

WHITE LIGHT

A harbourside home is given a new lease of life with light-filled, open spaces, a fresh colour scheme and contemporary furnishings.

Words by **Joelle Thomson** | Photography by **Kevin Emirali**

WELL TRAVELLED

"I love the 'Fig' rug. It's a beautiful rug made from New Zealand wool, designed in Germany and hand-tufted in Nepal," says interior designer Hilary Skinner.

“Changes in wall colour from one room to the next may not be immediately apparent, but subtle tonal variations ensure that no two rooms look or feel exactly alike.”



TAKING SIDES
The staircase to the main bedroom is flanked by a Terry Stringer sculpture and Driade Astrolabio table.



WORLD OF DESIGN
Art by New Zealanders Gordon Walters and Gretchen Albrecht; 1920s Swedish birch sideboard; contemporary Driade furniture from Indice; and Taraxacum light by Achille Castiglioni for Flos.

When the owners of this harbourside home in Torpedo Bay, Devonport, purchased the house, they decided to live in it for at least a year before conceptualising its makeover. “Until you’ve spent time in a house, you can’t really determine where the light is coming from and what aspects of the house you want to enhance. However, we knew we wanted to make the house feel more open, with more light coming in, and to have a room that was a dedicated yoga studio,” says the owner, who teaches yoga.

Architect Richard Naish, of RTA Studio, and interior designer Hilary Skinner, of Skinner Design, worked with the owners to incorporate more light and open space into the house, transforming it into a bright, modern home without sacrificing its original character.

DESIGN CENTRAL

This isn’t the first makeover the owners have undertaken but it’s their favourite. It’s a radically different look from their previous homes – a bungalow and a villa – which also had Skinner’s input. The owners’ favourite features include the high ceilings, the off-white colour scheme and the dark timber floors, not to mention the uninterrupted view across the Hauraki Gulf to Auckland city.

The main living area is partially divided by a wall, effectively creating two spaces – informal and formal. Though separate, they

flow into each other, combining as one, thanks to the open hallway with glass ceiling that links them.

Despite the vast amount of glass in the doors, windows and walls, a feeling of warmth is imparted by the dark wood stain on the French oak floor, which was chosen by Skinner for the living area. “The dark floor contrasts beautifully with the rest of the colours throughout the house,” the owner says.

While there is no single favourite feature for Skinner, as there are many elements that appeal, the formal living room is very pleasing with its mix of collected furniture, New Zealand art and contemporary additions, the most recent being the “Fig” rug designed in Germany, made from New Zealand wool, hand-tufted in Nepal and now happily ensconced back home on the waterfront in Devonport.

CONTEMPORARY CLASSICS

Complementing the selection of colours and finishes is a variety of art, furniture and decorative objects collected by the owners over several years. The result is the juxtaposition of some very contemporary furniture and some older, classic pieces.

A family of furniture designed by Enzo Mari in the 1970s includes a trio of glass-top tables: the long coffee table and the small side table (to the right of the fireplace) in the living room, and the dining table. They were produced by contemporary furniture company Driade, whose portfolio includes many design classics. The company works with architects and designers from

HARBOUR PANORAMA

The master bedroom enjoys both privacy and an uninterrupted view of the Hauraki Gulf.



many cultural backgrounds, creating a diverse and interesting range of furniture and products that are available in New Zealand exclusively from Indice in Auckland.

An item of furniture that Skinner highlights is the Swedish birch sideboard designed in the 1920s and purchased by the owners several years ago from a store in Sydney. A favourite shopping destination, the store has provided the house with several pieces of furniture that sit comfortably alongside the more recent contemporary additions.

“The 1920s, ’70s, ’80s and the current decade are all represented in the furniture here, though all the pieces look modern. It showcases a diverse group, including the work of French, Spanish, Italian and Swedish designers. Though much of the furniture has originated in different countries and is distinct to those cultures, it all sits well together,” Skinner says.

SHADES OF WHITE

Changes in wall colour from one room to the next may not be immediately apparent, but subtle tonal variations ensure that no two rooms look or feel exactly alike. The starting point for the interior colour scheme was Dulux Antique White.

“The walls are all white but they are different shades,” the owner says. “As you move through the house it feels really cohesive, but there is a very subtle change.”

“There are relatively few changes of colour within the house,” Skinner says, “but a diverse look has been achieved by combining different textures and finishes, such as plastered walls and the



A space at the front of the house has been converted into a yoga studio with its own courtyard entrance.

Along with the coffee table and side table in the living room, the dining table was designed in the '70s by Enzo Mari for Driade.



POOLSIDE BY DESIGN

The Ruth Rocker by David Trubridge has a flip that doubles as a footstool and side table.

CITYSCAPE

The owners enjoy the view of Auckland city from their Tokyo Pop armchairs by Tokujin Yoshioka for Driade.



smoothly honed marble inside that contrasts with the unfilled travertine used extensively on the patios outdoors.

“The colours all belong to a palette of the same hue, creating subtle changes of light. The lighter the colour, the more light it reflects, so you need to be aware of the base tones in the colours you choose.”

Enhancing the understated tonal differences of the walls is a strong lighting centrepiece by Achille Castiglioni for Flos in the formal living room. “Though it was designed in 1988, this dramatic light has a contemporary feel that fits with the home’s modern design,” Skinner says.

In keeping with the colours of the walls throughout, Skinner has used light-coloured marble in every bathroom. The exception is the master ensuite, its white-veined black marble resonating with the area’s rocky landscape.

“The view from the master bedroom is phenomenal,” Skinner says. “It has one of the best water views in Auckland. I thought straight away that using black and white marble in the ensuite would work. You can stand in the shower and see the volcanic cliff, so it seemed natural to pick up on that in the design.”

The owners confess that while they love the luxurious, bold black marble, they probably wouldn’t have chosen it themselves. “Our ensuite is stunning. It gives a brave and different look to the rest of our home, thanks to Hilary’s eye,” the owner says.

“Our house is now a beautiful place to live in and to come home to. It feels peaceful and tranquil. It doesn’t feel like something you just see in the pages of a magazine. It feels like home.”