



MAKE IT YOUR OWN

Our step-by-step guide to building the home of your dreams



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WELCOME

It's the great Kiwi dream to build a home of your own, designed to suit your life and your personal style.

In this first-of-its-kind guide, we follow the story of a real-life home build from dream to reality, backed up by bonus content and videos online at homestolove.co.nz.

If you've ever harboured a secret desire to build your own place, this landmark home project will inspire you – and guide you every step of the way.

Knowing where to start is the hardest part so, with support from industry experts, we offer tips and advice for everything from wallpaper to wardrobes.

And our real-life family share the highs and lows of their three-year building project, from those early days of putting their vision down on paper, to that fabulous feeling when they finally moved in.

It's a rollercoaster ride, so let's get started!

Meet the family

Oliver Driver's face will be familiar to many New Zealanders from acting roles on *Shortland Street* and in many other local TV shows, movies and theatre productions, but nowadays he's more likely to be found behind the camera, directing a new season of *Power Rangers*. His wife Ella Mizrahi has an equally high-powered CV, with a background in production, event management, arts curation and set design, and is now contracted to the Auckland Council ACE team. They live in Auckland's Te Atatu Peninsula with their two young children, Etta and Otis, and Harry the dog.





STEP ONE: FINANCE

START WITH A DREAM

Introducing Oliver Driver and Ella Mizrahi – an Auckland couple building their first home

It's more than three years since Auckland couple Oliver Driver and Ella Mizrahi bought a small subdivided section in the Auckland suburb of Te Atatu Peninsula. It was at the height of the housing boom and they were living in a rented Mt Albert home while they looked for a place to buy.

"We wanted to live somewhere that felt like it had a real community," says Oliver. "We liked Te Atatu Peninsula because a lot of our friends lived there and it was a family-oriented place.

"But every house we looked at, a developer would buy it before we could, paying more than it was worth. Houses were going for crazy amounts of money."

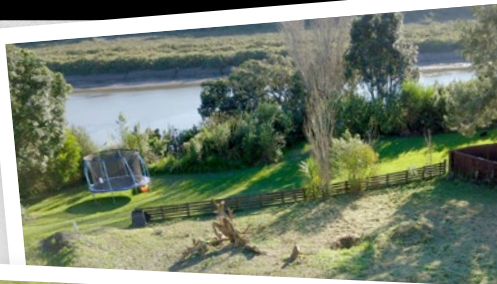
Just as Oliver and Ella were beginning to feel despondent, a friend suggested they buy the section she was planning to subdivide off the back of her Te Atatu Peninsula property. "It's a tiny piece of land

but it's on a reserve by the creek and there's a walkway that goes all the way around it so it's got a really nice feel," says Oliver. "We fell in love with it."

They decided to take a leap of faith, buy the land and build their own home.

"We foolishly thought that building would be cheaper than buying and renovating," Oliver laughs. "We now know it's not. We should've watched *Grand Designs* more often – and believed it!"

And so began a steep learning curve as the couple, who had never done anything like this before, embarked on the exciting but also exhausting journey of overseeing their new home build.





Their first priority was to figure out a budget and talk to the bank about how they were going to pay for the project. "My best piece of advice would be to ensure you understand the entire amount the project will ultimately cost," says Oliver, with the benefit of hindsight. "The biggest ongoing shock for us has been the many costs that come at you that you did not factor in."

And before they could even think about building, thousands of dollars disappeared on vital infrastructure, including delivering water and electricity to the section and laying a concrete driveway (luckily Oliver had talked to Chorus early in the process, so he knew to lay the telco duct required to carry fibre to the site under the driveway, avoiding unnecessary expense later). At last, the site was ready for a home!

*"We should've watched
Grand Designs more often
- and believed it!"*



Oliver consulted
Chorus tech expert
Kurt Rodgers early in
the planning process



Step One checklist

1 Set your budget. There's no point buying an expensive piece of land if you can't afford to build on it. Talk to your bank about how much you can afford to borrow and how they would structure the loan. Ask about a special construction loan that can be drawn down in stages as building progresses.

2 Find a section you love. Consider the community, proximity to work, schools and facilities, privacy and sun position. Your build will be easier if you choose a level section with easy access and no drainage and engineering complications. If you have an architect or builder lined up, ask them to look at the section and identify potential hidden costs.

3 Meet with a planner at your local council to find out what development is allowed in that zone, whether building restrictions exist and what consents are needed. You may also want to get specialist reports, such as engineers' or geo-technical reports.

STEP TWO: DESIGN

MAKE A PLAN

The devil is in the detail when designing your new home – and there's a lot to think about!

Oliver and Ella's next stroke of luck occurred when their brother-in-law David Ponting, who is director of architectural firm Ponting Fitzgerald, offered to design them a house as a wedding gift.

David lives just down the road from their Te Atatu Peninsula section, so he was familiar with the riverside site's advantages and challenges.

"Oliver and Ella wanted a house that maximised their connection to the river while providing a relaxed, fun, family home they could grow into, very much with children in mind," he says.

Oliver says creating a brief for David forced the couple to think about their

family's long-term future. "This isn't an investment property for us," he says. "We'll live in it for the next 10-15 years, so trying to think that far ahead was really interesting."

David came up with a simple, low-slung structure clad in black corrugated iron to be reminiscent of a classic Kiwi bach.

