



ALPS TO OCEAN

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With a view that stretches from the snow-capped peaks of Aoraki Mount Cook to the blue seas of the Canterbury Bight this new home captures the true beauty of our region from its vantage point atop the rolling hills of Timaru.

With any home on the top of a rise, the wind is one of the major factors to consider in the design process. And this location was no exception with its prevailing easterly winds, which accounts for the amount of floor to ceiling glass that allows the expansive view to be enjoyed even when the wind is dominating with its presence.

Bill and Sally Washington spent considerable time planning and thinking about their needs in their new home. They had owned the two-and-a-half-acre block for 15 years and knew that they had to build for the view. Their number one design brief was that the home had to be flat and no wider than one room. This accounts for the feeling that the house goes on forever when you move from one end to the other.

The living areas are all to the east and guest bedrooms to the west with the master bedroom in between.

To enable the house to be all on the same level a huge amount of earth was dug out of the gently sloping hillside to create a flat section. In front of the house the land falls away to the farm land below. This hillside area is in the process of being landscaped with 1497 shrubs planted in the garden beds here and at the back of the house. A meandering pathway has been cut into the hillside garden to enable ease of access and to view the beauty of the garden as it develops and matures.

The house has been built with the age of its owners very firmly in mind. Bill is in his eighties and fit and well. He still heads to his office every day at Washington Drilling, a company he formed in 1962 after coming across an

opportunity to import a drilling rig. The firm has grown from one drilling rig to fifteen and has added offices in Australia and Papua New Guinea to its operation based in Washdyke. Sally is equally fit and active, although she would rather head to the golf course for her time away from her new home. Recognising their age and the couple's strong desire that they be able to remain in their home for as many years as possible was a factor in the overall design.

"When the very first plans were drawn up, the house was on three levels and had lots of stairs. That is not very practical as you get older so we went for a single level and lots of earthworks instead," says Bill.

The whole project took local builder, Allan Gale, just on two years to build. And when you stand up behind the house and look down on the roof line you can certainly see why. The house is over 600 square metres, and has been designed with three separate wings – the living area, the master bedroom and the guest bedrooms. The unique feature is a circular room at the front of the house which breaks up the long straight lines of the building. The clever use of both schist stone and cedar timber as the external cladding creates a pleasing interplay of textures and colours.



ABOVE The casual lounge with its comfortable leather lounge from DA Lewis. The colourful throw, a family gift to Sally, fits in perfectly with the splashes of bright colour used throughout.
OPPOSITE This stunning home sits atop its hillside position with views available from every window.



ABOVE The formal dining and lounge areas are discreetly separated with the feature fireplace. All schist work was carried out by Classic Stone and all of the joinery was built by craftsmen from Barrett Joinery.



ABOVE The schist features provide a distinct link between the exterior and interior of the house. The long hallway is wide enough “for a couple of wheelchairs to pass each other,” jokes Bill. All of the flooring was supplied by Simpsons Flooring Extra. TOP Bill’s home office is decorated with a selection of modern art and lit from the circle of windows around the ceiling. BELOW The view from the kitchen sink definitely ensures washing up is a pleasure.

Stepping inside the front door, you are greeted by a feature wall with a striking piece of art flanked on both sides by more schist. The transition from the external to the internal flows through with a textured wall paper used by interior designer Deborah Still throughout.

A thick dark carpet helps to absorb sound in the spacious entry which turns out to be the centre of a long hallway – one way leading to Bill’s unique circular office and the other toward the bedrooms.

Natural light is a big feature of the home. There are windows along the length of both the entry hallway and the one that runs along the back of the bedroom wing, so you never feel enclosed or shut off from the light.

The front of the house towards the spectacular view is almost totally glass. To the left you have the Southern Alps and on a clear day you can see Aoraki Mt Cook. To the right the turquoise hues of the ocean can be seen. In between are the hills and rolling countryside.

The expansive view from the white Corian kitchen bench was one of the reasons that there is an integrated sink here and not in the butler’s pantry. “There was no way I was going to stand in the pantry at the sink,” says Sally. And why would you when you can happily work away with the beautiful scenery in front of you?

The kitchen has two ovens, so that dessert doesn’t have to be cooked at the same temperature as a main meal and two fully integrated dishdrawers. “That’s the only thing I would change,” says Sally. “The dishdrawers have no external control panel, they operate by remote control, each drawer having its own separate one, so I can never tell where in the cycle they are up to. A control panel would be much easier.” The use of lime green in the glass splashback and on the bar stools brings the white space alive with this dab of colour. It complements the orange tones of the casual living area where the curtains and cushions reflect the tones of a gorgeous throw rug which is special to Sally. And quite by coincidence – the throw was

stored away during the build and when the room was finished, Sally remembered the throw and brought it out to sit perfectly atop the new lounge suite.

One of the best features of this home is the ambient temperature – this house is warm. The natural warmth generated by the concrete foundations and the north-facing windows ensure that very little heating is needed during the day, even in winter. Ensuring the house was warm was another of the priorities for the Washingtons. There are two gas fires, one a beautiful double-sided Escea fire built into a schist-covered feature wall that neatly divides the formal dining area from the living room, three heat pumps, and radiators on the walls in the bedroom wing heated by the hot water boilers.

One of the most striking features of the home is the curved walls, especially in one of my favourite rooms, Bill's circular office. Allan Gale, the builder, acknowledges that the curves 'took some working out' but he is very proud of the finished result. Clearly so are the owners as we wander through.



ABOVE The kitchen is sleek and elegant and works well with the butler's pantry tucked in behind. Sally has her home office in the alcove next to the kitchen.



ABOVE The curved wall leads your eye to another large window through which you can enjoy the views. The wallpaper is Arte Marrakech. "Deborah Still was a pleasure to work with," says Sally. "She would narrow down our choices and bring them out to us making decisions that much easier."



ABOVE The master bedroom is certainly bright with the Harlequin Demeter stripe feature wall and Bluebell Gray Abstract curtains. The blue guest room has the same wallpaper in a different colour and with Harlequin Amorura velvet curtains.

The bedrooms offer up a few surprises, in particular the use of bold colour on the feature walls and curtains. “I love bright colours,” smiles Bill, as we walk into the master bedroom. The feature wall here is a striped pattern of pinks and purples. The curtains reflect this colour palette.

The same Harlequin wallpaper adorns the walls of the other bedrooms, with one in blue tones and another in a green and yellow palette. A clever way to refresh the look of each room and keep a consistency to the overall design.

A large laundry with the washer and dryer sitting at a convenient height on top of a single set of drawers ensures that backs don’t have to be bent too far when using these appliances. Clever little touches such as this make it a very easy home to live in – at any age. And I am sure that view will be enjoyed for many years to come. ■



ABOVE The bathrooms feature tiles on the floors and walls and large showers.



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