

# .. LIVE

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## Let's GO

The plans for getting us moving

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# A Modern Castle

They say a man's home is his castle and what better way to reach your castle than via a drawbridge across a moat? The latest home to be completed by local architect, Neville Saunders, is a modern take on a fairytale home. Words: Irena Brooks Photos: Mark Harris

Beyond the grey fence and cedar gate lies a bridge across to the front door. Below is a riverbed of plants that is easy-care yet grounds the property.

This was almost a brand new build, with just the footprint of the original house retained, along with some of the original wall framing, but Neville reckons everything else was pretty past its best.

**"The owners wanted a house that made a bit of a statement but was very contemporary, lots of light and airiness about it.**

**And a good guest area, plus a decent home theatre set-up,"** he recalls of the original brief.

The exterior of the house is a blend of cedar, grey plaster, Alucobond and Titan Board painted in a deep red by ColourPLUS Jacobsens Paints which has a 12 year non-fade feature," says Neville.

The front door opens into an atrium and hall, tiled with large grey glossy squares that reflect the light coming in from the massive glass pane that reaches from above the front door right up to the ceiling

of the top floor. This design feature is the crux of the home, giving it a grandeur in keeping with the exterior as well as offering the practical element of light.

The first area you come to on the left of the hall is the open plan kitchen and dining area. The first impression is of light and space as floor to ceiling windows and sliding doors, reveal an enticing wooden deck that wraps this whole side of the house and beyond that, a beautifully landscaped garden.

The open plan living is accentuated even more with two sets of sliding glass doors, which meet in a





corner and can be opened up completely. There's no supporting post to interfere with the flow – it's like taking out two walls of the kitchen. This feature is perfect to get a breeze wafting through the house on hot summer days and for entertaining as guests can easily drift from the kitchen and dining area to the deck and the garden.

The deck is made more functional by the addition of a tinted glazed canopy over part of it – letting the light in but keeping any summer showers at bay.

Plantings offer privacy, lushness, functionality and beauty. There's a vegetable garden that is so well-tended it offers ornamental value as well as nourishment. The fact it is so handy to the kitchen ensures the cook can easily spy what's ready to be picked. The entire design and construction of the garden was by Oakura man, Sam Sutherland.

In the kitchen it's all white, bright and stainless steel. Designed by Prestige Kitchens, a 3.8 metre island means there is always oodles of bench space and the plethora of cupboards and drawers don't feature a single handle or knob – just a gentle push on the doors and drawers and they open electronically.

Double stacker doors grant full and easy access to the large pantry and soft fluorescent light bathes the bench-top.

With stainless steel appliances and an induction cook top (a pot of cold water can be brought to the boil in less than a minute!) this is a kitchen that encourages cooking. Indeed, the owner admits it's her favourite room of the entire house.

Off to the side of the kitchen is a delightful sitting area and the entire expanse of windows has been fitted with automatic blinds, which descend and retract at the push of a button on a remote control.

In stark contrast to the main living area is a separate lounge, which overlooks one side of the front garden. With charcoal walls and a feature wall in charcoal and grey striped wallpaper, this room is deliberately dark, as the owners wanted their own home theatre.

At the push of a button, a blind comes down over the window and completely obscures any light. A drop-down screen, row of black leather couches and chairs, complete with cup-holders, plus a collection of black bean bags completes the home theatre experience.

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Beyond the dining area is the door to the laundry and double garage. The laundry features two large sliding drawers – one for whites and one for coloureds, as well as plenty of bench space, washer, dryer and ironing accoutrements. A door opens directly from the laundry to the deck and washing line.

The other side of the house is dedicated to sleeping quarters, bathroom and storage.

Across the hall are two double bedrooms separated by a divine bathroom.

There's a large translucent glass wall across the bathroom and behind it on one side is the shower and on the other side, the toilet. It's a smart touch that gives light and privacy to the shower and toilet and clean lines to the bathroom.

Decorative tiles set in the floor, glass basins and well-thought-out lighting give the bathroom the extra design elements that make it a stunner.