To maximise the view out to the river, he lifted the floor level high enough to look down on the water, and added a deck along the west-facing aspect. To capture the sun, he placed the open-plan living area, dining room and kitchen at the northern end of the home, with the bedrooms and bathrooms to the south.

"This isn't an investment property for us. We'll live in it for the next 10-15 years."



Ella got advice on appliances from Samantha Edge at Haier



Knowing that changes are expensive once a fixed-price building contract begins, Oliver and Ella tried to think through every detail in advance. Ella created a lookbook for every room, including images she liked and swatches of fabrics and colours.

"I followed everything from #floors to #toiletrollholders on Instagram," she says. "They share really inspirational photos and link to brands."

The couple also started scoping out big-purchase items, such as flooring and appliances, long before they were ready to buy. "It really helps to get a vague idea of what you want before you choose your suppliers," says Ella.

Step Two checklist

4 Write a list of immediate and future priorities for your home. How many bedrooms do you want? What are your storage needs? How important is energy efficiency? While you might not have enough money for luxury items, such as a swimming pool or home theatre, if you put the infrastructure in now, they can be hooked up later.

5 Start collecting design ideas. Take photos when you're out and about and put them in a scrapbook or folder with clippings, sketches and notes. Start a Pinterest page where you can gather images of looks you like.

6 Find an architect, draughtsperson or designer to capture your vision on paper. Ask for recommendations, check out websites online and shortlist a few to interview. Give them a very clear brief and an even clearer budget, and be prepared to work with them closely as they refine the design from concept sketch via the approvals process to a detailed construction design.



STEP THREE: BUILD START

DO THE GROUND WORK


Finding a builder you can trust is key to a successful and low-stress new home building project

Choosing a great builder was the next step in Oliver and Ella's journey, and they hit the jackpot with James Hosking of building firm JR Hosking Carpenters & Co.

"Like anything in life, if you have good people around you everything tends to go quite smoothly," says Oliver.

After years of planning, Oliver admits he was nervous as the starting date for the build approached.

"It's the only part of building a new house that's a mystery," he says. "When you do renovations there's that scary part where you go to replace a tiny bit of the deck, then you open it up and find you need to replace the entire deck because everything's rotten. In new builds, the



last scary moment is the earthworks – because who knows what's under there?"

His anxiety wasn't helped by the fact that the section had a council sewer line running through it, and the very high water table of the riverside site meant the piles had to be much deeper than usual to make sure the house was on solid ground. Happily, James' well-laid plans made the very busy dig day run smoothly.

Next, under the guidance of site foreman Mana McKenzie, the team put down bearers and joists for the floor framing, followed by high-density wood chip panels for the subfloor.

Once the wall frames were up and the giant roof trusses had been craned into place, the team celebrated with

the traditional roof shout and Oliver and Ella could finally see how their house was going to shape up.

"The hardest thing was to try to understand two-dimensional plans in three dimensions," says Oliver. "But the first time we saw it with the floor down we could see it was a good-sized house."

Oliver recommends asking your architect to provide computer generated elevations to give you an idea of the way the spaces work together.

With the build progressing at pace, he and Ella were being kept busy making hundreds of important decisions about the furnishings and fittings for their new home, doing the rounds of homeware showrooms to choose everything from flooring to light fittings.

A visit to Carpet Court was high on their agenda because they wanted to use the wooden flooring in the living areas and the carpet in the bedrooms as the starting point of their colour scheme.



Ella visited the Carpet Court showroom for expert tips from Anthony Gilmour



Step Three checklist

- 7 Find a builder or construction company. Ask for recommendations, then check their credentials. Ask about their previous experience, ask for testimonials from previous customers, and find out what insurance they have, what guarantees they provide, what penalties apply if you change your mind about something and what contingencies are in place if something goes wrong. Make sure you sign a comprehensive building contract that's been checked by your lawyer. The builder should provide detailed plans and schedules that set out exactly what's included in their quote, including a deadline for completion.
- 8 Decide who is going to manage the project – this could be your architect or builder or, if you have the capability, lots of free time and nerves of steel, it could be yourself. You may need to apply for building or resource consents and engage other expertise, such as a surveyor or a quantity surveyor – your architect will advise on all of this.

STEP FOUR: BUILD MIDWAY

REFINE A DESIGN

Coming up with a creative and cohesive interior decor scheme calls for lots of legwork

With the roof on, the building team from JR Hosking Carpenters & Co put their minds to cladding the exterior and installing the Vantage window and door joinery to make the place watertight, so the plumber and electrician could come in for their first fix.

Once the piping, wiring and data cabling had been run inside the walls, and the Haier ducted air conditioning system installed in the ceiling cavity, the interior linings went on and instantly transformed the framework into recognisable rooms. Walking through the spaces for the first

time was an exciting moment for Oliver and Ella. "It was even better than we imagined," says Oliver.

Although at one stage he did toy with the idea of lending a hand with a hammer himself, now he's glad he decided to stick to his day job directing the television series *Power Rangers*, and leave the building to the experts.

He and Ella were busy enough with work, kids and trying to keep two steps ahead on the design decisions that would transform the shell into a home. "Lighting plan, window treatments plan, door hardware plan – it's incredible how many choices there are to make," says Ella.

