

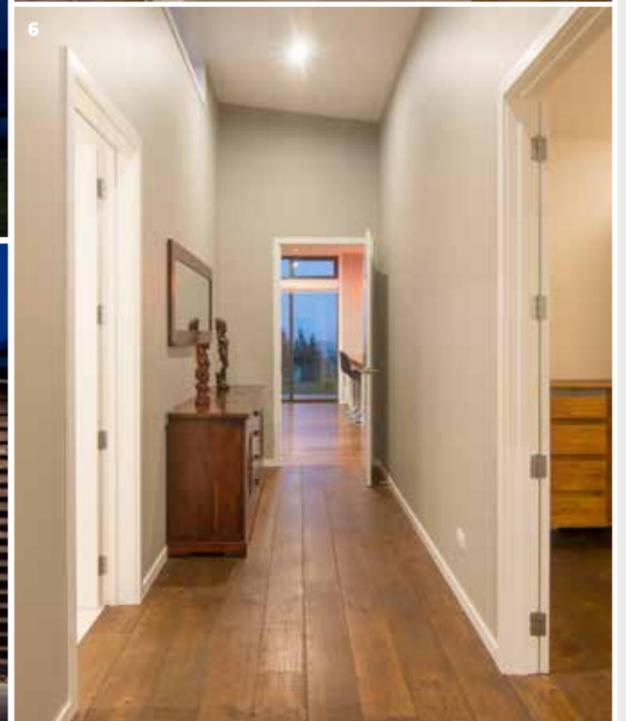


“We were not building a house to satisfy our ego. We were building a living space to serve us as a family and to make us feel free”

**1**  
Large sliding doors to the north maximise spectacular views over Tasman Bay and harvest sun energy



- 2.** The large and open kitchen, dining and living rooms are the focal areas of the house  
**3.** A large compressed bamboo kitchen island is the hub of the house  
**4.** The exterior is clad in locally sourced Lawson cypress, stained and oiled  
**5.** Eaves are optimised to maximise sun in winter and clever design provides sheltered outdoor areas  
**6.** Clearstory windows line the wide hallway providing natural light



## Ethical & superbly functional

BY BRENDA WEBB  
 PHOTOGRAPHY BY DANIEL ALLEN

Creating a warm, liveable and functional eco-home to maximise views and sunshine were key aspects in the design and build of this sustainable award-winning Tasman hilltop home.

“We were not building a house to satisfy our ego. We were building a living space to serve us as a family and to make us feel free and enable us to enjoy it,” the owner says. “It was important to get the rooms to work in regard to sunlight, view and practicality. It was also clear that the more straightforward the room layout, the cheaper the whole house would be.”

Built by eco building company Hybrid Homes, the 212sq.m. house sits on a near-14,000sq.m. section with spectacular sea and valley views, therefore layout was critical, especially the placement of rooms. Keeping the space simple and functional was paramount.

Another important factor was having a warm house – the Austrian owners were shocked to see how far behind New Zealand’s building standards were regarding insulation. “New Zealanders seem happy to freeze during winter, burn large amounts of cheap firewood or pay enormous power bills to keep warm,” the owner says.

Right from the start using the sun to warm the house was high on the priority list, courtesy of a well-insulated

concrete slab, large windows to the north, smaller to the south, optimising eaves and having the best available double-glazed, gas-filled and thermally-broken windows. Exterior walls in the house are thicker than standard regulations.

The owner was definite that the design followed a favourite quote: “The shape of the building should be primarily based upon its intended function and purpose.” After studying three design concepts by Hybrid, the owners opted to go with the original plan they had submitted and are delighted with the result – a warm, open and totally liveable and functional house.

Hybrid Homes’ general concept is to plan the entire house down to detailed specs in advance, according to the owner. During the building process the family rented a neighbouring house, which allowed them to watch progress and also to set up the garden layout and plant dozens of trees.

“We enjoyed having no responsibility throughout the building process, especially given the fact that we were new to the country and didn’t know anything about how such projects are approached in New Zealand,” the owner says.

Completing the eco-theme, rainwater is collected and stored in four buried concrete tanks, while waste is disposed of through a constructed wetland system. **WT**



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- 7. Bedrooms have a simple square layout and feature the composite oak floors used throughout
- 8. The master bedroom ensuite features an open shower, bath, toilet and double basin
- 9. Large deck areas allow for outdoor living maximising those spectacular valley and sea views
- 10. The second bathroom features an easy to clean, low maintenance open shower
- 11. The house is sited to take advantage of stunning views



8



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10



11



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