



back to basics

This unconventional bach shows how stripping back a design to the bare elements can create a more authentic and relaxing holiday experience, as well as accommodating a carefully defined budget.

Getting out of town for a break can be a very distinctive experience for different people. For some, their holiday house is a virtual replica of their primary residence, complete with all the mod cons and creature comforts of home.

However, for Auckland architect John Holley, his wife Rachel and their 16-month-old daughter, a weekend away is a much simpler experience – and they planned it that way. Their bach at Whiritoa on the east coast of the Coromandel Peninsula is a tribute to the carefree holidays many of us remember from our childhood.

“We live in a three-bedroom townhouse on a small section in central Auckland and it’s a very urban lifestyle,” says John. “We wanted the bach to be far more primitive. It has a wood-burning fire and a small kitchen, and it’s a nice contrast – very quiet and peaceful. Whiritoa’s a tiny township with one dairy and a handful of houses; during the winter months it’s virtually deserted, so it’s a great escape.”

Their aim was to create an entirely different experience, John explains. The home is designed to be opened up, almost like a box. The front wall lowers down to create a large deck off the living space, which can be closed off at night with sliding glass doors.





alternative ideas for this interior on pages 22-25



“You get there and literally open up the bach. It’s a bit like setting up camp; dropping the deck is like pitching your tent.”

The fold-down deck is operated via pulleys powered by a pair of electric winches positioned below the floor. Once lowered, a piece of floating deck supports it from below. In addition to virtually doubling the size of their living space, the system offers another benefit.

“It also provides great security,” says John. “Being a bach, it’s not used for long periods, so this lets us shut the place up securely while we’re not there.”

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While getting back to the basics was one driving force behind the design, other more practical aspects also influenced the look of the place. The house sits on a rectangular 372m² site that drops away from the road by about 1.5m. John admits it’s the sort of site only an architect would buy and build on, because it came with



a couple of minor drawbacks. Its location in a flood plain meant ponding was a problem, so the house had to be raised on poles. And a council drain on the left-hand side of the property limited the available building space.

Rather than see these things as obstacles, though, John used them to help shape his design. The result is a compact floorplan that sees the kitchen, bathroom and bedrooms grouped in a central block behind the living space, with a corridor on either side leading to the rear of the house. It also incorporates space-saving features, such as sliding interior doors and small utilitarian bedrooms with raised,

bunk-like beds. The shower room and toilet back onto the kitchen, meaning all the services are located in one place.

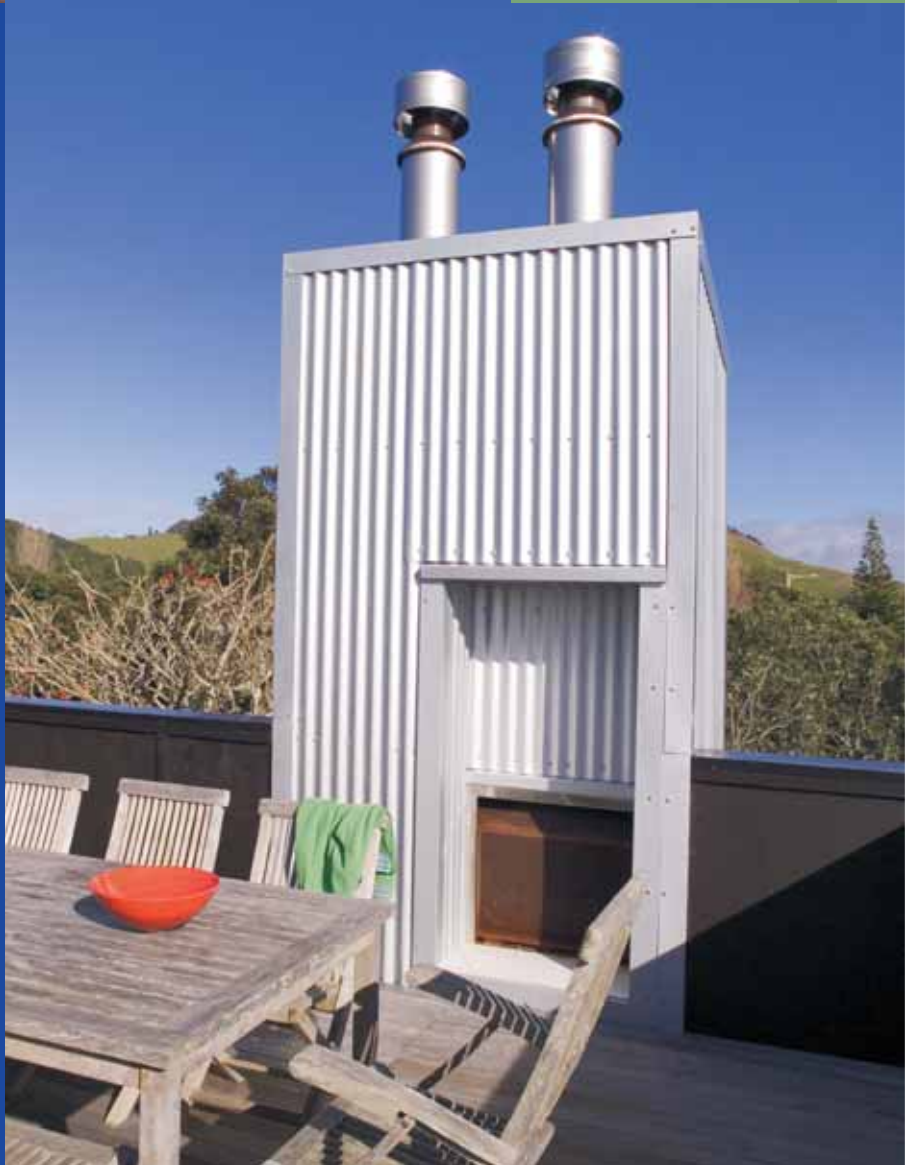
The layout reflects one of John's sources of design inspiration: a group of old boatsheds on the Auckland waterfront. John likens the house to a sort of wharf, with the towers on either side resembling piles.