Early in the piece they commissioned John van Doormaal from Innovative Kitchens to design the kitchen around the Haier appliances they'd chosen. With Oliver a lofty 198cm and Ella just above average at 168cm, there was debate



about whether the working surfaces needed to be higher than normal, but in the end they went for a 940mm benchtop, only fractionally above average height.

They thought they knew what they wanted for window treatments, but a visit to a CurtainStudio showroom set them on a slightly different path, with shutters in the kitchen and linen-look curtains backed by black roller blinds in the living areas.

Tiles were another challenge, but a visit to Tile Space convinced Ella to be brave in her choices – something she doesn't regret. "When I saw the tiles go up I nearly cried," she says. "Once I saw how good they looked I felt more confident that it was all going to be fine."

"Walking through the spaces for the first time was an exciting moment."



Teresa Butler from CurtainStudio guided the couple's window treatment choices



Step Four checklist

9 When organising the services and infrastructure, don't forget to allow for your future technology needs. Just as your home will need to be hooked up to electricity, water and maybe gas, make sure you allow capability for ultra-fast broadband. Even if fibre is not available at your site yet it may be soon. See the Chorus website for advice and a roll-out schedule.

10 Decide the big-picture items that will shape your house and give you the look you want. The same simple floor-plan can be made to look completely different by utilising different combinations of cladding, roofing and joinery.

11 Make decisions about things such as heating and cooling, window furnishings and a lighting plan as early as possible, as anything that requires internal ducting or wiring needs to be decided well before the wall claddings go on – this includes ducted air conditioning, sensor lighting and automatic blinds and curtains.

STEP FIVE: INSTALLATION

ADD YOUR FLAIR

It's the finishing touches that transform the shell of a new-build house into a family home

Only weeks from moving day, Oliver and Ella had a few sleepless nights panicking that their new build wasn't going to be ready in time for them to move in.

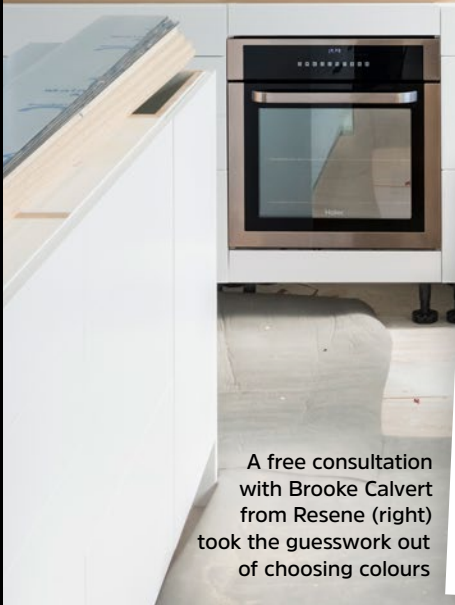
They had given notice at their rental and booked the moving truck, so their deadline was non-negotiable. But less than a month out, there was still a lot of work to do. "It just didn't look like it was going to come together," says Oliver.

After about five months of painstaking construction work by the team from

JR Hosking Carpenters & Co, all the interior finishing jobs seemed to be happening at once, with countless tradespeople moving through the site installing wiring and plumbing, lining, plastering and sanding the walls, painting, tiling, and laying the flooring and carpet.

Oliver says the last few weeks of the build were by far the most intense and stressful of the entire process. "There were just a billion things to decide – it was quite overwhelming. Everyone was working super hard to get it done because we had a strict deadline. And we were at the stage where we just wanted to be in our house so we could stop having to think about it and make yet more decisions!"

One tricky decision was which colours to paint the interior. "The first time Ella went to the Resene ColorShop she chose five different kinds of white to be safe, but I encouraged her to be braver and bolder," says Oliver. So they booked a free



A free consultation with Brooke Calvert from Resene (right) took the guesswork out of choosing colours





"The last few weeks of the build were by far the most intense and stressful."

Resene colour consultation, which helped them put together a colour palette that stuck with a low-sheen white in the living areas, but enlivened the bedrooms with pops of colour.

"The living area is white to showcase our art, then you open the bedroom doors and they're all different colours," says Oliver. Otis' room is soft yellow with a cactus wallpaper, Etta's is tangerine with a dog print wallpaper, and the main bedroom is a restful sage green, chosen to tone with a favourite artwork.

Although those last few weeks were stressful, it was fun seeing the project come together. "We could finally see whether our decisions had worked or not, and it was such a relief that they did!" says Oliver. "We're lucky that Ella's really good at visualising – if I had chosen it would have been a disaster."

Step Five checklist

12 Engage a kitchen design company to start working through your plan so the cabinetry can be constructed and benchtops and fittings ordered in time for installation. Choose your appliances early so your kitchen designer can allow the right amount of space for them in the design.

13 Commission a wardrobe company to custom design and manufacture shelving and storage to make the most of your wardrobe spaces.

14 Think about flooring before making any other interior design decisions. It's easier to match paint and fabrics to flooring than the other way around.

15 Take swatches of your flooring choices with you for colour-matching when you choose wall tiles, wallpaper and paint colours.

STEP SIX: CELEBRATION

RELAX AND ENJOY

The thrill of moving into a brand new home designed just for you makes all the work worthwhile

Almost exactly six months since the foundations for their brand new house went down, the family moved in, and immediately noticed the benefits of living in an architecturally designed home tailored for their needs.

