

# A SLICE OF COUNTRY

By Graham Hepburn



Creating a home that blends into the landscape and its rural surrounds was part of the brief for architectural designer Brynn McCauley on this award-winning project.

"The owners wanted to create something in keeping with the site and like the surrounding rural buildings so milking sheds – with their simple facades and striking mono-pitched roof forms – were the main inspiration," says Brynn. "The site is set in the valley with hills behind. It's a beautiful site with strong geography, some lovely landforms and a great outlook with a peep of the sea."



The 210sq m home in the village of Manakau was designed to resemble a collection of rural buildings, while vertically arranged COLORSTEEL® appears to fold from the mono-pitch roof down the front of the home, mimicking the steeply rising ridgeline that forms a backdrop to the property.

Bringing these elements together successfully saw Brynn recently become a national winner at the 2013 ADNZ Resene Architectural Design Awards for New Homes Between 150sqm and 300sqm after picking up the regional prize in the same category at the ADNZ awards earlier in the year.

Brynn says having "design-conscious and site-conscious" clients in Lucy Potter and Ramon Hart helped immensely, as well as having a strong site to work with.

The west-facing property features a four-bedroom home with attached garaging and a large forecourt separating it from a 58sqm workshop – both of the latter two features important to Ramon, a logging contractor. The house plan is arranged so the buildings – all similar in form – nestle into the contours of the site.

Budget was also an important part of the equation, and the couple was not prepared to compromise on the size of what was to be a family home.

Brynn says this meant using simple materials and building methods, again in keeping with the functionality of rural buildings. COLORSTEEL® Endura in Metcom7 profile has been used for the roofing and part of the building's façade.





"Normally Metcom7 is used in industrial or agricultural settings but we wanted to use its strong lines to relate it to the alignment of the hills and the way the escarpment ranges up so the house layers in with that and the linear elements of the Tararuas," says Brynn.

"Looking at the house you get the idea of a grouping of buildings rather than one solid form. So what you see is not one amorphous structure but elements that punch out," says Brynn. "It was quite a challenge to create that impression



visually with basic building materials. "The plywood is battened on the joins so it has a slightly industrial/agricultural flavour and looks like a utility building."

Because the project is located in an area identified as having significant landscape and rural character, a resource consent was required to ensure that the house reflected those values and that meant subdued "earthy tones" were required for the exterior. The roof and cladding is in 'Greyfriars', while the board and batten areas have been stained with Resene Woodsman 'Equilibrium'. The plywood panels and glazing were "formatted" to create symmetry on the exterior, while aluminium joinery was used to complement the light, uncluttered look.

Plywood panels are also used within the house such as on the kitchen island and family room walls to blend the interior with the exterior.

The entrance is at the south end, slicing between the form of the garage and main form of the house.

The kitchen, open plan living areas and main bedroom are then arranged across the front and along the plan on a north-south axis. The children's bedrooms, main bathroom and



"The living room has lots of sun and ventilation, and almost feels like an outside space," says Brynn.

While subdued tones were required for the exterior, the interior features splashes of colour – blues, greens and yellows – that define different areas and inject a sense of fun.



services areas are set in the quieter space behind these busy areas. This layout optimises the connection of the living spaces to the property and views out over the valley. A woodburner with wetback warms the living space, and, given Ramon's job, there is no lack of fuel.

The kitchen serves as the main focus to the interior of the house, commanding wide views out over the property.

The living and kitchen spaces all open via stacking sliding doors out onto the large decked areas, to



with planting along the edges so you cross that through a swathe of plants as the driveway winds its way up to the house."

Brynn says this approach combined with the home's simple but striking forms help to create a sense of arrival.

### Brynn McCauley, Architectural Designer

Brynn McCauley has been working in the architectural industry since undertaking his studies at the Victoria University School of

architectural practices, which gives him a wide variety of experience, working on a range of projects throughout the country.

He has been responsible for and contributed to a number of projects that have achieved industry awards and recognition, including a number of ADNZ National and Regional awards.

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the northern and western sides of the house. Placement of the decks was carefully considered to provide sheltered areas.

Landscaping has been kept to a minimum in line with the rural shed aesthetic.

"Essentially they wanted the property to be left as a paddock running up and around past the house with the decks reaching out into the paddock and some grasses and flaxes around the edges," says Brynn. "There's a stream that runs diagonally across the property

Architecture in 1991. He has a Bachelor of Building Science and is a Design 2 Licensed Building Practitioner. He has been a member of ADNZ since 2002. He began his own business working in the Kapiti/Horowhenua/Wellington region as BMC Design Ltd in 1997. Prior to this he had the benefit of working for a number of leading New Zealand architectural and interior design practices.

Since commencing his own business, he has focused on delivering creative and contemporary architectural design solutions to a wide variety of projects and clients, throughout the country. His projects often have a contemporary flavour, with materials and built form that explores and relates to their intended function, the site and needs of the client.

These projects have involved working in Commercial Interior Design, Retail, Light Commercial, through to New Residential work and alterations. He also often works in close association with other

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