

# OPPORTUNITY KNOCKS

*Ten homes in 16 years: these Mt Maunganui homeowners just can't resist a challenge*

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**THESE PAGES** The living room overlooks the kitchen in Dave Macfarlane and Jodie Tipping's Mt Maunganui home. "I love it when people just hang out in the kitchen - I'd rather eat there than in the dining room, and in summer it opens right out onto the deck," says Jodie; the benchtop is a leather-finish granite and the splashback tiles are from Arledomus.



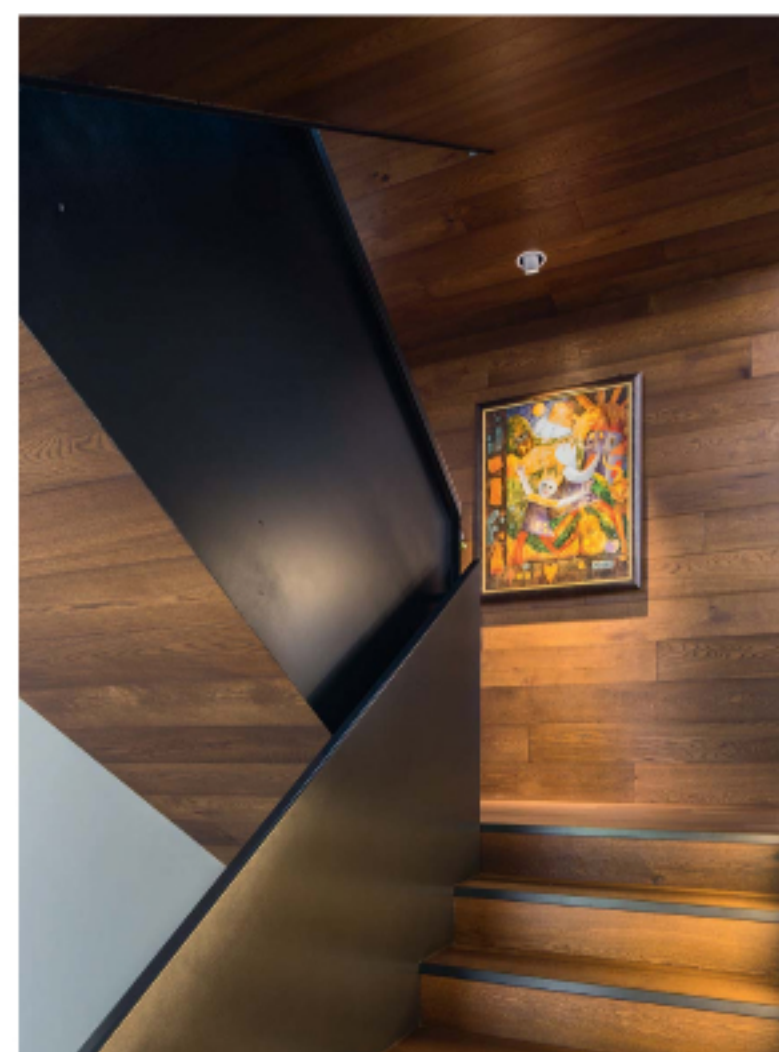
DESIGN NOTE

*Scale is important: Dave requested the extra-tall, frameless doorways throughout the house to make rooms feel more spacious. In other areas, ceiling heights were lowered to create a cosier feeling.*



**THIS PAGE** (clockwise from top left) The deck offers additional, all-weather living space and access to the garden. Jodie and Dave have lived in about 10 houses; Dave has lost count of the number he's owned and lived in before that. A stairwell on the kitchen level leads down to the garage and entrance and up to the living areas and bedrooms; the artwork is by Tauranga artist Kate Jones Madill.

**OPPOSITE** Skylights and clever angles maximise light in the kitchen; the pendants are by local designer Mat Macmillan.



**W**OOD FINISHES AND homely touches have crept back into Dave Macfarlane's life, following a lengthy affair with stark minimalism. For about 16 years, the property developer has sought white walls and empty surfaces in each of the 10 or so Mt Maunganui homes he's shared with wife Jodie Tipping. No bookcases. Ditch the decorative cushions and anything resembling clutter. Definitely no ornaments on display.

"I'm not a knick-knack person," he says. "China cabinets? I don't understand why people have china cabinets, holding on to things you received for your wedding and now you're 65 years old and none of it has been used."

While the couple's current abode may not sport a matching set of heirloom dinnerware, it's a radical departure from their previous homes.