"It's the little things that make a difference," says Oliver, who is 198cm tall. "Because I'm stupidly tall, the doors are all 2.4m high rather than 2m, and the ceiling is 2.7m, which is a bit higher than

usual. It's things like that that you can do in a new-build that you're never going to do in a renovation. We've also got slightly higher counter tops in the kitchen, and the showers are extra high – I've never had a shower that wasn't chest height! It makes a real difference that I'm not wandering around the house feeling like a giant."

Oliver and Ella made it their mission to unpack as soon as possible, with pictures up on the walls and their favourite treasures around them. "We wanted to make it feel settled as quickly as we could because of the kids," says Oliver.

The family spend most of their time in the northwest-facing open-plan living area, where the kitchen is fitted out with



stylish Cosentino Dekton benchtops, Voda tapware and a new suite of stainless-steel Haier appliances. "Cooking doesn't feel like a chore any more," says Ella.

To the south of the living area, a hallway leads past a storage room and laundry nook to a spacious family bathroom fitted with Tile Space tiles, Newtech fittings and Voda tapware, to the children's bedrooms and then the master bedroom, with its ensuite accessed through a custom-built walk-in wardrobe designed by The Wardrobe Company.

So do they have any regrets? "I think we got most of it right," says Oliver. "We're in a pretty fortunate position to have been able to have built our own place, and we're so glad we did it!"

"We wanted to make it feel settled as quickly as we could because of the kids."



Step Six checklist

16 Choose bathroom fittings, such as vanities, basins and baths, as well as tapware and accessories, such as heated towel rails and toilet roll holders. When choosing tapware, remember to ask the supplier if it's suitable for the water pressure in your new home.

17 Don't forget the outdoors. After months of construction your section will look like a battlefield, so be sure to allow for fences, sheds and landscaping in your budget.

18 Buy furniture and accessories needed to fill in any gaps that your existing furniture won't fill.

19 Take the opportunity to declutter and get rid of any scruffy or redundant possessions as you pack up to move.

20 Set a moving date, book the moving company and cleaners and get ready to settle into and enjoy your new home!



BUILD FROM THE FLOOR UP

Your flooring sets the tone for your entire house – so plan ahead to get the foundations right

Research, research, research. When you're planning a home build or major renovation, you sometimes feel like you're spending your life online and in showrooms, looking up different options so you can make decisions about everything from drainage to decor.

Which flooring to use is one of the most important decisions you'll make, and needs to be finalised early in the process as it affects so many other elements of the build. For example, it's much easier to choose a carpet that you love and colour-match a paint to the carpet, than it is to try to find a carpet to co-ordinate with a particular wall or joinery colour.

With such a wide range of options to choose from, including carpet, laminate, vinyl, tiles and wood, all available in a vast variety of colours and finishes, sometimes it's hard to know where to start.

The team at Carpet Court are experts in this area and will guide you through the process, but before you head to the showroom it's helpful to think about some of the key decisions you'll need to make. Then you'll be well equipped early, and not be so overwhelmed by the process when deciding which flooring will best suit your lifestyle, interiors style and budget. Understanding these simple factors will help clear up the confusion...

Lifestyle

Balance the look you like with the practicality you need. A lighter coloured floor may not be suited to a busy family but could work well in a quieter adult home. Consider the activity at your place – are there lots of people, pets and kids? Entrances, stairs, hallways and ranch slider exits will get lots of use, so pick a product relevant to how busy your home is and ensure it can endure the workload.

Environment

New Zealand has a harsh sun environment, so the amount of sunlight entering your home will determine the level of durability and fade-resistance required of your floor. Different fibre types and flooring materials withstand fading at varying rates, so it's important you know which areas of your home will be exposed to direct sunlight.

Decor

Consider how often you like to change your design look. Choosing a more neutral floor will let you change out your furniture and colour scheme when it suits. Do you want a seamless look throughout? Choose a floor that has water resistant properties so you can run it through from kitchen, to laundry to bathroom.

Budget

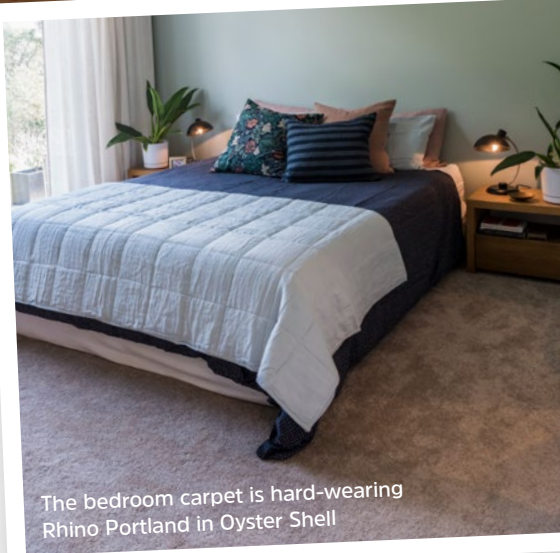
Choosing the cheapest flooring doesn't necessarily save you money in the long term, so invest accordingly to make sure it will last the distance you need it to. Your lifestyle and activity will help determine this. And you don't want to get a great floor and then



For the kitchen and living area Oliver and Ella chose Nature's Oak engineered wood in Matterhorn

skimp on the underlay. Quality underlay insulates your floor and provides a good moisture barrier, so make sure to allow for it in your budget. Using interest-free finance options will also help ensure you get the best floor for your needs.

