

SURPRISE & DELIGHT

Somewhere near Taupō, a retired couple
still can't quite believe where they live

Words **MONIQUE BALVERT-O'CONNOR**
Photographs **FLORENCE CHARVIN**

THESE PAGES Both the living room and main bedroom of Colin and Rebecca Anderson's lakeside home access the potager garden and outdoor seating area; leeks are left to form seed pods and add architectural interest in the garden.



Four years in and Colin and Rebecca Anderson are still a little bemused that home is within a peaceful settlement just a few kilometres south of Taupō.

The retired couple had just finished renovating their forever home in Auckland when a golf trip brought them to the area, and a real estate brochure on a café tabletop seduced them.

“We didn’t even know we were looking to leave Auckland and didn’t really know we had an intention to buy here,” says Rebecca.

Colin, a keen fisherman, had spent time nearby trout fishing in the Tongariro River, but Rebecca had never even holidayed in Taupō.

“I only ever drove through on my way to something,” she says.

It wasn’t even this white weatherboard character home that grabbed their attention in the real estate brochure – that wasn’t yet on the market. It was a Kinloch home on a sizeable piece of land. While checking it out they detoured to visit friends living nearby.

“We drove past this house and I called out, ‘Stop!’ to Colin. We thought it was absolutely gorgeous, although it looked nothing like what it does now,” says Rebecca.

THIS PAGE The house was built in town in 1930 as a holiday home and moved to its current 1019sqm site in 1972; the guest annex on the left was added by the original owners; the burgundy-leaved forest pansy tree was a must-have for Rebecca who has planted a cottage-style garden to suit the house using roses, limelight hydrangeas, peonies, foxgloves, aquilegias, salvias, dahlias and buxus. **OPPOSITE** Colin and Rebecca at the gates leading to the reserve that separates their property from the lake: “It’s the largest swimming pool in the southern hemisphere,” says Colin.





Fast forward four months to another golf trip. They found a real estate agent, as Taupō was still tempting, and told her they loved character homes and had a hankering for a view of the mountains. She told them of a property that had just hit the market.

“It was the one we had seen – it was this place,” says Rebecca. “We drove home to Auckland talking about nothing other than this. Long story short, we bought it within a week. Even unadorned we could see it had lots of character and potential.”

It was a blind leap of faith, she adds, but they’ve landed in a happy place. The first thing they did was tell their children – they have four between them – who all gave the Taupō idea the thumbs up. Rebecca’s youngest son, James Hosking, the owner of an Auckland-based building company, helped with stage one of the renovation process.

THESE PAGES (clockwise from above) The couple rent the two bedrooms in the guest annex through Airbnb; roses climb the posts and the antique mangle said goodbye to laundry duty years ago. The dining room chairs were reupholstered for this house and the chandelier was a Trade Me find. A butler’s sink, Perrin & Rowe tapware and fig-patterned roman blinds enhance the English country look; the butcher’s block was created from native timber salvaged during the renovation; the lights are from Italy.



THIS PAGE (clockwise from left) Rebecca's favourite fabric, from Sanderson, dresses the windows in the main bedroom. The bedhead is covered in sage green linen and an old photograph of St Heliers Bay in Auckland has pride of place next to the bed – it's where Colin grew up. The view down the hall to the living room; the three hallway lights were found locally. **OPPOSITE** Rebecca chose pretty Sanderson fabric for the spare bedroom; the sash windows are new replicas.



‘We drove home to Auckland talking about nothing other than this... We bought it within a week’





THIS PAGE (from left) The chair is placed to make the most of the lake view – Rebecca says it's a lovely place to sit and read or knit; the oak corner cabinet was made for the couple's last house but fits perfectly into this one. The antique French clock was another Trade Me find and sits above the fireplace in the lounge and below a mirror made in New Plymouth for the previous house. **OPPOSITE** The Beethoven bust has found a home on a chest of drawers; an existing sofa and chairs were reupholstered to suit the dark blue walls; the guinea fowls on the tabletop were handmade in France and the print on the left is by Rebecca's friend Lisa Morgan.



‘When the kids come to stay, it’s quality time... in Auckland it was always fleeting visits’

Alongside the two-bedroom, single-storey house that had so captivated the couple was a single garage and a basic cottage, and it was these that were beautified first. “We put barn doors on the garage, to replace the rumpty old roller door, and put in character windows,” says Colin.

He had a vested interest: that old garage is now predominantly Colin’s fly-making room, but space has also been attributed to Rebecca’s gardening paraphernalia. “I would have loved for it to be a designer potting shed, but I had to relent,” says Rebecca.

Given the house has only two bedrooms, the wee cottage has been perfect for when guests visit, especially their mostly Auckland-based children and grandchildren.

“When the kids come to stay it is quality time – we have them 24/7 when they are here. Whereas in Auckland it was always fleeting visits,” says Rebecca.

The character of the house was carried through into the cottage during the renovation. The battens on the walls and ceilings, for example, match those found in the bigger dwelling.

In recent years – ever since the house renovation was completed late in 2018 – the cottage has been available on Airbnb. It’s called Fox Cottage, referencing the property’s original owners.

When it came time to tackle the house renovation, the Andersons called upon a designer with a villa specialty, Aaron Guerin of LAD Architecture. He was told

Q&A

Best thing about the location:

There's only a reserve separating our property from the lakefront. Cyclists go past, sometimes a horse and there's plenty of action on the lake. And, of course, there are daily swims in the lake over summer. *(Rebecca)*

Favourite part of the renovation:

I like the seamless look of the addition. You can't tell where old ended and the new began. *(Colin)*

Worst renovation moment:

There were actually no hiccups during the build... except for when the neighbours' dog got all the steaks intended for a barbecue dinner during the initial renovations. *(Colin)*

Favourite local cafe:

Industrie. *(Rebecca)*

Favourite decor:

We both love the lodge feel in the lounge. *(Colin)*

Colin and Rebecca Anderson



THIS PAGE A Philip Beadle print hangs in the guest annex, which is called Fox Cottage; tongue-and-groove panelling adds to the charm of this space. **OPPOSITE** Colin's happy place, the shed where he makes flies for his trout fishing.

it was imperative that the house's character shine through, that the view of the lake enjoyed from the entry to the property was retained, and that the cottage remained disconnected from the house.

An additional 60sqm allowed for an ensuite and walk-in wardrobe to be added and the laundry to be brought inside. The original kitchen's little log burner has been allowed to stay to add to the home's cosiness. New joinery has been made to replicate sash windows as a nod to the home's history, but is double glazed for comfort. The interior doors with their diagonal grooves have survived many a decade and still sport their original handles.

Rebecca says she and Colin are aligned when it comes to decor decisions.

"I just say 'yes' at the appropriate times... but do concede we have similar taste," he says. He scored brownie points for finding the perfect colour for their lounge. Taubmans Elegant Evening provides the desired lodge feeling and saves the home from entirely white status.

Interior design has always been a big interest of Rebecca's and she's enjoyed making decisions. Bedroom number two, with its pretty floral London blinds, was decorated with her now-deceased mother in mind. These days pretty florals are also in abundance outside, with the garden a far cry from its initial bare state. It's been a learning curve for Rebecca who is new to gardening.

The living is good in this unexpected spot, say the Andersons, and the house "has a nice soul" so perhaps one day soon it won't seem such a surprise. ■



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