



Holiday romance

Simple timber construction and unadorned materials allow this all-timber bach to lure its owners into a love affair set to last decades

TEXT by Penny Lewis PHOTOGRAPHY by Jackie Meiring



The building's "naturalness" does not jar with the green fields of the farm next door; with age the timber will complement the hue of the sand at the nearby beach

ABOVE Cedarboard-and-batten cladding and kwila decking create a linear rhythm at this coastal holiday home, designed by Herbst Architects. The hanging wicker chair is from Auckland's Ritzy Bits.

RIGHT A woodburner encased in a shaped, mild steel surround keeps the bach warm in winter. The wicker pendant lamp is a prototype made by Vivian Keenan, while the rest of tables is from Zeitgeist in Auckland's Gray Lynn.



Timber may well be the perfect building material for New Zealand. As well as being richly tactile, its grain a playful match for the movement of light, a well-constructed timber house can stand up to the elements more robustly than other dwellings. But there's more to wood than the practicalities because, rather than impose itself on a landscape, a timber home can settle quietly into the scenery. Such is the case with this coastal bach, designed by Nicola and Lance Herbst of Auckland-based Herbst Architects and built by Tony Simpson of Paragon Construction.

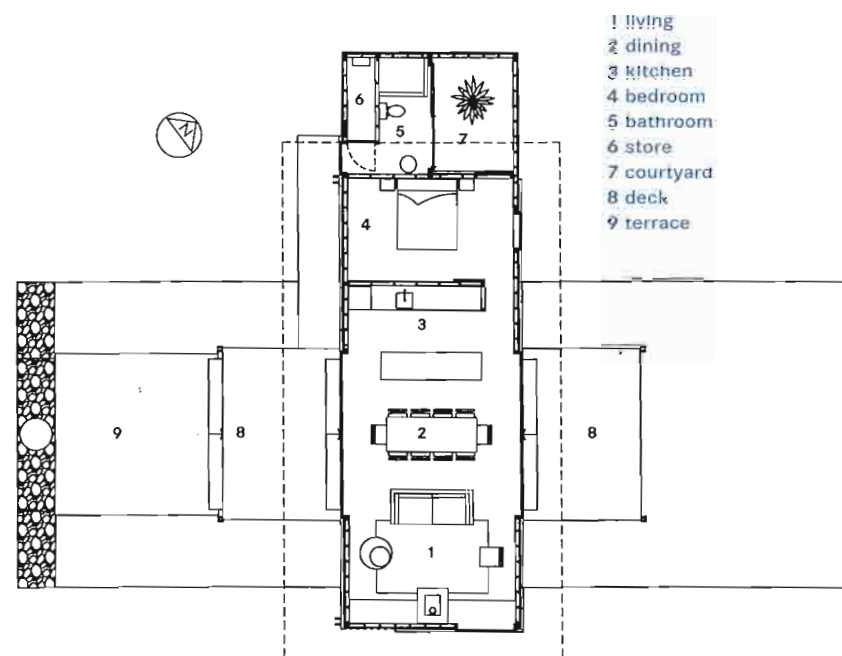
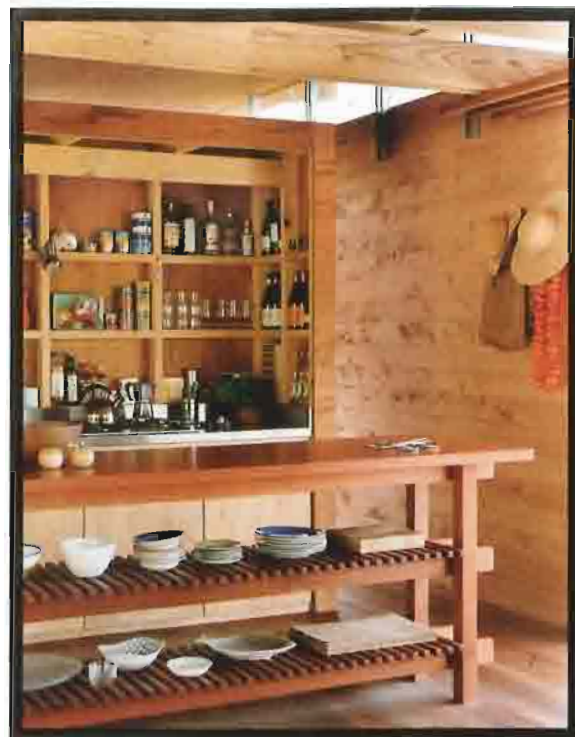
The holiday home's cedar board-and-batten-clad exterior, kwila flooring and decking and macrocarpa interior lining will mellow and weather elegantly. Today, the visual impact of the building's "naturalness" does not jar with the green fields of the farm next door and; with age, the timbers' patina will complement the

hue of the sand at the nearby beach.