An office completes this side of the house, with a relaxing view over the front garden, while floor to ceiling storage cupboards make the most of the space in the hall.

The entire house is climate controlled with seven heat pumps from Climate, and double-glazing throughout ensures ultimate thermal control as well as aiding in noise reduction.

Decorated throughout in shades of black, charcoal, grey, white and stainless, accentuates various accessories, art and architectural features that sport a dash of colour or timber. For example, the staircase raising to the second floor is carpeted to almost the edge, but each side of the stairs is finished with rimu timber that gives the whole structure an extra element of design appeal.

The plain grey walls make an excellent back-drop for local paintings and an enlarged artistic photo of the view from the owners' previous home.

The carpet is called Malibu Lights (colour 89) and is patterned and textured which gives this 100% wool carpet a different mood according the available light in each room.



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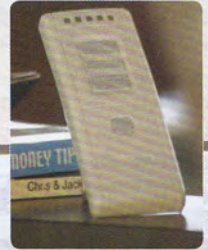
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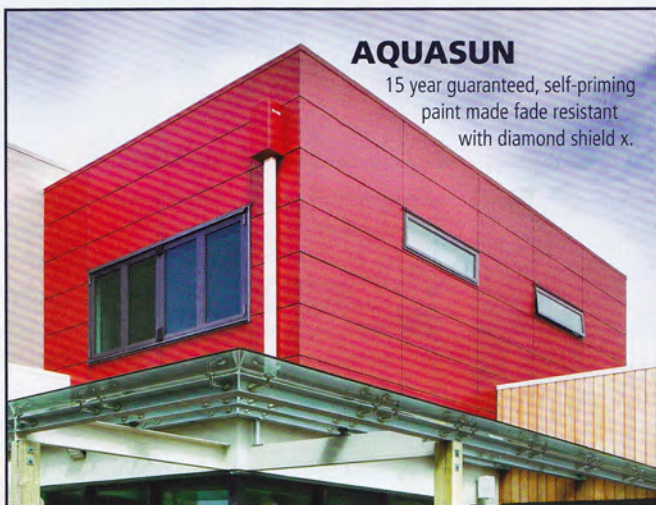
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in the Feature Home.

On the top floor of the house is the master bedroom, with walk-in wardrobe and en suite on one side of the stairs and a gym on the other. The two areas are separated by the staircase and a bridge, from where you can look down into the hall and sitting room.

From here, you can also look back into the atrium and you realize the large glass pane at the front of the house has been screened with exterior louvres, which still permit light but give privacy from the street.

The gym has great views across the city and there is provision for a television and sound system, giving the owners all the motivation they need.

The master bedroom enjoys views over the city to Paritutu, and you can also look down through the bi-fold windows to the back garden and perimeter of established trees. Though this is an inner city property it is incredibly private and quiet.

The walk-in wardrobe features a clever combination of a full-length mirror, which opens as a door to reveal multiple shelves of shoes behind its length.

The en suite is done in similar tonings to the main bathroom downstairs, but has its own style.

Like the two downstairs bedrooms and the lounge, the master bedroom has a feature wall in a different wallpaper, so each room, though tied together with the same palette of colours, has a very individual feel.

It was important to the owner and architect that the right hues were used.

"You can get some greys which look brown or even green or can be very cold," says Neville.

"The paint used on the walls and ceilings throughout is called 'Concrete' and is a nice, warm grey," he adds, crediting the owners with the excellent décor choices.

Black joinery was used throughout as "it recedes when you look through it," Neville explains.

"With black, the view outside becomes dominant, not the joinery."

Likewise, the light switches and power points are also all black. A new range called PDL Strato, they feature a small blue LED light when they are switched off so there's no frenetic sweeping of the wall in the dark trying to find the switch.

"This is a home that will grow with the family," says Neville. "You can change things around without upsetting the flow of the house."

"I just love this place so much," says the owner.

"it's just so nice to come home to." ..



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