The benefits of the right flooring include warmth, insulation, softness, durability and fade or stain resistance, but it also forms the foundation of a decorating plan, and inspires your other interior choices.



The bedroom carpet is hard-wearing Rhino Portland in Oyster Shell



carpetcourt

To find out more or book a free in-home consultation visit carpetcourt.nz or call 0800 787 777

MAKE LIFE EASIER

It's never too early in the design process to start planning your dream kitchen and laundry – and choosing appliances should be top of your to-do list

Whether building or renovating, selecting your appliances should be one of the first steps when designing your kitchen and laundry. This ensures you get exactly what you want, with the cabinetry built to fit around it.

New innovations in technology are a constant in the appliance industry, so it's a good idea to do some research online to narrow down your options before you venture into a showroom to make a final decision. You'll find all the specs you need at haier.co.nz/products/.

Ten top tips for planning your kitchen and laundry

1. One of your biggest decisions will be whether you want a single-door or french-door fridge, and whether the freezer is positioned at the top or the bottom. Make sure you give your kitchen designer the exact dimensions so the cabinetry can be built to suit your design needs.

2. Unless you have a huge family or a chef's degree, a 60cm-wide built-in oven is a good option for most homes because its compact size means it can be seamlessly integrated into your kitchen design.



The family love the convenience of the non-plumbed water dispenser in their new Haier French Door Fridge

3. If you hate cleaning the oven (is there anyone who doesn't?), look for one like Haier's 11-function built-in oven with pyrolytic self-cleaning capability, which burns off the dirt and reduces it to ash. If you have children, a child lock function is a good idea.

4. When choosing a cooktop you may be limited by the services available at your site. If you don't have piped gas you can use gas bottles, or consider a Haier Induction Cooktop, a modern option that heats instantly and allows for precise cooking.

5. Depending on the look you prefer, you can build your rangehood discreetly into the cabinetry over the cooktop, or make a feature of a freestanding model in stainless steel.

6. If you enjoy entertaining or baking, try to make room in your plans for a scullery or butler's pantry where you can hide away the mess. Consider installing a second fridge under the counter in your scullery, or add a separate freezer in the garage. Haier has a range of affordable bar fridges and vertical and chest freezers to fit your space.

7. The size of your laundry will determine whether you have your washer and dryer side by side or stacked (Haier has a stacking kit designed for this purpose). Front-loading washers tend to be more water efficient and gentler on clothes than top loaders.



Take the stress out of washing with a stackable Haier Front Loader and Condensing Dryer

8. If you have an internal laundry, choose a condenser dryer, as these collect condensation in an internal tank that drains into the laundry tub, so they don't have to be vented to the outside.

9. Some kind of heating and cooling system is a must. Heat pumps are convenient for retrofitting, but if you're embarking on a new build it's a smart move to invest a bit more and get a comprehensive ducted system. Haier has a range of heating and cooling options including wifi connectivity, so you can heat your home before you walk in the door.

10. Remember to allow for new appliances in your new-build budget. Once you see your pristine new kitchen, you won't want to bring your old whiteware across with you!

Haier



To find out more or find a stockist near you visit haier.co.nz

ALIVE WITH COLOUR

Essential questions to ask yourself when choosing paint

Whether it's for a new build, a renovation or just a room makeover, choosing paint colours can be a daunting exercise. Here are some questions to ask yourself.

How light or dark is the room?

Light changes our perception of colour so the same paint may look different in different rooms. In a north-facing room the light is brighter, so darker colours will appear brighter. In a south-facing room the light is less intense and as a result darker hues may look even darker. Colour viewed under a store's artificial lighting may look completely different when you get it home, so always try it out in the room you're painting. Resene colour consultant Sarah Gregory suggests shortlisting a few colours, then taking Resene testpots home to try them out in the room. "But don't paint them on the wall, paint them onto a large piece of card. That way you can move it around the room, because colour will look different where the light hits it." When painting the test card, Sarah suggests leaving a white border around the edge. "That's so you don't get total colour combination going on with the wall colour that's already there. When you put colours together they change each other. Colours can seem to change the



"Because the light varies at different times of the day, so does the appearance of colour"

more of them there is, so the bigger the sample you use, the better idea you'll get as to what it's actually going to look like once the whole room is painted."

What will the room be used for?

Different colours evoke different emotions, so a room that's going to be used for relaxing will suit a soothing palette, whereas pops of bright colour might be more suitable for a busy playroom.

How big or small is the room?

Colour that looks light and airy when painted on the walls in a large room may look different in a small room, where the walls reflect onto one another, making the colour appear more intense.



In Etta's bedroom, walls in a tangerine colour called Resene Romantic are paired with wallpaper in a fun dog print, chosen from the Resene Small Talk Wallpaper Collection

When will the room be used?

Because the light varies at different times of the day, so does the appearance of colour. Try your colour out on a large sheet of card, and move it around the room at various times of the day to make sure you still like it.

What colours are nearby?

Colour is affected by the colours next to it, so if your room has a lot of wood, an intensely coloured carpet or a lush green view, take this into account when choosing colours.

What finish will look best?

Gloss paints are highly reflective, so the colour and room seem lighter and brighter. Matt or flat finishes such as Resene SpaceCote Flat, absorb the light, so the colour and room will feel deeper and darker than glossy surfaces.

