

showing the way

By Gill Davis ~ Photos thepicturegarden.co.nz



These pages clockwise from top left: Stone pillars and chimney breast make for an eye-catching frontage. Elegance in the hallway. The modern colonial theme is announced from the front door. Living areas give on to the loggia.



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New building materials, new products, new features, new trends... building a home is exciting. With so many options available, H&L set out to demystify the process, checking out add-ons now common and asking the questions. Are they status symbols or useful?

We visited Urban Residential Developments' new showhome to get the lowdown on what's happening in the marketplace. This is the first showhome the company has built. "We've gone all out to showcase a high-quality finish in the workmanship and good products and fittings," says director Daniel Klinkenberg.



The office

An office is now a must in most new builds; this showhome has four bedrooms and an office that can double as a fifth bedroom.

It's necessary because "more and more people are working from home", says Daniel. "It's usually sited near the front door, so you don't have to traipse clients through the house. The home office is also a getaway if members of the household are studying - you can have it set up close to the living room and close the door on all the workings."

The walk-in wardrobe

An efficient walk-in wardrobe contains clothing, accessories and shoes. It's practical because it frees up the bedroom but for it to work effectively, the walk-in wardrobe must be readily accessible with good flow between it, the ensuite and the bedroom, says Daniel. "It has to be spacious so it can function as a dressing room too, and shelving, drawers and hanging space all need to be carefully thought through."

The walk-in linen cupboard

It's becoming increasingly popular because so much storage is needed in the modern home. This is a practical solution, where you can walk right in and locate items at a glance. It's usually sited close to the laundry. Shelving that offers good ventilation is a must; wire racks encourage airflow in this showhome's roomy walk-in linen cupboard.

Cavity sliders

These are ideal for maximising wall space, especially where swing doors wouldn't leave room for nearby furniture or artwork. They're particularly practical in hallways, ensuites and sculleries. To maximise light but maintain privacy, glass cavity sliders in the showhome are coated with frosted film with horizontal negative detailing.

Cavity sliders are also suitable outdoors - as cedar louvers over a ranchslider to block sun, for instance.

Ceiling height

Higher studs are making a comeback. Here, scullery, kitchen, dining, family and living rooms all have a 3m stud creating a sense of spaciousness and elegance. In the entrance that soars to 3.5m for the "wow" factor.

High ceilings are not suitable for the entire house, Daniel says. "We've lowered the ceilings to 2.7m in the bedrooms and wet areas so they are in proportion with the rooms."

Open-plan living areas

Each needs its own designated zone but cohesion is a must, says Daniel. "Once furniture is in place, space is needed between each area otherwise it looks crammed. Think where you're going to place furniture at the design stage. Good flow between areas is important."



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These pages clockwise from top left: The loggia. Recycled rimu floors in the kitchen. The scullery is good looking and efficient. Satin-lacquered kitchen cabinetry carries the modern colonial theme. Easy flow throughout living areas. The media room.



"A proper scullery should be a down-scale kitchen. Efficient flow between the two is essential"

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Kitchen

◀ Times dictate this is included in the open-plan living areas, with a breakfast bar as the demarcation line. The contemporary kitchen often accommodates multiple cooks, so it shouldn't isolate them, especially when entertaining. It also means the cook is close enough to monitor children's homework, television and internet use.

A satin-lacquer finish was chosen for the cabinetry here. It's hard wearing, easy to clean and looks much better than ordinary veneer, says Daniel. From the wide selection of efficient kitchen lighting available, contemporary fluorescent strip lighting was chosen for the showhome. It sits flush with the ceiling above the breakfast bar – "it keeps the room open" – and task lighting fitted under the wall units ensures benchtops are never in shadow, maximising usable space.

Scullery

A walk-in pantry is not a scullery, says Daniel. "A proper scullery should be a down-scale kitchen. Efficient flow between the two is essential, and it must be a good size; it needs a sink, good light and be pleasant to work in."

The showhome's is a case in point. Two windows that admit lots of natural light sit behind the sink and work bench. Well-planned open shelving runs along two walls; everything can be seen at a glance and is accessible.

And those soft-close doors and drawers are not a luxury, Daniel says. They are much more convenient.

Home theatre

It can sound a bit pretentious, but it's a practical asset. It should be close enough to the living areas to still be part of what's going on but also able to be shut off, in this case with a cavity slider. It can double as a formal lounge too. A television on the wall above a gas fire keeps the room's focal points in one area.

