

MONOCLE

A BRIEFING ON GLOBAL AFFAIRS, BUSINESS, CULTURE & DESIGN

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Charm, the next offensive. Is it time to go back to finishing school?

Why businesses, brands and nations need a new buzzword for 2012 and beyond. **MONOCLE REPORTS** on the top charmers



1 SMILE
...
A small gesture transforms transactions and makes them matter

2 BE HONEST
...
Be proud of qualities that can't be faked

3 BE TRUE
...
Have an opinion. Don't workshop your vision

4 BE FRIENDLY
...
We all want a bit more warmth

5 AND...
...
Charm is not measurable. Bad luck for copy-cat firms



Konnichiwa!

OUR JAPAN TRAVEL GUIDE

A MONOCLE GUIDE TO THE WORLD'S MOST CHARMING NATION



HEAD FOR THE HILLS:
Get your skis on for a tour of the Japan Alps (also home to famed puddings)



LISTEN TO THIS:
From J-pop to traditional tunes, you'll be filling your tote with CDs from a Nippon tour



WELL GROOMED:
Even the fluffed-up pooches are exquisitely coiffed (and behaved)



TAKE THE BULLET:
Ride the Shinkansen to see Japan at high speed

D

RESIDENCE
New Zealand

BACH LIFE —Piha

Preface

Tucked inside woodland and backing onto a beach, this residence in New Zealand's North Island is the most ambitious project to date from local practice Herbst Architects, using plenty of wood to blend into the scenery.

WRITER
Sam Eichblatt

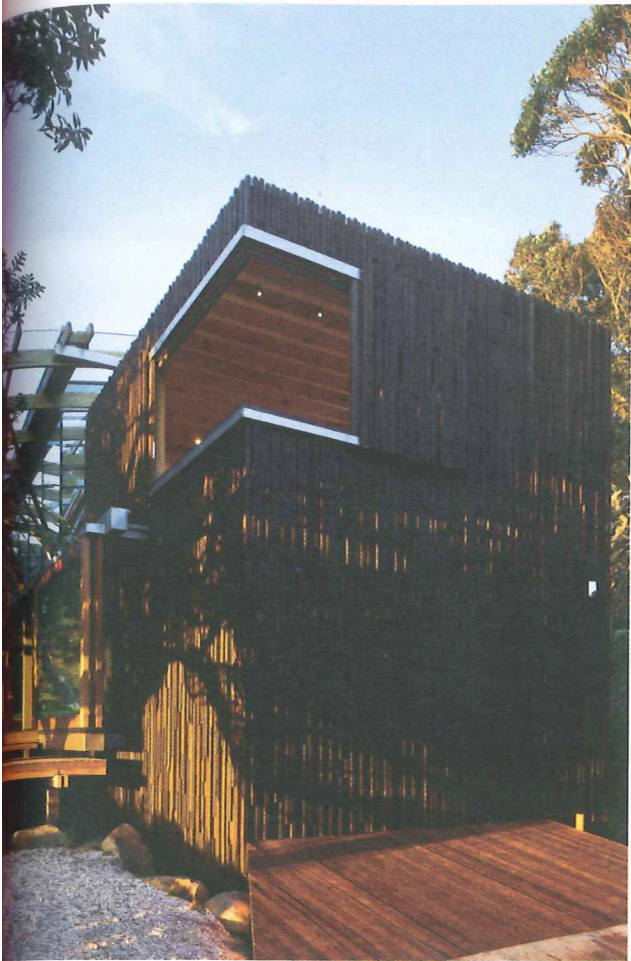
PHOTOGRAPHER
Patrick Reynolds

Herbst Architects is renowned in New Zealand for its signature remodelling of the classic Kiwi bach. Taking the spirit of the traditionally cobbled-together holiday home or beach shelter, it has been designing a series of highly sophisticated, sustainable dwellings – eight of them so far on Great Barrier Island, a mountainous ridge of land 100km by sea from downtown Auckland.

The practice's latest, and largest, project back on the mainland marks its crossover into new territory. Designed for an Auckland couple who are patrons of the arts and architecture, the Butler Beach House is designed to be not just a holiday house but a coastal retreat for extended periods of time.

"Conceptually, detail-wise and materials-wise, this is the most advanced project we've worked on so far," says Lance Herbst who, alongside partner Nicola, leads the small Auckland-based firm. The airy cedar and glass pavilion lies within a belt of native pohutukawa trees that soften the force of the onshore wind at Piha, one of a chain of moody,

- 01 External view of garage and master bedroom
02 Entrance to house through pohutukawas



01



02

often blustering black-sand surf beaches on Auckland's west coast.

Building regulations in this part of the world, especially ones pertaining to the natural landscape, are tight. While it seems voluminous inside, the house is nearly as tall as it is wide, so the floor plate is, in fact, very small. "We were cutting down trees – a serious act in New Zealand," says Herbst. "The house is replacing them, so it has to refer to that. We were essentially building it inside and beneath the canopy."