What's your personal taste?

Create a mood board, scrapbook or Pinterest page showing colours that you like. Look for recurring themes in the images and use them as the starting point for your scheme.



the paint the professionals use

For free colour advice visit your Resene ColorShop
or ask online, resene.co.nz/colouexpert

WINDOW TREATS

Curtains and blinds transform the look of your home, while keeping you cosy in winter and cool in summer. Here's what you need to know when fitting out your new build

There's a lot more to curtains and blinds than just preventing passers-by from seeing you in your pyjamas at night. They also provide added insulation and are an important component of your interior look. Choosing the right window treatments can be trickier than you might think, so we asked Teresa Butler from CurtainStudio to give us her expert advice.

Q: What's the most common mistake people make when choosing window treatments?

A: Without a doubt the biggest problems arise when people don't think about window treatments until it's too late. They often leave them until last in their planning, and by the time they come to us the build is underway and they're starting to feel the squeeze financially. If you come to see us as soon as you have plans you can show us, we can discuss what will and won't work and give you a realistic estimate to include in your budget. We're happy to spend time with you months out from when you need the curtains and blinds. Luckily at Curtain Studio we have a huge variety of custom-made products available in just 12 working days.



Q: Why is planning ahead important to the result?

A: As an example, if you want beautiful ceiling-to-floor curtains we need fixtures in the ceiling to carry the weight. If you come to us early enough, the builder can put them in there. It's the same with automation. More and more people want automated blinds, and it's a really affordable option these days. We can fit a battery-powered option, but if you haven't put the jib up yet an electrician can put the wiring in the walls so they run off the mains power. Then all the wires are hidden and you've just got a switch on the wall!



*"We're happy
to spend time
with you months
out from when you
need the curtains
and blinds"*

Ella chose sheer curtains in a
linen-look fabric called Biella for
the bedrooms and the living area

**Q: What are some tips for
affordable curtains and blinds?**

A: One of the benefits of CurtainStudio is that alongside custom-made curtains, blinds and shutters, we have a wide selection of attractively priced ready-to-hang designs, so you can slice and dice depending on your budget. We usually advise people to spend money in the lounge, dining and main bedroom, then economise by using ready-made products elsewhere in the home.

**Q: How important is it to
consider window treatments
as part of a scheme?**

A: One important thing that people don't often think about when choosing window furnishings is how their home will look from the outside. If you have blinds and linings in lots of different colours they will look inconsistent and messy from the outside, so we recommend keeping these the same throughout all of your rooms.

CurtainStudio

To find out more visit curtainstudio.co.nz or call 0800 CURTAINS



FUTURE-PROOFED

Think of fibre as the fourth utility, and wire your home for a future you can't yet imagine

By December 2022, almost 90 per cent of New Zealand's population will be within reach of ultra-fast broadband, so it's important to plan fibre capability into any new build or renovation project. Even if your site isn't fibre-capable now, it very soon may be.

Five-steps to getting connected

1. To find out what broadband options are available at your site, enter the address into the Broadband Checker tool at chorus.co.nz.

2. Even if fibre isn't in your area yet, equip your home to make the most of it when it arrives – it's much trickier to install cables once the walls have been lined and painted. And if you're pouring a new driveway, take

the opportunity to underground the duct carrying fibre from the road to your home.

3. Locate your home distributor box, which connects the incoming signal from your broadband provider to your home data network (think of it as the fuse box of the data world), close to your fuse box, so you can run ethernet cables alongside your electric wiring into the different rooms.

4. Think about how you'll use the internet. What devices will be connected and how many? Locate your modem where most electronics are usually consumed – for most people this is the living area. Plug in your smart TV via ethernet cable so you're set for streaming, then connect other devices such as playstations. In a bigger home, you may need a wifi extender to increase the range.

5. Chorus is responsible for delivering the fibre connection to your home, but you'll need to shop around for a provider that will offer you the best deal on an ongoing broadband subscription. The speed comes from the plan you choose, so for a trouble-free streaming experience, opt for a minimum of 100Mbps on an unlimited plan.



Great wifi allows Oliver and Ella to work anywhere in the home

CHORUS

To find out more or to learn when fibre is coming to your area visit chorus.co.nz



JOINERY HOW-TO



Vantage Metro Series
sliding doors give
indoor-outdoor flow

Tips for choosing windows and doors with the wow factor

Kiwi company Vantage Windows & Doors has been making windows and doors for over 45 years, and their joinery is found in more New Zealand homes than any other brand. Here's their expert advice.

Consider how you live

Think about how you want your new house to function. The life stage are you at, whether you have children living at home, and whether you spend a lot of time entertaining guests outdoors are all factors to consider when choosing joinery.

Decide on a look

Find examples of windows and doors that you like in home and lifestyle magazines and websites. Browse the Vantage Inspiration Gallery online and save your fave images, colours, styles, configurations and hardware.

Investigate your options

Vantage offers a wide range of solutions for all homes, from entrance doors to windows, sliders, bi-folds and thermally

efficient products. Your home's location and environment may affect the options available to you, as high-wind zones and coastal climates call for special solutions.

Choose your colours

Think about the colours and materials you've used elsewhere and choose joinery in a colour to complement these. Consider a statement colour for your front door.