The tall, narrow, multi-level building is populated with partitioned spaces rather than open-plan living areas. In place of concrete floors, they have plush carpet. Jodie has slipped a few frivolous candles onto living room surfaces and even convinced Dave their cookbook collection should sit on open shelving, albeit below bench height. It was Dave who advocated a black ceiling to delineate the kitchen zone and also, he claims, to render fly spots invisible on the 7m-high stud. >





**THIS PAGE** The black, white and red stainless steel artwork by Robert Jahnke was discovered in a Gisborne gallery, bought for both the scale and the ideas it represents; the piece above the fireplace is by Tauranga tattoo artist Lisa Christiansen; the Ligne Roset dining room table was bought for the couple's previous home. **OPPOSITE** (from top) Jodie is threatening to have the living room couches reupholstered after Dave chose fabric a shade or two brighter than she agreed to; he is learning to live with open shelves full of books, bowls and Ottmar Hörl's comical gnomes, rather than his usual minimalist decor. The Murray Clode artwork depicts a swarm of buzzy bees flying away from the Mount.



*"HOUSES SHOULDN'T BE TOO SERIOUS... WE LIKE TO INCORPORATE BRIGHT COLOURS OR ITEMS THAT MAKE ONE SMILE"*

For the first time in years, the qualified joiner and former owner of furniture company Design Mobil has embraced natural timber inside his home.

"I was in the wood industry for a long time and the last thing I wanted to do when I came home was look at another stick of wood. But it's more homely and even though we still like more modern, contemporary stuff, we mix it up a bit. I think you just get older and want a change."

Jodie is accustomed to adjustment. "We move a lot," she says, describing her husband's habit of tackling tricky sites and projects such as leaky building restorations or finding land that isn't on the market.

"He doesn't mind small spaces that are a little hard; he sees opportunities. He loves the process but he doesn't get attached to things. So we seem to have this habit of moving house every couple of years, or even more often if Dave has his way." >



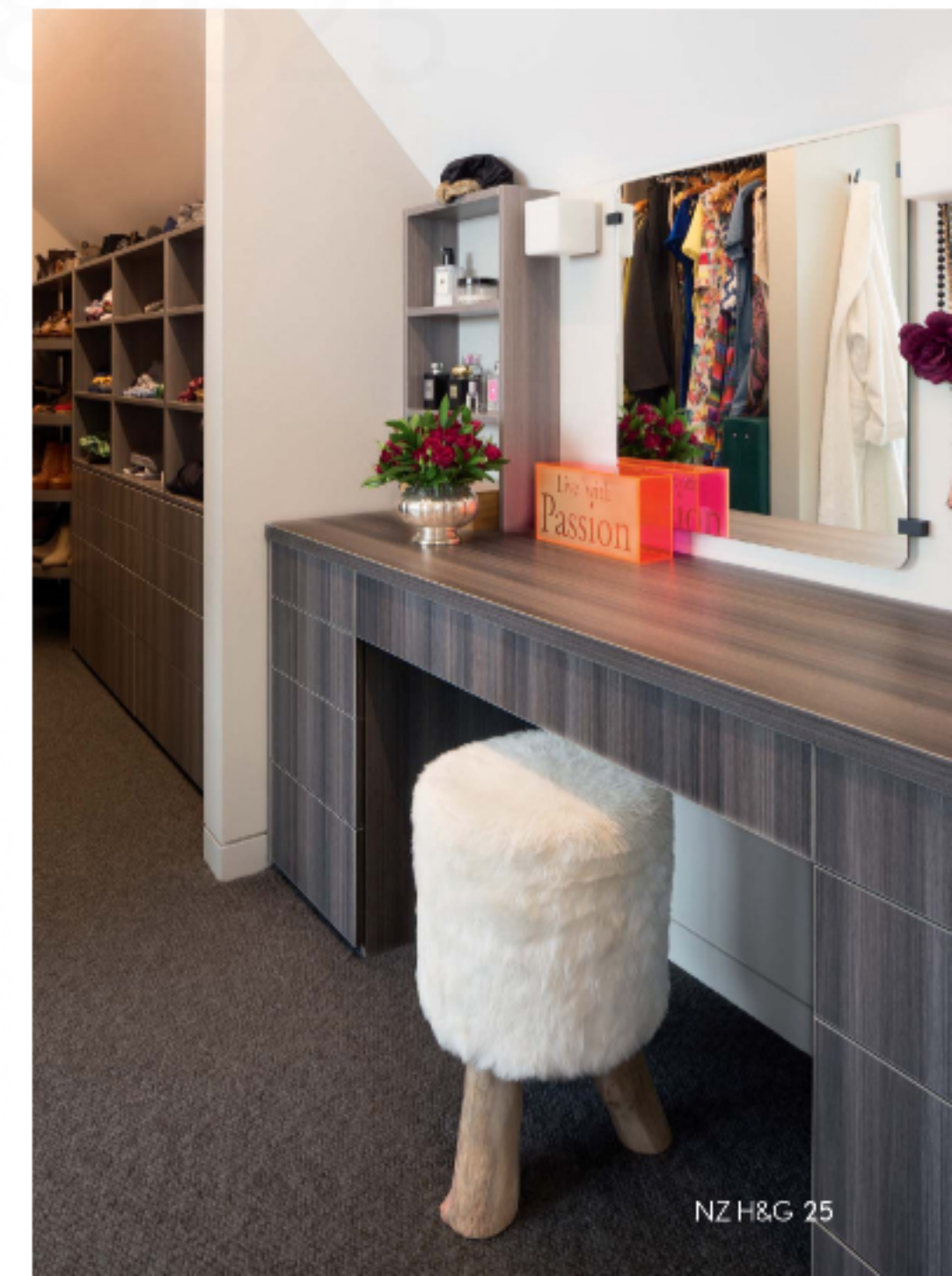
**THIS PAGE** An antique kimono found in a Tokyo second-hand store hangs in the top-storey master bedroom as a nod to Jodie's Japanese language degree and the years she spent working in Japan. **OPPOSITE** (clockwise from top) Dave designed and built the bed, which was originally covered in chartreuse velvet before the couple decided on a more muted hue; high windows capture views of the harbour and are carefully framed to avoid overlooking the neighbouring apartment building. Beyond the dressing room, Jodie's side of the walk-in wardrobe features revolving shoe racks that were designed by Dave and are the envy of shoe-loving friends. In the master en suite, the built-in sauna is well used after the couple's marathon mountain biking expeditions.



