



Easterbrook house

Titirangi, Auckland

 Resene Spotlight

Taking its design cues from the utilitarian forms of a tent and a shed, this Titirangi home for an extended family is a duo of compact buildings that uses a humble set of materials to allow the landscape its rightful place in the scheme.

Sited for sun, seclusion and views of the surrounding bush, the main dwelling and its 'mini me' cousin share an aesthetic and similar planning. The primary home is conceived as a barn-like pavilion with bedrooms for adults and kids located at opposite ends. A canopy-like roof is strung between these more-solid bookends to architecturally mimic a tarpaulin.

A modest footprint of 120 square metres called for meticulous planning with no wasted space. The aim was to live big in this small dwelling. Although the rectangular shape is only four metres

wide, the soaring mono-pitch roof and full-height glazing brings a feeling of spaciousness to the main living zone. A split-truss roof allows an external pergola to shade the home in summer and clerestory windows bring in low winter light. The low-key combination of glulam beams, plywood walls and ceilings, aluminium joinery and concrete floors lends a casual feel.

A sunken lounge in the open-plan living zone is a modern take on the 70s conversation pit and this change in level demarcates the space. Built-in furniture ensured more space saving and includes an entertainment unit as well as an L-shaped banquette backed by bookshelves. Off the kitchen, a set of cavity sliders demarcates a spare bedroom or office. A bed here folds up into the wall. Board-and-batten detailing on this insertion further defines this zone

and unexpectedly brings the barn-like exterior cladding indoors.

Built-in bunks in the kids' bedrooms can readily be converted to a desk - an aspect that future proofs the home for a growing family. Pops of primary colour were the result of a collaboration between the homeowners and the project architect. This is a palette with an unmistakable personality that not only reflects the 'holiday-like' nature of the architecture, but captures a playfulness that's an everyday thrill for children and the young at heart. Determined shades of orange, red, yellow and blue on doors, kitchen cabinetry and built-in furniture are a delightful surprise amidst the otherwise pared-back materiality.

Although the home (and its smaller counterpart) has just been completed, it appears long settled in this verdant

environment. That's a result of an honest design that harks back to vernacular buildings. The house openly tells the story of how it was made.

There are times when contemporary architecture is guilty of taking itself too seriously. It's a case of any colour - as long as it's a no-nonsense neutral. But this Titirangi home was built as an escape from the city; moving here provided the opportunity for a busy couple with two young children to simplify life, be mindful of their environment and have some fun.

Choosing shades that would reflect a lightness of being and appeal to the free-spirited nature of their two boys (aged 10 and 5) was the starting point. Playful, primary colour features throughout the dwelling, bringing an element of delight to doors, cabinetry and built-in furniture. Five colours from the same

strong tonal family were chosen: **Resene Monza**, **Resene Chilean Fire**, **Resene Supernova**, **Resene Paradiso** and **Resene Bokara Grey**.

The placement of these multiple blocks of bold paint around the home is certainly in keeping with the trend to colour blocking. However, it wasn't fashion, but rather considered methodology, that drove their selection.

The primary shades not only provide a counterpoint to the pared-back materiality of the house, but there's a 'secret code' behind them. Bright yellow Resene Supernova on the built-in desks-cum-bunks of the children's bedrooms was chosen because the boys are 'the sunshine of our lives', comments the homeowner. The blue of Resene Paradiso that features on the doors leading to the bathroom, laundry and ensuite indicates

a wet zone. The red of Resene Monza on the master bedroom door has a message for youngsters. It means 'Stop!' if the door is closed. Similarly, doors that slide over the television set in the built-in living room cabinet indicate when screentime is off limits.

Subliminal messages aside, a trio of colours (Resene Monza, Resene Chilean Fire and Resene Supernova) on panels of the plywood kitchen cabinetry are Mondrian in style. Such warm, inviting shades are guaranteed to stimulate the appetite of even the fussiest eater.

This family of four has settled into their new built home and they are enjoying the gentler, slower pace. Colouring their environment has been integral to the process - an outward expression of their wish to live more creatively.



Architectural specifier: Dorrington Atcheson Architects - Tim Dorrington & Marie-Claire Henderson www.daa.co.nz

Building contractor: Axis Projects Ltd www.axisprojects.co.nz

Client: Mark and Susie Easterbrook

Colour selection: Mark Easterbrook

Painting contractor (interior and exterior walls): Mark Easterbrook

Photographer: Emma-Jane Hetherington