

REALLY GREAT ARCHITECTURE IS ALL ABOUT PUSHING THE BOUNDARIES. **CREATING SOMETHING SPECIAL THAT WILL STAND THE TEST OF TIME TO BE ADMIRERD IN YEARS TO COME.** THIS TAURANGA STUNNER IN HARBOUR DRIVE IS A CASE IN POINT. *Story: Andy Martin Photography: Kjell Nilsson*

PUSHING THE BOUNDARIES

BEING LOCATED ON THE HARBOUR'S EDGE, VIEWS WERE ALWAYS GOING TO BE THE KEY FACTOR WITH THE



ROBBIE SKELTON and Jan Wilson have owned this fabulous site for over 12 years and when it came time to develop it, local architectural designer Brendon Gordon was chosen as the man for the job. Brendon has a strong following in Tauranga, and is known as a very passionate designer who listens carefully, and supports the collaborative approach with designer, builder and architectural designer all working together as a team.

The plan for the site in Harbour Drive was always to build two apartments, one to live in, the other to sell. The first decision therefore was whether to have the apartments on top of one another or side by side. The owners opted for the former based on Brendon's mantra that 'width equals value' which is well demonstrated on this site, helped by its 25 metre frontage.

Being located on the harbour's edge, views were always going to be the key factor with the design to ensure the stunning sea vistas were maximised. But the clients also wanted privacy. Their brief was for something special but simple. Having lived in the area for some years, they also knew intimately how the sun and winds worked in relation to the site and this knowledge was also integrated into their brief. Solid construction methods were also a must, including concrete flooring for the upper level, and zinc cladding was always on the wish list.

Once local builder Mike Keaney had been selected, the 18 month build programme began with owner Robbie having a hands-on role throughout to ensure every last detail was incorporated 110 percent and up to what he admits are his own 'fastidious standards'.

