



“Master ... Master! We have a visitor.”

Throw two genealogy buffs with a shared love of all things historical into a house- building project, and Rocky Horror doesn’t immediately come to mind. Yet, here we find ourselves ... on the doorstep of Mike and Cheryl Carnahan’s modern Richmond home in the echoes of amusing door chime, waiting for ‘Master’. This is an example of what can happen when wife wants a modern glass box and husband an old-styled villa. And it’s teeming with automated wireless technology.

As the result of a challenging brief to Arthouse Architecture’s Jorgen Andersen to meet Mike’s accessibility requirements, there’s not a single ledge to be found in the entire place. While New Zealand homes often have terraces or patios lying at levels lower than the building to prevent water flowing inside, this wasn’t an option here. This was an issue that was probably the most complicated to overcome, and certainly one of the most expensive. The abode also needed to be totally warm and secure, as well as incorporating ‘decent environmental features’.

Says architect Jorgen of the project: “The design evolved from in-depth collaboration with Mike and Cheryl and their 37 page brief. The best results come from working on projects with great clients and builders, and that is certainly the case with this house.”

While the structure, built by Scott Construction from pre-cast and Thermomass tilt slab concrete with plenty of north-facing windows for added warmth, may look contemporary – inside beats to the rhythmic heart of an eighteenth century grandfather clock and contains a plenitude of other treasured heirlooms. With both sides of the family

living around these parts since the 1840s, Mike and Cheryl have inherited a great deal of things over the years. Where do you keep, for example, a couple of thousand New Zealand history books? As Mike rightly points out, you can’t just toss them in the corner.

Enter his love for restoring period furniture and, more recently, the crafting of new, interesting and replica pieces, usually from salvaged materials. The couple has worked a lot with local furniture manufacturer Jude Raffills in creating cabinetry using, amongst other things, shiplap from a friend’s garage and matai sourced from the old Murchison Hospital. Old blends happily with new.

Even the 1928 Frank Lloyd Wright replica cherry wood chairs (purchased by Cheryl as a strategic decision when Mike declared one day he was going to make one) fit nicely alongside the likes of Cheryl’s great-great-grandparent’s dining table, grandfather’s old tool chest (now a coffee table) and the chaise longue found at auction when the couple first married – springs tied together with flax and stuffed with horse hair – “too dirty and dusty to even come inside,” says Cheryl.

This three-bedroom home also has a separate study (shared with each other and yet more books) and TV room. The latter was incorporated because of Mike’s tendency to ‘relentlessly instruct’ rugby referees. Cheryl feels one fanatic in the family is enough and doesn’t follow it.

From Mike’s rugby memorabilia to family war medals, antique tea sets, mother’s old bedroom suite ensconced in the spare room, handmade golliwogs and an old piece of scrimshaw etched with a picture of great-grandfather’s whaling station, this state-of-the-art home blends seamlessly with times past. Mike may not have got his way with the villa-style, but as he says – “There was no way, just because we were moving into a new house, that all the old stuff was going to go and be replaced by the soulless.” Yes, Master.



1. The home needed to be totally flat and accessible 2. The open plan living area offers light, warmth, space and versatility 3. Inordinate care was taken in laying the non-slip floor tiles throughout the house 4. En suite bathroom 5. Cheryl and Mike Carnahan 6. Period and new pieces blend happily in this modern home 7. The office is the hub for the couple’s history and genealogy related projects 8. Meeting accessibility needs required nothing more than good design 9. Current and historical family photographs adorn the walls of the spacious main bedroom



10. Main bathroom 11. Mike may 'encourage' the rugby ref as much as he likes in the TV room 12. Main living area 13. The TV room also works well as a second lounge for visiting kids 14. Cheryl's beloved pantry is positioned at the end of the kitchen 15. Cheryl's mother's old bedroom suite fits in nicely to this contemporary interior

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16. Clever landscaping and the rise of 1.5 metres from one end of the section to the other is barely noticeable **17.** With the home's four outdoor terraces and moving screens, there's always somewhere to shelter from the wind **18.** The call for 'Master' awaits at the main entranceway **19.** Entranceway and garage/workshop **20.** Appealing street frontage

Designed by Jorgen Anderson, Arthouse Architecture



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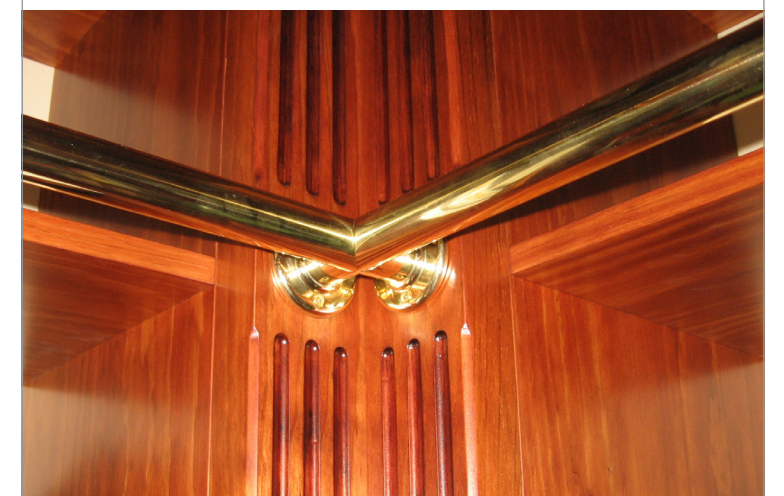
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