

# Lodge appeal

Hooked on Huka Lodge, this couple based their Hamilton new build on the stylish luxury accommodation

WORDS DENISE IRVINE  
PHOTOGRAPHS TESSA CHRISP

**THESE PAGES** The outdoor kitchen in Julie and Jamie Mikkelson's home links to the pool and back garden; the walls are recycled brick and the timber-look floor tiles are Breath White Matt from Tile Space; the dining table from Greenslades Furniture in Tauranga is made of repurposed marine timber and the chairs were found at Chique Decor in Whitianga.



**THIS PAGE** Julie and Jamie Mikkelson blended rustic and contemporary features to create a lodge-style home for their family.

**OPPOSITE** The kitchen has a scullery behind it; the antelope head was found at Notting Hill Interiors in Tirau; the tin-topped wooden dining table was sourced by Red Red Red Interiors in Te Awamutu; the upholstered dining chairs were custom-made by Red Red Red as was most of the furniture in the house; the pendant over the table is from Coombes & Gabbie Lighting Design.



When Julie and Jamie Mikkelson celebrated their 10th wedding anniversary seven years ago at the legendary Huka Lodge near Taupo, it had a far-reaching impact.

They loved the lodge's unique charm, its mix of casualness and formality, the extensive use of wood panelling, the lofty ceilings and timeless decorating style. At that stage the Mikkelsons were searching for a new house in Hamilton with more space for their family, and at Huka Lodge they at least found a style that worked for them both.

They came home, looked at a property that Julie had earlier discounted and immediately made an offer: the 1924 weatherboard bungalow on a 2600sqm section in a leafy city street had the potential for them to create their own lodge-style home with features they'd admired at Taupo.

Says Jamie: "You needed to have a big imagination; it wasn't really the same as Huka." The home they now enjoy with sons Gabriel, 15, and Gianni, 12, is the result of a massive renovation that saw them cut the bungalow in half, remove and rebuild the back portion, and add a second-storey master bedroom.

**THESE PAGES** The tweed, plaid and leather furnishings in the informal living room were inspired by Jamie and Julie's tour of whisky distilleries in Scotland; the gold gloss ceiling is Resene Classius; the collection of tribal art includes masks from South Africa and wooden weapons from Fiji; the mantelpiece is made of beams salvaged after the 2011 Christchurch earthquake - it holds whimsical hares that mix taxidermy and metalwork by Carterton sculptor Sean Crawford; the lamp is from Germany and the world map artwork is from The Design Depot.







**THIS PAGE** (clockwise from top left) The snug library, with plaid furnishings and an original fireplace, is panelled in native timber repurposed from the bungalow's ceilings; the deer antler light fixture is from Red Red Red. The formal lounge with blue and white ceramic urns from Red Red Red. Walls in the dining space are Resene Teal Blue; a much-admired painting of a Māori kuia (artist unknown) was thrown in for free with another Trade Me purchase - it has been double-framed by Te Awamutu Frames; the gold porthole mirror on the left is from Red Red Red. **OPPOSITE** The hallway is a gallery to display Julie and Jamie's art and collectables; a landscape of the Canterbury Plains by Cromwell artist Rachel Hirabayashi hangs at the end of the hall, and the table at left has wooden carvings bought in Siem Reap, Cambodia; the carriage-style lights are from Coombes & Gabbie.



Jamie, who has a background in electrical engineering, drew the floor plan for the renovation. They worked on it with Aaron Guerin of Cambridge firm LAD Architecture, who won a national award for the renovation at the 2018 ADNZ Awards. They employed builder friend Scott Nickel and his father Gordon to transform the modest bungalow into a 440sqm home. Two double garages and a single were also part of the plan.

A renovation this size, you'd think, would be more than enough for a family to deal with. In the Mikkelsons' case, it was complicated by the fact that they lived in Germany throughout much of the project. They started building in August 2013, then Jamie - with a long career in the international dairy industry - left to work in Germany. Julie and the boys followed, and the family watched their Hamilton renovation from afar.

"It was a three-year project," says Julie, "and most of that time we were living overseas. We came back each Christmas and





moved into bits of the house.” They were lucky, they say, to have a meticulous builder who they absolutely trusted, plus the support of Jamie’s parents, Bill and Anne Mikkelson, who were hands-on throughout.

And despite the distance, Jamie and Julie’s influence is everywhere. Jamie designed the electrics as well as the floor plan, and Julie had a strong hand in the interior design and commissioning of custom-made furniture. Every centimetre, every item, has been painstakingly planned and placed. There are six or seven different types of wood-panelling treatments, and the lodge theme has been achieved with subtle style.

The front part of the house is original and has influenced the project; it provides charm and visual impact, and melds with the second storey addition and the rebuilt rear.

Old and new are linked by a generous 2.2m-wide central hallway that runs directly from the lodge-style entrance portico. The hall is an art gallery as well as a thoroughfare, displaying art and crafts collected by Julie and Jamie on overseas travels in Asia, Scotland, Germany, Italy and more. New Zealand is well represented by artworks throughout, including a painting by Russell Winterburn in the entranceway.

An informal living room and kitchen is at the heart of the extension. There are sturdy interior trusses in this room, a collection of tribal art, and a mantelpiece of demolition beams

**THIS PAGE** The rear of the house is a new extension, its rooflines combining seamlessly with the front of the bungalow; the weatherboards are painted Resene Half Delta.

**OPPOSITE** (clockwise from top left) Jamie and Julie’s upstairs bedroom suite opens to a private balcony; the room’s sea-green hues are influenced by a mixed media work by New Zealand artist Mandy Emerson; the ceiling is painted in Resene Innocence. A panelled guest bedroom is part of a suite with a small lounge and bathroom; the wooden angel wings above the bed are from Red Red Red. The master en suite has pitched ceilings, panelled walls and a bath-tub from Auckland firm Paterson.



*‘We came back each Christmas and moved into bits of the house’*





## Q&A

**My favourite room:** The den/library. I've always wanted an office with a fireplace, and love that we were able to recycle timber from the house for the panelling. *(Jamie)*

**Top decorating tip:** With a big home, consider the internal fit-out and furnishings, otherwise you risk having a house that feels empty. *(Julie)*

**A must-do in Hamilton:** Check out the Waikato River paths, great for walking, running, biking or scootering. And Hamilton Gardens are world-class and worth a visit any time of year. *(Julie)*

**Favourite cafe:** Two Birds in Hamilton East. *(Julie)*  
Long-time favourite, Scotts Epicurean. *(Jamie)*

*Julie and Jamie Mikkelson*

that came from Port Lyttelton after the 2011 earthquake. A much-loved alfresco dining room with outdoor kitchen and a pizza oven extends into the pool area and the large gardens where Jamie grows vegetables.

Jamie stayed longer in Germany than Julie and the boys; he has only recently returned, and the family is relishing being together again in a house that has the best features of past and present.

Julie says Jamie only wanted to build once in his life, "so it was going to be a biggie". ■



**THIS PAGE** (from top) Landscaping at the rear of the property includes raised beds, an outdoor pizza oven, a pergola and a portico covering the back gates. The front of the original bungalow influenced the entire project, its gables, shingles and windows melding with the second storey addition; formal landscaping incorporates clipped buxus hedging and *Acer palmatum* 'Osakazuki' (Japanese maple).