

tuscany revisited

By Gill Davis ~ Photos Shane Morton

A holiday at a friend's house in rural Tuscany was the inspiration for Lee and Andy Boyd's new home.

They've picked up those timeless, rustic architectural aspects typical of the area and translated them into features in their own design: the solid-plaster exterior with adobe finish, the solid-timber frame over the big recycled timber front door, the arches and shaped parapets. "They are very reminiscent of Italy," Lee says.

Those influences are strong in the central courtyard, its portico and the adjoining alfresco room sited directly

off the kitchen. In summer every meal is eaten at the long wooden table and in the evening fat candles are lit in the big wrought-iron wall brackets.

Solid timber sets the scene both indoors and out. It's seen in shutters and in louvres, which create good air circulation while maintaining security, and timber joinery framing doors and windows. These cost surprisingly little more than the aluminium variety, Lee says. Wrought iron catches carry the Tuscan theme and maintenance is not a major; the Boyds oil them once a year.

Recycled native timber features strongly indoors. Its deep, rich colours enhance the home's air of rusticity and permanence. It's seen in bathroom vanities and the kitchen pantry with perforated-metal inserts on the doors, and it's centre stage in the kitchen's huge island bench and its support act, an overhead display shelf suspended from the ceiling by iron brackets.

Whitewashed cabinetry lightens the kitchen while remaining sympathetic to theme thanks to its chunky style and matching iron handles.





These pages clockwise from bottom left:
The alfresco room gives on to the central courtyard. An imposing archway frames the front entrance. White adobe plaster on exterior walls enhances the Tuscan influences. The alfresco room is a favourite spot for summer meals.



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A hutch dresser in the adjoining dining room was made from timber ripped out from Lee and Andy’s first home, a little Hamilton bungalow they renovated.

Warm pimento-red walls are the perfect colour for the hub of the house and it flows through the kitchen and dining room’s spine wall to the lounge, which is separated by a free-standing stepped wall in mellow-toned replica bricks.

Set into it in the lounge is an open Jetmaster wood fire on a raised polished-concrete hearth. The Boyds love the atmosphere these fires create; it’s the third they’ve installed in different homes. Polished concrete floors here are softened with a carpet square; elsewhere in living areas and entranceways they are left au naturel.

They enhance the Tuscan feel and create the comfortable, relaxed look the Boyds sought, which is child friendly and “comfortable to live in”.

Lee advises choosing a style for your house and sticking with it.

“Don’t chop and change. We’re both conscious of the look we’re going for and keep each other in check. We buy pieces because we need them and they fit and they’re the right colour. We’ve liked this look for a long time, so we’ve collected it, and we’ve taken those pieces from house to house.”

Two bedrooms, the main bathroom and the television room are in a wing that can be separated from the rest of the house by sliding doors when guests stay.

In the meantime one bedroom is used for baby Wilson. It has a boating theme, with a “dinghy” bed and wardrobes masquerading as changing huts in fun red-and-white and blue-and-white stripes.

Shutters and rich timber dominate the master bedroom; the keep-it-simple theme is not lost here. Interest is introduced in a feature wall papered with a white-lotus pattern on a teal background – that’s as close as Lee could get to her favourite colour, turquoise.

A little office is built into the alcove and hallway between the master bedroom and four-year-old Georgie-Rose’s room. She has a feature wall too, this time in matching-toned roses. An old iron hospital bed, a recycled-timber bed and chest of drawers mix cheerfully with essential girly elements like the pink bedcovers and the princess-castle play tent.



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Bricks are recessed into the polished concrete floors to define areas. The fire sits on a raised hearth in the lounge. Themed accessories tucked into a kitchen corner. Pimento red walls create warmth and intimacy in the kitchen. Timber sets a timeless scene in the kitchen and dining area. A hanging shelf houses glasses and display pieces above the island bench.



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This is the third house the Boyds have built, upgrading as they've moved on. Although it's smaller than their last one, they've refined the look and sited it exactly where they want to be: on a large country block, close to work, within an area that has "great community spirit".

"We're here to stay."

The build:

This house won the Gold Award and was category winner of the New Homes \$350,000-\$450,000 section in the 2010 Waikato Registered Master Builders House of the Year, says Daniel Klinkenberg of Urban Residential Developments.

- ▼ The house is clad in fresh white adobe plaster.
- ▼ There are a lot of parapet walls on this house so waterproofing was an important factor in the build. We had to ensure we did not compromise the look of the building or the weather tightness, which was our primary concern.
- ▼ The stunning entrance has large parapet walls, a stone arch and a glass roof with copper rain chains directing water into the built-in planters either side.
- ▼ Arches are trimmed in Stutex Stones Cerabrick. The stone is also used inside on the internal fireplace and recessed into the polished concrete floors.
- ▼ Kitchen design is simple yet practical with solid recycled-rimu cabinetry, which adds warmth and textural interest.
- ▼ Solid recycled-macrocarpa exterior windows and doors link to the internal stable-door style shutters in the bedrooms.
- ▼ In-slab underfloor water heating with 50mm polystyrene insulation.

The design:

This is the third home he has designed for the Boyds, says architectural designer Ross Heyblom.

- ▼ The palette for materials is simple and modest giving a timeless yet fresh "country" feel to the home.
- ▼ Enduring all-natural materials include: corrugated-steel roofing for a classic look, white adobe rendered-plaster wall cladding with brick facings to highlight archways, copper quarter-round spouting and downpipes for contrast, and oiled timber fascias and door and window joinery for a rustic feel.
- ▼ Mediterranean-themed architectural features include: stepped, arched and curved facade walls, shaded and paved outdoor circulation and entertaining spaces, a plaster-finished colonnade to the outdoor living court with feature facade wall above, roof ridges that abut central parapet walls. Gable end walls extend up as parapets, which book-end the rooflines.
- ▼ Main living spaces have a connecting central accessway which passes through them from the entry/garage access to the master bedroom wing. This open-plan style allows cosy living spaces without partition walls which would make spaces smaller and block sunlight and circulating warmth.



This page clockwise from top:

A little boy's dream bedroom for baby Wilson. Pattern on the feature wall lifts the rich-toned timber in the master bedroom. Recycled-timber vanities have pressed-metal inserts in the doors. The courtyard and its portico, which offers much needed shade in the height of summer.



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