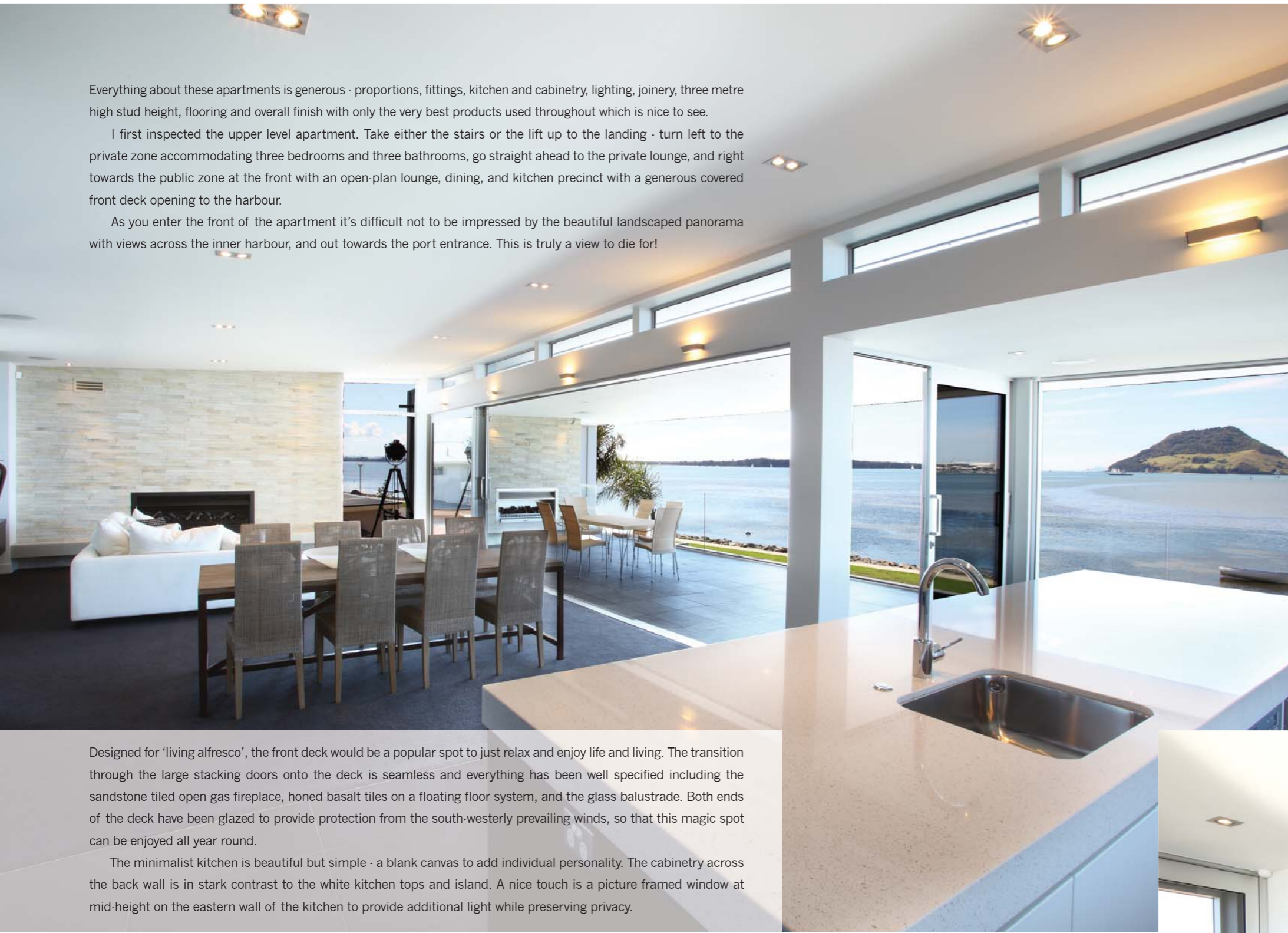
SIMPLY SPECTACULAR

The first thing I noticed, other than the eye-catching cladding finish, was that even though the structures are classified as 'apartments', unlike most apartments, the design achieves the all important 'mutual privacy' to each apartment. There is generous separate garaging, and separate entrancing well apart from each other - more a transitional feel and perfect for those leaving a stand-alone home for the low maintenance living of an apartment. In this case you have the best of both worlds.

Everything about these apartments is generous - proportions, fittings, kitchen and cabinetry, lighting, joinery, three metre high stud height, flooring and overall finish with only the very best products used throughout which is nice to see.

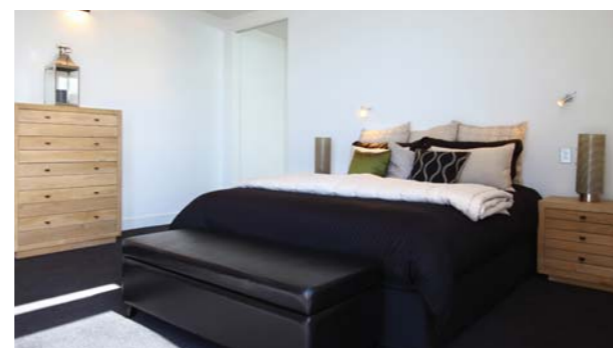
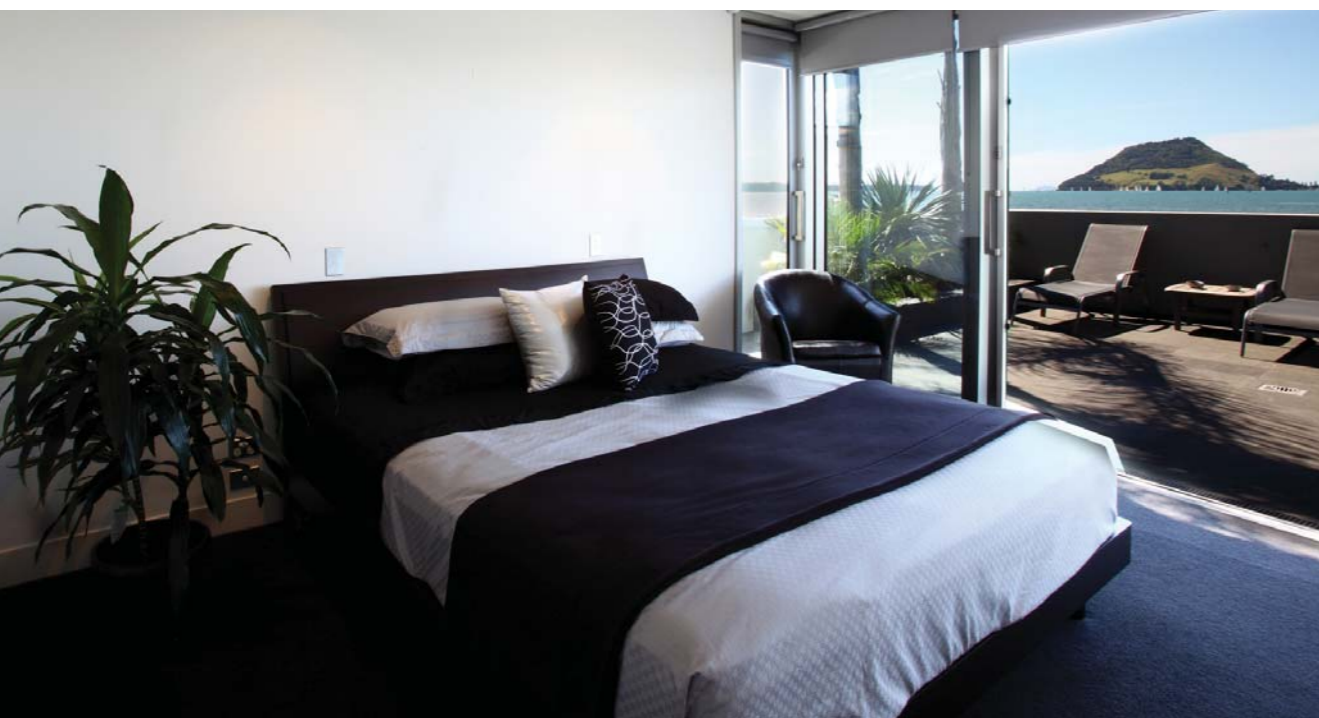
I first inspected the upper level apartment. Take either the stairs or the lift up to the landing - turn left to the private zone accommodating three bedrooms and three bathrooms, go straight ahead to the private lounge, and right towards the public zone at the front with an open-plan lounge, dining, and kitchen precinct with a generous covered front deck opening to the harbour.