As a result, the beach house is composed of two black-stained wood-clad towers that visually reference the surrounding trees and contain the private spaces – the bathrooms and bedrooms. As in other Herbst projects, the latter are designed as simple, distraction-free "cells" lined with poplar ply panels.

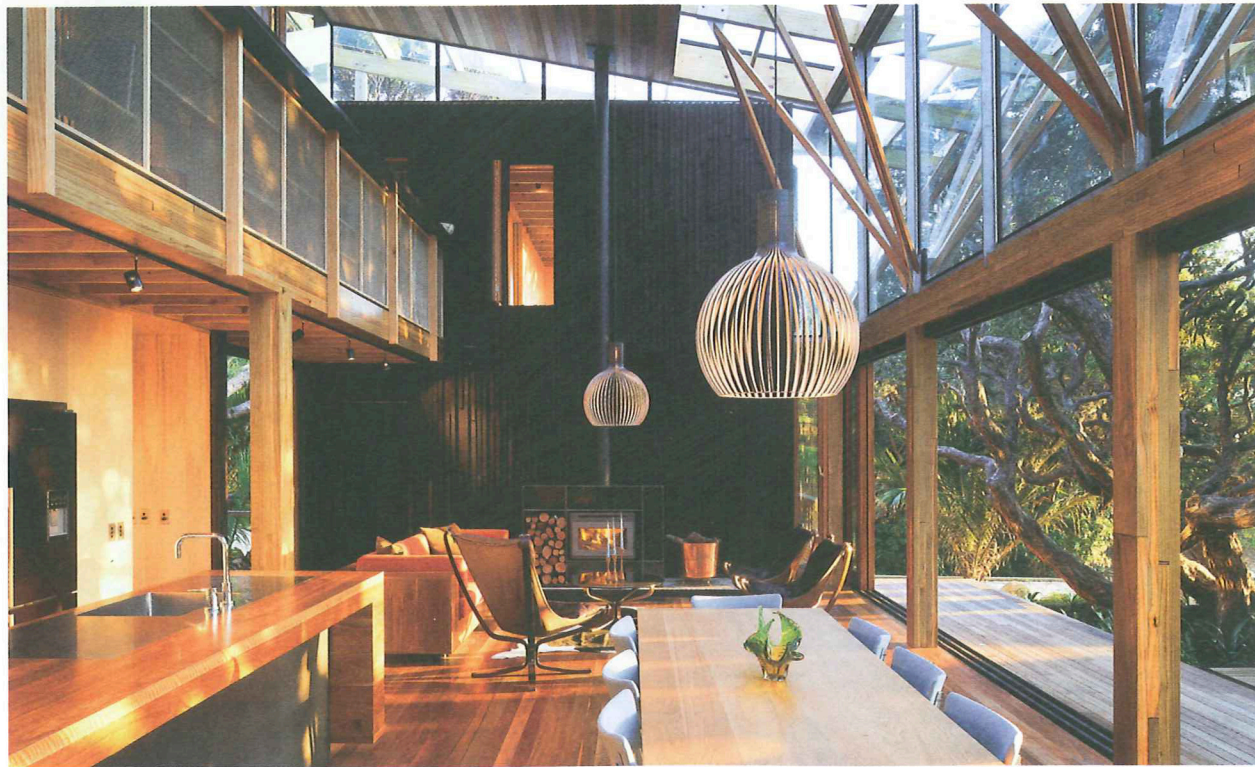
Throughout the house, the use of exposed wood gives the light a mellow quality, the grain lending its own low-key detail. "We're interested in the patina that develops through age, using cedar that



01 Entrance to main bedroom with lots of cupboard space
02 Multi-functional living and dining room area
03 Steps leading up to the breakfast deck

04 Ground floor bedroom
05 View of living area from the upper bridge
06 Mezzanine daybed with light, tree-filled views looking north

01



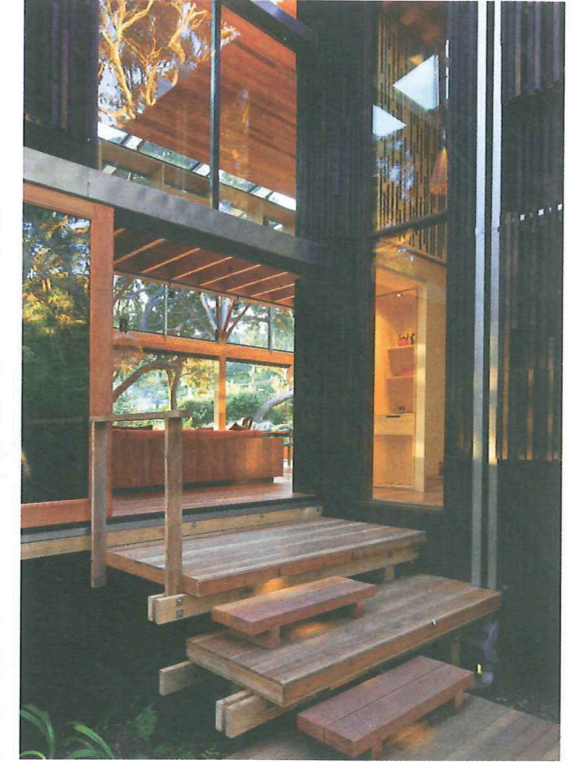
02



04



05



06

LANGE & NICOLA HERBSTS' CV

The couple met while studying architecture at the University of Cape Town.