"The whole idea of a wharf and boatshed pushed the aesthetic of the house. With the twin corridors inside, you get a clear line of sight right through the house, as you would along a wharf, and the bedroom block is like a boatshed in the middle."



material palette

- > Translucent fibreglass sheeting is an effective, budget-friendly window material. Used floor to ceiling at the back of this bach, it is impenetrable, lets in plenty of light, ensures privacy and eliminates the need for joinery, cutting down costs.
- > Dark-stained weatherboards are reminiscent of the older-style Kiwi bach.
- > Corrugated iron on the chimney tower is a reference to the early pioneering buildings, with their corrugated kitchen lean-tos. Its simple look suits the natural surroundings.
- > Corrugated plastic on the exterior of the stair tower balances the iron tower and brings light into the house and up to the roof deck at night.
- > Natural kwila is used on the decks, while inside the floors are polished tongue-and-groove kwila.
- > Bright-green, hand-made glazed tiles line the rear wall of the shower room, bringing inside the fresh, clean look of foliage.



With the deck pulled up like a drawbridge, the link between the bach and the floating deck is broken. You then get a real sense of the house becoming like an unreachable island, says John.

The large, open living/kitchen area is where John and his family spend much of their time. Thanks to Rachel, the compact kitchen is actually larger than John had originally intended. The island contains a sink and some storage cupboards, while on the back wall, two cupboard towers flank a small hob and oven. These floor-to-ceiling cupboards contain the fridge and the dishwasher – an appliance John is grateful Rachel insisted on. In a nod to the traditional bach kitchen, the MDF cabinetry features sliding cupboard doors and pull holes instead of hardware.

“There isn’t a lot of bench space,” John acknowledges, “but there’s enough, and there’s plenty of storage.”

Fluoros in the ceiling panels provide lighting throughout the house, which has no windows on the side walls. Natural lighting streams in through skylights above the kitchen and in the bathroom above the shower.

And the smallest room in the house remains true to the back-to-basics theme. Accented with a wall of bold green tiles, the shower space is essentially a wet room, with the water running onto the natural kwila floor before draining away. A high monsoon shower head with a skylight above it makes you feel like you’re standing outside in the rain, says John.

Having a limited budget provided John with an interesting challenge.

“I didn’t really find the budget restrictive. Actually, it helped rein in some of my crazy ideas and made me focus more. Generally, in these situations, if you come up with a good solution, it tends to be a very good one.”

The chimney flu is just one of John’s clever solutions. Clad in corrugated iron, it runs from the ground up to the roof deck, and vents both the roof-deck and living-room fireplaces. The latter, unusually, is set up at waist level, making it safe for children and providing space for a storm-water tank in the foot of the flu tower.

On the other side of the house, the stairwell tower serves as a front entrance and a means of reaching the roof deck.

“Because you can see the profile of the stairs through the translucent polycarbonate sheeting, it shows you where the entry is,” says John. “At night, the whole tower glows and becomes a bit of a beacon and also provides light to the upper deck.”

At 7m above ground level, the roof deck is the perfect place for John and Rachel to enjoy a barbecue and a glass of wine.

“We get a fantastic view to the beach and the dramatic bluffs, as well as a nice rural outlook.”