Choose your hardware

Hardware completes the look and function of windows and doors. Vantage offers four ranges so you can colour-match hardware and joinery for a unified look, or use a contrasting colour to make a statement.

Choose the glass you want

You can optimise the thermal efficiency of your home by choosing a performance glass, or by using Argon gas or a thermal spacer in your double glazing.

Ask the experts

For more personalised advice, contact your local Vantage manufacturer.

To find out more or contact an expert visit vantage.co.nz



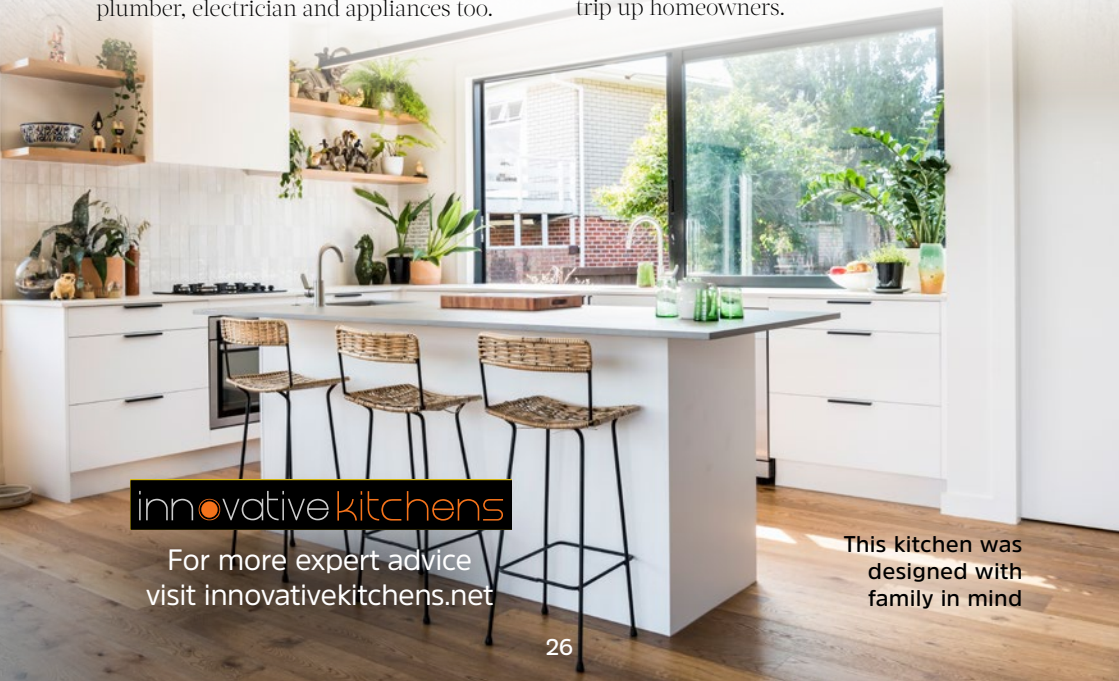


KITCHEN CONFIDENCE

Meticulous planning is key to creating a kitchen that looks great and functions efficiently

John van Doormaal from Innovative Kitchens shares his top tips gleaned during more than 30 years in the kitchen design business:

- 1.** Do as much research as you can before you engage a kitchen designer. Look at interiors magazine and put together a scrapbook or Pinterest page to show them.
- 2.** Take a tape measure when you visit showhomes and kitchen showrooms, so you can get an idea of scale.
- 3.** Set yourself a budget before you brief your kitchen designer, and be clear about whether it includes just the cabinetry, or the plumber, electrician and appliances too.
- 4.** Research appliances early in the process, but don't get pressured into buying until you've checked with your kitchen designer to make sure they'll work in your space.
- 5.** Even if you plan to buy pre-fabricated units, it's worth paying for a couple of hours of a professional kitchen designer's time to get the layout right. They will be able to see issues at a glance, and be able to give you quick advice on how to make it work.
- 6.** For best results, attend a kitchen design seminar at the outset so you know what the process involves. John runs regular seminars featuring nine "red flags" that commonly trip up homeowners.



innovativekitchens

For more expert advice
visit innovativekitchens.net

This kitchen was
designed with
family in mind

TOP NOTCH

A beginner's guide to benchtops

Good looks and durability are equally important when choosing benchtop surfaces. We ask Kate Deakin-Bell from Cosentino how to get both.

What's important to consider when choosing benchtops?

Think about your family situation and how you use your kitchen. In busy family homes, benchtops must be highly resistant, hygienic and easy to maintain, as they have to face many aggressions during the day, including accidental impact, heat and grease. That's why Dekton by Cosentino is a no-brainer. Made from 20 natural minerals compacted into a sheet, it's pretty much indestructible and can withstand 300 °C direct heat, plus the scratches and dings of family life.

What's new in benchtop design?

Marble and materials that simulate marble offer timeless appeal. Previously seen mostly in luxurious or traditional homes, the look is now popular in modern kitchens and bathrooms. Dekton by Cosentino has mastered the hyperrealism of natural marble, combining timeless good looks with unbeatable durability.



How can benchtops change the look of a kitchen?

The trend is moving towards thinner benchtops, which give a room a clean, modern look. A lighter-coloured island also helps make a kitchen feel airy and spacious. Light concrete grey is on-trend, as is having the bench and island different colours.

What's new in benchtop tech?