As you enter the front of the apartment it's difficult not to be impressed by the beautiful landscaped panorama with views across the inner harbour, and out towards the port entrance. This is truly a view to die for!



Designed for 'living alfresco', the front deck would be a popular spot to just relax and enjoy life and living. The transition through the large stacking doors onto the deck is seamless and everything has been well specified including the sandstone tiled open gas fireplace, honed basalt tiles on a floating floor system, and the glass balustrade. Both ends of the deck have been glazed to provide protection from the south-westerly prevailing winds, so that this magic spot can be enjoyed all year round.

The minimalist kitchen is beautiful but simple - a blank canvas to add individual personality. The cabinetry across the back wall is in stark contrast to the white kitchen tops and island. A nice touch is a picture framed window at mid-height on the eastern wall of the kitchen to provide additional light while preserving privacy.



...BEAUTIFUL BUT SIMPLE - A BLANK CANVAS TO ADD INDIVIDUAL PERSONALITY

NATURAL LIGHT IS PLENTIFUL AND EVEN THOUGH THERE IS AIR-CONDITIONING THROUGHOUT THE COMPLEX, NATURAL VENTILATION ALSO HAS ITS PLACE.

PRIVACY A FEATURE

Mutual privacy is in fact a feature of the whole apartment design, while still providing each room with view-shafts towards the ocean. Natural light is plentiful and even though there is air-conditioning throughout the complex, natural ventilation also has its place.

A 'C-Bus' home automation system ensures that the extensive lighting and other fittings operate effectively and conveniently as befits the very latest in modern living design.

I also enjoyed the detailed joinery design throughout this apartment and in particular felt that the joinery chosen for each room worked well in terms of scale and design. This is complemented with lots of glass, solid stacking doors and sliding windows, clever use of opaque glass, opening louvres, and chunky New Zealand made hardware.

There is another roomy exterior deck around the side and rear of the apartment providing additional living space. One of my favourite features was the ensuite which has an exterior door which opens to an expansive view straight through the entrance to Mayor Island - a glorious outlook. It was features like this, plus the utility room with aluminium louvred door, and the use of the very latest decking systems that illustrated that every important detail had been taken into account.

The lower apartment pretty much mirrored the upper level with one main exception - a 15 metre hot water bore-fed heated lap pool which can warm to a comfortable winter 38 degrees Celsius. Care has been taken to ensure maximum privacy is maintained with the use of a large LouvreTec aluminium louvre to 'split' the levels and also provide maximum mutual privacy.

EXTERIOR WITH ATTITUDE

However this property also stands out with its external appearance, design and surrounds.

The use of zinc cladding, plaster and sandstone work really well with an unusual mix seldom used together - the main reason is the cost of fixing the cladding with installation for this project taking over three months! The system used to fix the zinc - Standard Weltded Seam System - means there are no visible joints or exposed fixings, with each sheet being hand rolled and clicking into place designed to last 100 years! The level of craftsmanship on the exterior cladding is quite outstanding, epitomising the term of 'unique, hand-build home' - it's quality craftsmanship at its very best.



In summary, this property is special - the perfect location matched with a home that owns' the site. The attention to design, construction and finishing are a real credit to designer, builder, and owner. These apartments are a triumph to Bay of Plenty architecture and I am sure they will be admired and enjoyed for many years to come. 🇳🇿