After graduating, they worked partly together and partly independently on projects in South Africa.

Immigrated to New Zealand in 1998.

Established Herbst Architects in 2000.

One of the couple's first projects was their own bach, for which they received the New Zealand Institute of Architects Award in 2002.

Great Barrier Island is home to eight of their houses.

As the island is off the electricity grid, each project was designed to have minimal impact on the environment.

The Lindale Bach is one of the practice's most significant projects: an example of an environmentally sustainable casual shelter created to high specifications.



06

DRESIDENCE
New Zealand

fades to driftwood-grey colours, and letting nature do its thing, instead of plasticising everything,” says Herbst.

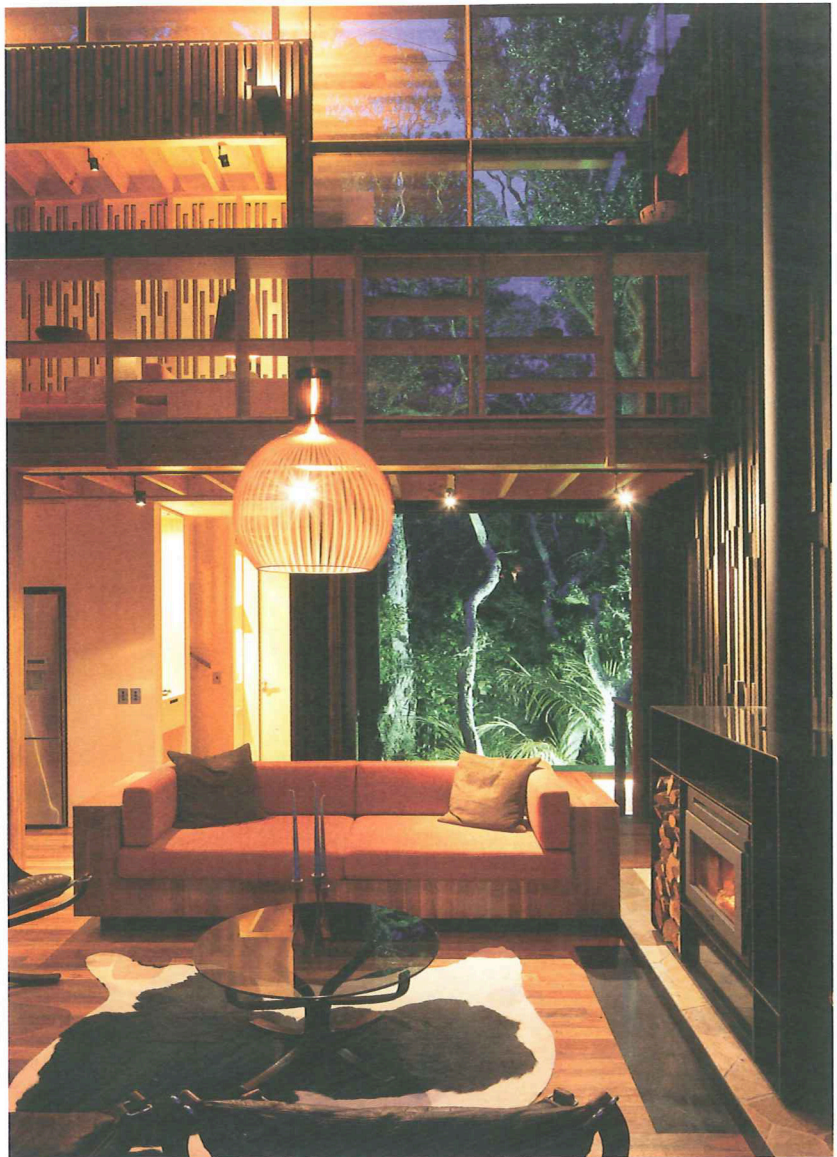
Between them, the towers support a roof that “frays” from solid wood to glass, above a central, double-height living area, the public space, which gives a full view of the surrounding trees, firmly establishing a sense of place. Sliding doors on both sides can be rolled completely away – the Herbst’s clean (and now trademark) take on the outdoor room.

“It’s a model we’ve used before,” says Herbst. “It’s a room that is an interface between inside and outside, but in winter the owners can close it up and really get the fire going.” Above, a bridge between the two towers acts as a mezzanine area, and the balustrade has been detailed with shelves to collect books and objects discovered from the beach. “The longer [the clients] live there, the more it will reflect the life of the beach,” says Herbst. — (M)



02

- 01 Living area overlooked by bedroom bridge connection
- 02 Ensuite bathroom attached to the main bedroom
- 03 The doors to the living and cooking space can be slid away, opening completely onto the forest



01



03