N-BOOST is revolutionary technology that improves the DNA of Silestone and Dekton, preventing adhesion of liquids, enhancing shine and colour, and providing maximum resistance against stains.

What are the biggest benchtop mistakes people make?

The most common regret we hear is from people who choose natural stone, such as marble or limestone, and find that, though it looks beautiful, it doesn't last. You need a surface that'll withstand the test of time.



For more expert advice visit cosentino.com



TILE IT RIGHT

Tiles bring texture and durability to bathrooms and kitchens

The range of tiles available these days is mind-boggling, so Mahsa Halajpour from Tile Space shares her tips on choosing well.

- Tiles come a variety of looks, including marble, concrete, timber and stone, so start your search by checking out the hundreds of in-situ photos on the tiles.co.nz website.
- Take your plans, colour samples and inspirational photos to the tile showroom so the experts can help you narrow down a look. Borrow samples to take home – it's always good to look at them in the space.
- Large-format tiles make a space look larger and rectangular tiles make the direction they are laid look longer – so vertical tiles will make a low ceiling feel higher. Taking tiles all the way up to the ceiling also gives the illusion that the room is larger.
- Match warm tones with warm, and cool with cool. If you have a grey concrete or stone-look floor tile, your design consultant can identify whether it has a warm or cool base and match the wall tile accordingly.
- Light colours and gloss tiles make rooms look larger and brighter. Dark tiles make spaces feel cosy, intimate and sophisticated.
- Match floor and wall tiles for a cohesive feel. Most indoor floor tiles can be used on walls too, and many come in different finishes, so you can have matt on the floor and polished on the wall.
- Decorative tiles add character and interest. Pair feature tiles with plain tiles in a complementary colourway.

Pearlescent wall tiles (Mallorca White Satin 10) look sharp against marbled floor tiles (Concrete Grey 60x120) in the main bathroom

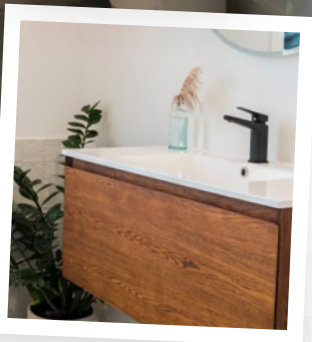
**TILE
SPACE**

For more tile advice and to view the range visit tiles.co.nz

STYLE ON TAP



The Lexington bath and Kolum vanity are from Newtech and the black taps are from Voda Plumbingware



Top tips for selecting tapware and fittings

The tapware and fittings you choose can dramatically change the look of your bathroom or ensuite.

We asked Jon Doherty from

Voda Plumbingware and Marcus Wycherley from Newtech for advice on getting it right.

1. Freestanding baths are fashionable and look gorgeous, but require more space than a standard bath. The back-to-wall bath is a good option for a smaller bathroom.

2. Clean lines and negative detailing are trends in vanities, and durable plywood is a popular choice if you want a modern look.

3. Choose taps suited to the water pressure in your home. Imported tapware usually only works on high pressure, so if you have low or unequal pressure let your retailer know.

4. Chrome tapware is timeless but black is very much on-trend at the moment, and brushed stainless

steel, brushed nickel, brushed gunmetal and Voda Plumbingware's new mirrored black are on their way in.

5. Thin rims are on-trend for basins and baths, giving a lighter visual effect and ensuring that the basin doesn't overpower the vanity. If you're using a vessel basin you need a wall-mounted or tall basin mixer.

6. Look for a toilet that's easy to clean. Newtech's latest rimless technology has fewer corners where bacteria can hide.



See the Voda Plumbingware range at vodaplumbingware.co.nz

For on-trend bathroom fittings visit newtech.co.nz



GET SORTED!

With a place for everything it's easy to keep everything in place

A well-designed walk-in wardrobe will change your life. Darel Clinch of The Wardrobe Company answers some common questions.

How can a new wardrobe change your life?

Choosing an outfit is an important part of every day and when you're faced with a disorganised wardrobe your day begins with chaos and frustration. A well-designed wardrobe saves precious time, reduces stress, increases storage space and even protects clothing, shoes and bags from damage.

Why have a wardrobe custom-designed?

A major advantage of having a bespoke wardrobe designed and fitted is that it can be tailored to suit your needs. Part of our design process is considering your requirements and working collaboratively with you to maximise the space available and strike a balance between hanging space, drawers, open shelving and dedicated shoe storage.

What's the biggest wardrobe mistake people make?

Not consulting a professional at the planning stages. Our 26 years in the business have given us the experience to suggest minor tweaks, for example moving a door, adding a mirror, or repositioning power sockets and light fittings, in order to fully utilise the space. Once building has begun, these changes become costly or impossible.

Do I need to be building new?

No, it's possible to borrow space from your existing bedroom, bathroom or hallway. We'll often section off part of a bedroom with sliding doors, and use the divided space as a walk-in-wardrobe and dressing room. Using mirrored doors on the bedroom side of the divider creates the illusion of space, so it won't feel smaller. In fact it will feel larger because the mess will be hidden!



To find out more visit thewardrobecompany.co.nz or call 0800 CLOSET

MEET OUR EXPERTS

We're proud to introduce the team joining us on this exciting journey...



FIND OUT MORE AT

 **HOMES**TOLOVE.CO.NZ