Cabinetry should house the workings, including cabling, of screen and sound system. Here, a frosted-film glass door means everything's tidy but still accessible.

Indoor/outdoor living

H&L has one word for this – essential. We have the climate to use outdoor spaces much of the year, but flow from living areas, orientation to the sun and shelter from prevailing winds needs careful thought at the planning stage. "We try to plan multiple outdoor living spaces to maximise sun or shade throughout the day. The loggia on this house gets all-day sun, the master bedroom has a courtyard and there's a breakfast area for morning sun," Daniel says.

The loggia also means the kids can still play outdoors when it's raining and, with its own outdoor fire and telly, you can entertain through the night and even in winter.

Daniel advises siting the loggia out of the path of prevailing



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winds or using the fireplace wall as a windbreak. If this is created from stone it holds heat and in this case ties the area back to the stone pillars at the entry.

Bathrooms

Here's another area where organisation of space is vital. The ensuite in this house is designed in a T-shape with toilet and shower tucked behind the vanity wall with access at either end. Each enjoys privacy without the feeling of being closed in.

Tiled floors and walls, including the shower, is a no-fuss, easy-clean option. And eliminating the shower's lip makes for easy access. Tiling can be kicked up with mosaic-stone feature strips across floors and up walls; use them to define spaces too.

The bathroom is no longer simply a utility, it's now elevated to spa/haven status with bathroom suites designed to impress. However, it still needs to be clean and uncluttered, a mix of practicality and a few judiciously chosen luxuries.

The showhome's main bathroom is all drama. An overflowing soak bath takes centre stage with a ceiling-mounted bath spout. Bi-fold doors behind the bath open to a cedar-screened little garden.

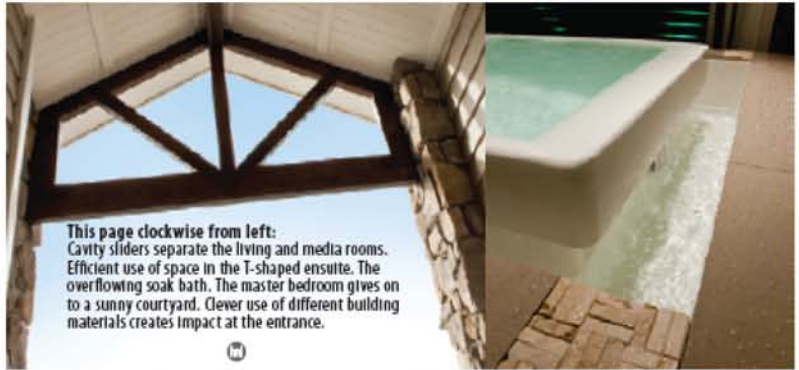
Sticking to theme

Care should be taken to maintain a theme throughout. Here modern colonial lends that solidity and timelessness, that character and presence people seek in older homes, backed with contemporary smarts.

It starts with timber-look board on fences, it moves indoors into deep (135mm), moulded skirtingboards and 90mm colonial architraves. In the kitchen it's seen in shaping on cabinetry doors and the scroll work either side of the hob. "There are lots of features available, no matter what way you want to go – contemporary, traditional or character," Daniel says.

The extras that count

- Recycled rimu on floors in the showhome's kitchen, scullery and entry. "There are good imitation products on the market but I still haven't found one that comes close to the real thing," Daniel says. "Rimu looks good and is in keeping with this house. It's hard wearing, easy to keep clean and nice to walk on. And you don't need underfloor heating."
- Decorative beams in the theatre room ceiling are also sympathetic to the style of the house and help create the intimate atmosphere necessary.
- Lime plaster coating, which can be tinted to any colour, on the walls in the living areas. The effects are warm and timeless, and the sealed coating hard wearing and wipeable.
- Internal doors stretch to 2.2m to balance with the showhome's high studs. Horizontal negative detail brings through the modern aspect subtly and ties with the negative strips in frosted film on cavity sliders. For easy cleaning the doors have the same lacquer finish as the kitchen cabinetry.
- Make a statement. In this house it's done with Linea Weatherboard, boxed corners and window facings, stone pillars, exposed-macrocarpa trusses, sleeper and exposed aggregate steps and wrought-iron balustrades at the entrance. The entry ceiling is lined with HardieGroove to replicate the old TG&V.



This page clockwise from left: Cavity sliders separate the living and media rooms. Efficient use of space in the T-shaped ensuite. The overflowing soak bath. The master bedroom gives on to a sunny courtyard. Clever use of different building materials creates impact at the entrance.



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