

AIR NEW ZEALAND INFLIGHT MAGAZINE

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Kia Ora



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SEA CHANGE

Clockwise from bottom left: The view; the new building; the original bach remains on the site.



BIO

ARCHITECT
Evan Mayo,
Architecture Bureau.

BACKGROUND
A stay-at-home dad with three children, Mayo still manages to run a successful architecture business. He grew up in an extended family that boasted several builders, engineers, and an architect – so becoming an architect himself seemed like a natural thing to do.

PROJECTS He's currently working on a range of residential projects from his Hamilton office including three new homes in Mount Maunganui and Hamilton and a variety of renovations. He's also about to embark on a major renovation of his own family home and office.

A holiday home at Mount Maunganui charmed its owners so much, they made it their permanent residence.

Returning home after a beach holiday is never easy, but after Heather Coyne and Mark Winter spent their first summer in their new bach designed by architect Evan Mayo on Marine Parade at Mount Maunganui, they loved it so much they made it their permanent home. “We call it our sea change,” says Coyne. “We came for Christmas and we didn’t go back.”

Having recently sold half the Hamilton property investment business they’d founded together, and with their adult children now having families of their own, it was the right time for a move. Coyne packed up their corporate wardrobes and sent them to a hospice shop. The move, by all accounts, has been a great success. “People say, ‘you look so relaxed’. They haven’t said that to me for 40 years,” says Winter.

The beachfront at Mount Maunganui has more than its fair share of Italianate monstrosities and oblong plaster palaces, obese structures sited oppressively

close to the road, like forwards ready for a scrum. They feel, perhaps, more suited to the Gold Coast than to New Zealand. Because of this, the arrival of a small, simple house screened by a pohutukawa tree is something of a pleasant oddity. Also unusual is the fact that Winter and Coyne have retained the original classic bach on the front of the site – one of the few that now remain on this strip of prime real estate.

Mayo, the new bach’s architect, is a stay-at-home dad who set up his own company, Architecture Bureau, in Hamilton four years ago. He had already established a good relationship with Coyne and Winter when he designed a renovation of their Hamilton home. Here at Mount Maunganui, his first step was to reshape the site by raising the land level at the rear to establish a platform for the new building that allowed views to the beach. This modification also helped achieve a balanced relationship between the two dwellings.

Visitors arrive at the new building by walking up

generous steps through naturalistic landscaping to the front deck, which invites you to sprawl in the sun or shade. There is no formal entrance, as the living area can be entirely opened up to the east. The prevailing wind comes from the west, so the house hunkers down at the back. An extended eave over the deck offers shade and shelter. On the other side of the home, electronically controlled high-level westerly windows allow the building to “breathe”.

At first glance, the 135-sqm house feels like a one-bedroom bach (with the master bedroom and ensuite above the carport), but there are actually another three bedrooms (and a bathroom and guest toilet) tucked in the rear off a narrow corridor. Sliding doors to those back bedrooms give the rear of the house a clean, almost Japanese sensibility, and help ensure the usability of every inch of space.

Winter says he had only one request at the start: that Mayo use plywood, something the architect took to



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Above: The living area opens up to the east. Below: The bach now entertains four generations.



heart. While the exterior of the house is dark-stained plywood, hoop-pine plywood has been used on the interior to create elegant cupboards in the living space, and also in the perforated ceiling panels, which both look good and absorb sound.

At the front of the section, the old bach, with its circa-1920s wallpapered ceiling, timber panelling, and fireplace, now doubles as a home office and spare bedroom, offering a fireplace, a couple of cosy couches, and a view of the sea. Portraits of two of Winter's forebears hang above the mantle. The place feels quaint, moody, and romantic; Winter says it was a fantastic antidote to an earlier experience of spending weekends in a nearby apartment.

A valuer by profession – “until I realised why I was constantly frustrated” – Winter is well aware

of how values are ascribed to properties, with square meterage so often reigning supreme. Here, he and Coyne boldly ignored many of the so-called “rules” of the profession in favour of the intangible aspects of their unique property.

Since Winter and Coyne made their move to live permanently in the new bach, they've been followed from Auckland to the Mount by their daughter (with her husband and two children), as well as Winter's mother. It's a move that's been good for all the family. “What a place for kids to grow up,” says Winter, gesturing at the view. “You don't need to go somewhere in the weekend to get away from it.”



STORY **ANDREA HOTERE**

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