



PHOTO: SHAWN DEWITT

# quietly confident

Majestic views reach across neighbouring rooftops to the lagoon, the coast and Kapiti Island from this new home on Waikanae Beach by Nathan Rooney of Space Architecture Studio in Wellington. There's so much going on from the elevated living area that the adjacent kitchen design, by Tushka Glimtmeier and Rowan McLeod, also of Space Architecture Studio, could never attempt to compete. Nor was it meant to.

The idea was to keep it low key. The kitchen looks down onto the living room, it blends quietly into the background and doesn't detract from either the outlook or the home's architecture.

Appliances are all concealed below one low, U-shaped bench that continues into a breakfast bar where there's space on the dining room side that allows people to sit for casual meals. When you look back up to the kitchen, the only thing that's on show is a storage unit designed to create a visual break between the kitchen and living areas. The stereo and CD collection are hidden away in a cupboard with drawers for extra storage. Open shelves display books and pottery. The design of the storage unit reflects the simple architectural lines of the house. Basically a box frame clad in wenge veneer, its front divided into solid and open spaces. Drawers and cupboards are lacquered while the open shelves are high-pressure laminate.

Despite its overriding simplicity of line, it achieves richness and moody drama. High ceilings in both areas create generous volume plus a sense of grandeur. The ceiling heights switch between the two spaces creating additional interest. In the living area, the stud is 4.5m and in the kitchen it's around 3.2m.

A large split concrete block wall is a strong element of the external architecture to come inside. It runs the length of the living area. Where the ceiling height drops, it splices into the kitchen

bench with a sharp, clean intersection. The wall adds rustic, earthy texture to contrast with smooth, refined finishes in the granite grey cabinetry, the pale grey benchtop and the highly polished concrete floor.

Just a slither of light shines through a window in the corner behind the wall and above the bench. However, abundant natural light infuses the living area by day so the designers could afford to veer towards more dramatic dark finishes. The matte surfaces of the concrete wall absorb the light while the polished surfaces reflect it. In the evening, lighting from satin chrome wall lights wash along the block wall creating a luxurious mood, heightened by the variety of natural textures.

The house has a reasonably compact floor plan. However, at some stage, the owners anticipate they will use it to accommodate guests as a bed and breakfast. So the kitchen had to have the ability to cater for family members as well as guests. While it's efficient on space, it has an easy layout with high quality appliances and plentiful storage. The designers were careful to use every possible bit of space with many ingenious solutions. For example, there are even pull-out drawers installed in the toe kicks with push catches so they can be easily operated by foot.

The large pantry behind the wide, full-height door on the rear wall has a full-depth, laminate worktop so the space can be used as an extra workspace. Pull-out drawers below maximise storage capacity and adjustable shelving above offers more options. The pantry has space for small appliances, which can be used in situ, without having to lift them out onto the bench. Pull-out vegetable baskets and space for wine storage sit under the breakfast bar. Though it's not the star of the show, this theatrical space is a highly functional contender for best support act. *Vicki Holder*

**Kitchen designer** Tushka Glimtmeier **Colours and finishes** Rowan McLeod **Bench top** Quarella composite stone, Gris Ceniza, Tile Warehouse **Pantry bench top** High-pressure laminate, Stipple Seal Flint finish, Laminex Group **Cabinetry** High-pressure laminate, Fossil Flint finish, Laminex Group **Storage unit** Natural timber veneer, wenge, Bestwood/Interior **Sink insert** Regency Majestic, Burns & Ferrall **Hob and range** Toledo 10, Range Master **Tapware** Solo kitchen mixer, Ideal Standard **Lighting** Aesthetics Quad pendant, Aesthetics Lighting **Coffee machine** Rocket E61, Caffè L'Affare