Designed for a professional couple, the design follows the architects' ethos that holiday living shouldn't be too convenient or grand. "We're a little wary of convenience. It's important to keep the mood and feeling of being on holiday – the rituals of lighting candles or making a fire to cook on," Lance says. Here, ritual-invoking properties include limiting lighting to essential task lighting (powered by deep-cycle batteries), with the exception of one low-key ambient light. All other illumination comes courtesy of kerosene lanterns and candles. The owners also need to set foot under the big sky to reach the bathroom, which is accessed via a courtyard enclosed within the walls of the house.

The bach's apparent simplicity belies its sophisticated execution and rich detail. Based on a cruciform

ABOVE Seagrass matting from Design Emporium, Auckland, is evocative of the classic Kōwhiri bach, while the dining chairs are from The Boiler Room in Auckland. The architects' method of merging indoors and out-by details such as continuing cedar pergola slats inside has a practical as well as stylistic benefit – there's plenty of room to hang lanterns and fairy lights.



FACING PAGE Macrocarpa-lined walls in the bedroom are a foil for the verticality of cedar board-and-batten cladding in the courtyard. **ABOVE** An unlined wall provides ready-made shelving in the kitchen. The kwila island unit, made by Tony Emmanuel of J & T Concepts, Auckland, picks up the linearity of the architecture of the building. **RIGHT** A beaded curtain tides a small utility room off the bathroom.

shape, the body of the building is raised on timber piles, which are shielded from view by gabion baskets filled with local rocks. The gabion baskets are aesthetically pleasing and help to visually anchor the house to its site. A channel of loose rocks around the base helps with drainage. Raising the house was essential as the site is an alluvial flood plain and there was the prosaic need to accommodate the house free of storm water.

The shorter length of the cruciform shape is expressed with decks on the northern and southern aspects of the house, on either side of the indoor living area. The decks step down, connecting the house to the site – on the northern aspect to a raised platform of grass and on the southern face to a concrete-paved courtyard.

Inside, generous treatment of both the window and door apertures and a continuous sweep of ceiling, uninterrupted by walls, ensure the ambience of the bach is relaxed and roomy. Commercial-section, anodised joinery is full-height. The sliders are externally rigged and their movement the architects liken to a skin moving on the outside of the building. The roof is supported clear of the walls on structural steel pins, allowing additional light to flood into the space through clerestory windows.

Nicola and Lance employed several techniques to link inside and out. Pine beams span across the width



The roof is supported clear of the walls on structural steel pins, allowing additional light to flood into the space through clerestory windows





ABOVE Cooking outdoors occurs frequently and is catered for with this Chinese wok, which rests in a recess cut into a large piece of purpose-bent mild steel. **RIGHT and INSET** Layering in its many guises is a signature of Nicola and Lance's design. Here, externally rigged full-height sliders retract back over the skin of the building. The language of the roof and its supports is a series of stacked materials. The sculpture is by Keith Simpson.

of the interior and both decks, where they form supports for cedar-slat pergolas. The cedar pergola slats continue inside the house, while the meranti ply ceiling does the reverse by extending outside, beneath the kick-up corrugated-steel roof.

Inside, the same layered, blurred division of boundaries is evident. There are no internal doors. Rather, the bedroom is separated from the open-plan living area by an unlined partition that forms the backbone of the kitchen. From the bedroom, a door leads outside to the courtyard and access to the kwila-lined bathroom, which also includes a small utility room. A large shower, complete with a pebbled floor, caters for one of the owner's love of long, relaxing showers.

Future plans include building a second wing to house a second bedroom and garage. But for the time being the owners are cherishing trips away from the city to their timber holiday home. "The views here are so huge. The time of day and the seasons radically change the way the inside feels—the floor-to-ceiling sliders seem to let nature and light in," one of the owners says. **H&E**