In winter, they have the fire to keep them warm, while in summer, there’s complete privacy for sunbathing. **H**

Architect: John Holley,
McNaught Architecture
Builder: Chris Hobbins



Resene
Joie De Vivre



Cladding: Plywood,
corrugated iron and
corrugated fibreglass
from Supreme Plastics,
Onehunga

Resene
Sea Fog

Roof: COLORSTEEL®
from Metalcraft,
Hamilton
Kitchen cabinetry:
Bakers Joinery, Waihi
Cushions: Eon Design



Resene
Jandal



Get the exterior look
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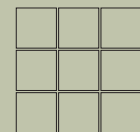
Resene Pitch Black

Bathroom tiles: Middle
Earth, Warkworth
Shower fittings: Caroma
Chairs: De De Ce
Flowers: Vida Flores



Resene
Spirulina

Resene
Coriander



on the following pages,
find two alternative
style suggestions



^ Get this look for less than \$2500.



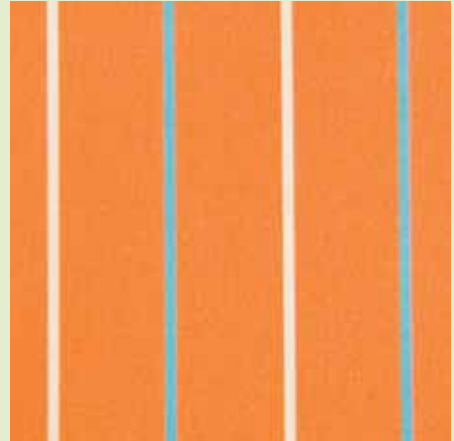
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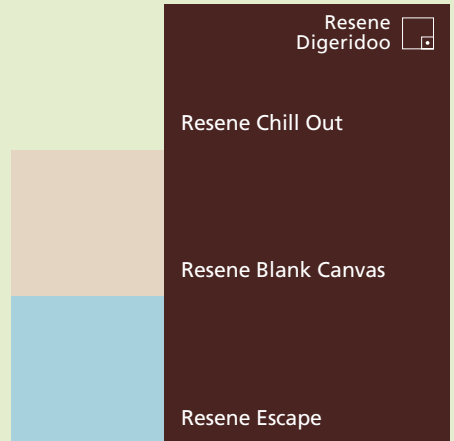
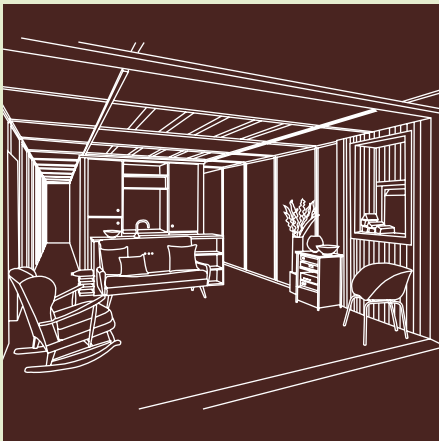


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Resene Digeridoo

Resene Chill Out

Resene Blank Canvas

Resene Escape



Robyn Bell from Robyn Bell Interiors suggests this alternative on a budget of \$2500:

Without changing the true rustic nature of this bach, a fun, bright scheme could be achieved with a soft wall colour like Resene Blank Canvas and accents of orange and turquoise in the furnishings. A lightweight two-seater sofa could be covered in an easy-wear acrylic canvas fabric, so that it could be carried outside onto the deck on warm summer evenings. A pair of beanbags in a similar fabric

would add versatility and a casual feel. You could then throw in a couple of chunky, Scandinavian-look stools that would double as occasional tables to put a drink on. The fireplace is such a wonderful feature, so a woven PVC storage basket in orange would make a great wood box.

Robyn Bell

Robyn Bell Interiors, phone 04 293 2280,
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^ Get this look for less than \$5000.



Resene Barista

Resene Half Spanish White

Resene Flesh

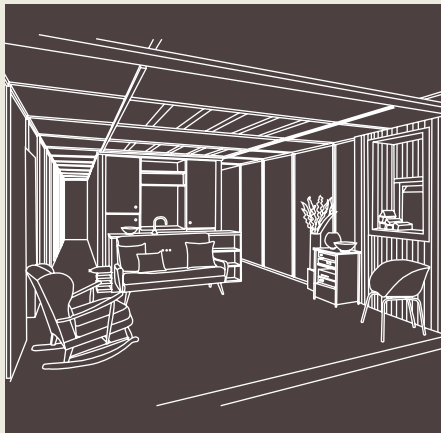
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Alisdair Daines from Daines Matz Architects suggests this alternative look on a budget of \$5000:

At present, the bach is a very relaxing, casual holiday space, but it could be given a more contemporary, slightly upmarket look. The walls could be painted Resene Sisal, with the ceiling Resene Half Spanish White. Some throw cushions in black or a rich, dark chocolate would provide a nice accent to the lounge suite. The space is very compact, so it doesn't need

too much adornment – maybe an artwork or two on the walls. The modern look could be carried through to the kitchen, with cupboard doors in Ebony Oak Melamine complemented by satin chrome-plated straight-rod handles.

Alisdair

Alisdair Daines, Daines Matz Architecture, phone 03 548 2484, email dma@dainesmatzarchitects.co.nz