Dave had long ogled this 230sqm section, driving past and envisaging the kind of house that might work in the narrow space wedged between a low-rise apartment building and the landowner's home at the back of the section. The location's appeal is obvious; it stands near the foot of Mt Maunganui, the beach town's landmark cone that they both climb up or walk around most days. From here, Dave realised, they could also stroll to nearby cafes, hot pools, the ocean beach and the harbour with its summer parade of cruise ships and pleasure craft.

Architect Mark Carnachan was given a budget to work with, and briefed to maximise sun, space and desirable outlooks, while minimising views of neighbouring high rises. He duly returned plans for a simple, two-storey, box-like building. When Dave expressed displeasure at the dull design, Mark politely explained that's what the budget bought.

"I take my hat off to him," Dave says. "I've never had an architect say that. We increased the budget quite a bit and he nailed it. The guy's just got a lovely manner about him; he really listens to a client and their requirements and needs." Which is how the couple wound up with a 272sqm three-bedroom house over five levels, starting with a self-contained guest room that opens into a private garden tucked below street level. >





**THIS PAGE** Jodie hopes to enjoy this home – built by award-winning firm D&B Construction – for another year or two but Dave is already planning their next abode; the screen to the right of the front door hides the entrance to the self-contained apartment and access to the hidden tropical garden; the house is clad in cedar and Euro-Tray.

**OPPOSITE** (from top) Tropical planting and leaf-patterned fabric create a green oasis on the lowest level of the house; the home's multiple levels have doubled outdoor space: "It's pretty easy really," Dave says, "you just dig it out."



Q&A

**MY BIGGEST REGRET:** I couldn't make solar panels work on this house. It didn't make financial sense and the roofline wasn't quite right. (Dave)

**I BUILT MY FIRST HOUSE:** At age 23, I worked night shifts building yachts and during the day I'd build. I did my own plumbing and wiring, too. Everyone thought I was mad because the site was down in a dip but as soon as I finished the house, I sold it and bought another one. (Dave)

**OUR SELF-CONTAINED BEDROOM:** is ideal for Airbnb guests. We love to use Airbnb when we travel and liked the idea of having overseas people here. It's also ideal when my dad stays, or Dave's adult kids. (Jodie)

**THERE'S NOT ENOUGH:** Humour in the world. I say to people, when did you last laugh till your belly hurt? Houses shouldn't be too serious and in our home we like to incorporate bright colours or items that make one smile, like Ottmar Hörl's colourful gnomes that we received as a wedding gift. (Dave)

Jodie Tipping and Dave Macfarlane

During the guest suite's construction, curious neighbours wondered if they were excavating a swimming pool or a wine cellar. Upper levels include a home office, garage, a seldom-used dining area – visitors generally wind up in the kitchen – and a lounge with views of Mt Maunganui and Pilot Bay.

One end of the kitchen faces a deck enclosed with ceiling and wall louvres to redirect sunlight and wind, built as a freestanding, very slightly detached unit to comply with council regulations. A few steps away, a small, well-stocked garden produces the herbs and chillies needed for the couple's preferred Asian recipes.

Jodie admits to an unusually strong attachment to this home they've lived in since October 2015. She's not yet ready to leave it and is even trying to spend more time working from home, as director and major shareholder of technology company Cucumber. Much as Dave is enjoying the current abode, he is keeping an eye out for a block of rural land and mentally adding a stylish, sustainable house.

"I just get bored," he says. "Our next house will be totally off the grid, connecting to no services. I'm working on it already. In fact, I worked on it before I even started this one." ■