

DUAL IDENTITY

A Tauranga residence is not only a great family home, it's also a functional workplace for a busy architectural design firm.

Words **Soraya Nicholas** Photography **Amanda Aitken**





LEFT The dramatic entrance looks straight through to the landscaping beyond. Visitors can step inside and turn left for the home office, or right to enter the family home. **ABOVE** The exterior of the home is crafted from Specialised Plaster Systems over a brick veneer, with feature accents from Craft Stone. **BELOW** Throughout the living spaces, Dulux Sandfly Point was the colour of choice.

IT TOOK ANDRE AND REBECCA LAURENT some time to find the perfect section to build their new home on. Searching in both rural and city suburbs, they eventually found what they were looking for at The Lakes subdivision in Tauranga. Although it was little more than a wide expanse of dirt when they purchased the site, they were enticed by the local playground, and planned walking and biking tracks. They also liked the size and shape of its site and immediately put their creative talents to use.

Although they were most importantly looking for a location that would suit their family, with children Jordan (14), Lucca (5) and Leo (3), Andre and Rebecca also wanted to work from home. Having always operated their business – **Creative Space Architectural Design** – from home offices, they

wanted to custom design a home and workplace in one. “When you enter the home, you turn one way for our home and the other for our offices,” explains Andre. Having each space separate has meant there is “very little home/work interference”, with visitors knowing exactly where they are heading when they arrive.

“Living in this home seems to build confidence, reduce stress, enhance relationships and encourage creativity,” says Andre. “We love every minute of our family dynamic running like clockwork and business has never been better!”

Part of the home’s success is the careful thought process that went on as soon as the section was purchased. The dwelling itself had to be, above all else, absolutely functional and practical, and the property needed to be safe and secure.



The main living area is the family's favourite haunt, and the day bed is where Andre in particular likes to relax, with the bi-fold windows flung wide open.

Q&A

with Andre Laurent

What was your design brief?

The brief was to maximise our investment in the 750m² site and produce a home that would best serve a family with three children and a satellite architectural studio. The brief also demanded that the home showcased our unique style of design and stimulated other homeowners into stepping outside the usual combinations of methods and materials we commonly see. Great design creates great value and when investing in a new home it seems only natural to create something interesting that reflects all aspects of personality and lifestyle.

Was it hard designing a home for yourself rather than for a client?

Yes! I personally found it far more challenging as this required in depth thought, analysis and defining of who we were and where we were going. I am very used to looking into and improving our clients' lives, however asking myself the same questions resulted in more questions than answers. It really was quite hard to find the answers we were all (the entire family) happy with, but it resulted in a wonderfully essential process! It now seems we just need to follow the path we so carefully planned as a family.

Favourite design aspects?

Wow this is a hard one! I would initially say that many people would look at this home and expect it is the result of a passion for design. In actual fact, every line and aspect of this home is the result of a passion for function! The carefully pitched and extended cantilevered roof faces and oversized eaves do an outstanding job of maximising passive solar design. You simply need to occupy this home for it to be warm and livable. The real answer is the designed and desired effect this home has on our children – Jordan, Lucca and Leo.





LEFT & ABOVE Both Lucca and Jordan's rooms have bright coloured feature walls and pretty, colourful furnishings. The pink feature wall in Lucca's room is Dulux Newmarket. **BELOW** Andre, Rebecca, Jordan, Lucca and Leo all love their contemporary family residence.

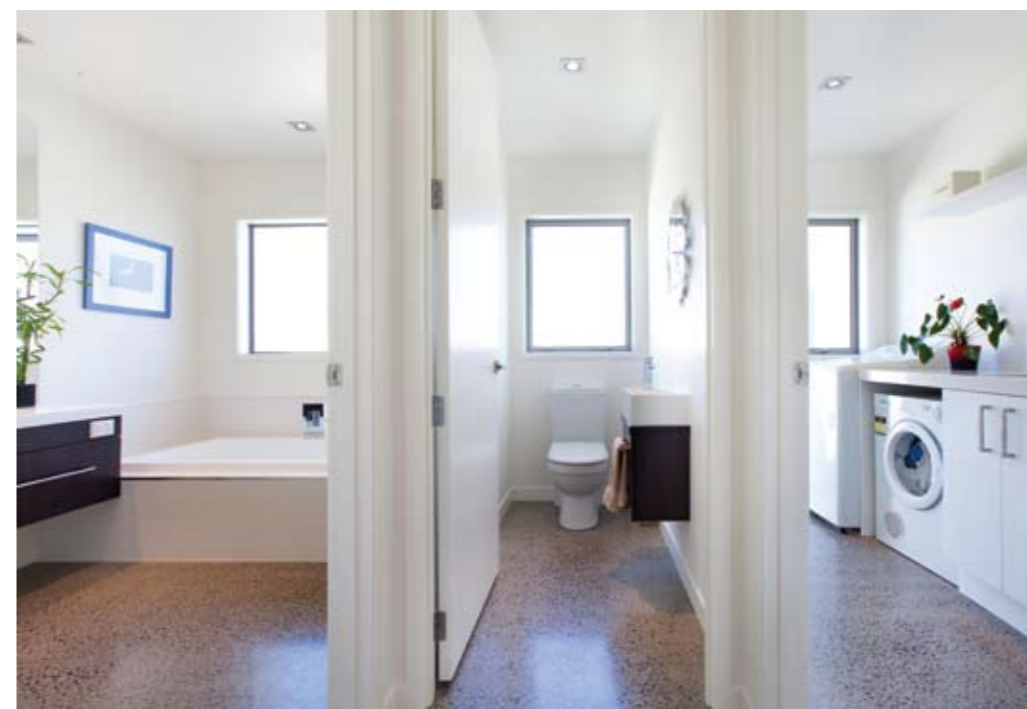


"The key to getting this home so right was taking the time to establish a very detailed brief. We looked at what spaces we needed and then we broke this down and looked at what we needed within these spaces. We even listed all the items and clutter in our lives and allocated storage for each genre of object. The result has been a space for every activity and a place for every object."

This was a particularly good way to ensure the kitchen had all the storage space required to make it not only aesthetically exciting, but also incredibly functional. Every kitchen item has a place, and when combined with hardwearing construction materials, makes it an area in the home that the children cannot damage. "We used Colourform Wrap for the cabinetry instead of a spray lacquer finish," explains Rebecca. "It's a great alternative as the kids can bang into it without chipping or scratching it."



The kitchen cabinetry is constructed from Colourform Vinyl Wrap, with an engineered stone benchtop. A trio of paintings from The Warehouse add colour to the almost white walls.






ABOVE The toilet was placed in a separate room adjoining the main bathroom, which is ideal for a large family.

Incidentally, it is the open-plan kitchen/dining/living area that is Rebecca's favourite space within the home, because she loves the easy flow of the spaces. However, Andre has a much smaller spot inside that he calls his favourite – the day bed. Positioned to enjoy a view of the property as well as being part of the open-plan interior, he describes it as an "easy, relaxed place to fall asleep."

Rebecca and Andre love their home, and the way they can operate their business without having to travel anywhere each day. And the children are happy being at home too. They can run in and out, enjoying the open flow of the design, not to mention having their own designer bedrooms to retreat to should they want some quiet time. ■

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