, the floor went mouldy – you name it. It’s always a challenge building a house, but it’s great having it completed and being able to enjoy it now.” ●

Pentecost of Planted Landscaping. Everything from vegetables and white alpine strawberries to a berry arbour and fruit trees populate this space, along with a stunning glasshouse from Winter Gardenz.

The outdoor shower is perfect for a post-swim rinse-off and was built by the couple using large paving stones donated by a neighbour up the road.

Clad in black Nu-Wall aluminium, the stylish home stands out in a neighbourhood largely dotted with lighter

STUDIO Inspired by an episode of her favourite television show, *Grand Designs*, Asha clad one wall of her standalone art studio with brass scales – a welcoming sight as you enter the driveway.

