Structured Simplicity

Moving from a one-acre property in Titirangi was tough, but a three level home in Auckland quickly convinced this family that it was time to pack their bags.

Words **Soraya Nicholas** Photography **Kelsi Duin**

A combination of cladding materials was used on the house, including aluminium weatherboards for a contemporary twist on a classic look.

ABOVE The kitchen is filled with light, and instead of having a breakfast bar, the centre island is used for storage.
LEFT The living spaces work well for the large family, located on the first floor.

DAVID AND MARIE HAD BEEN LOOKING to move for some time from their one-acre property in Titirangi, ready to be closer to town, but finding the right home was not as easy as they had hoped. With three children, two dogs and two cats, they still needed space, and they were more interested in purchasing an already completed house than building from scratch.

When David visited a home for sale and reported back to Marie, they thought it could be right, but in the end they were not entirely convinced. Until their real estate agent showed them the front house in the small development, which the owner had intended to keep as a private dwelling rather than selling it on. "It felt 100% right," says Marie. "We could picture our family there as soon as we walked through, and we basically told them we were interested, 24 hours later it was a done deal!" The home was almost finished, however David and Marie were able to make some minor changes to what was left to do, as well as completing the landscaping and fencing to keep their animals contained. "It really appealed to us because it was modern and low maintenance, and the three levels work even better than we'd imagined for our family," explains Marie. Their eldest son, who attends university, has the entire ground floor to himself, which is "like a self-contained flat." The middle level houses the master bedroom and the living and dining areas, and the top floor is for the couple's other son and daughter to share.

The home was designed by Mark Rantin of **MRA Design Ltd**, with the experienced design company devising a plan to subdivide the original section. They incorporated a plan to keep an existing house, and build two new ones. "The design had to make the most effective use of a south sloping small city site, to create a family home," says MRA director Wendy Metcalfe. "The inspiration for the design comes from the challenge of selecting products of strength and durability, that had simple clean lines, and then using them to create a fresh, modern aesthetic." The incorporation of three levels was important to the developer too, with the original idea being for the bottom level to be used as an office/living space.

Mark worked with the developer to select the best cladding for the project. One of the primary cladding materials used was Nu-Wall Mono 190 profile aluminium weather boards, supplied by **Nu-Wall Aluminium Cladding Limited**. Finished in a Charcoal Matt powder-coated colour, the weatherboards are visually exciting, durable and completely low maintenance. The weatherboards interlock to ensure complete weather tightness, and the actual installation process is tested and appraised by BRANZ. For this home, the cladding was placed in both a horizontal and vertical fashion, to create a modern twist on the classic weatherboard style of home.

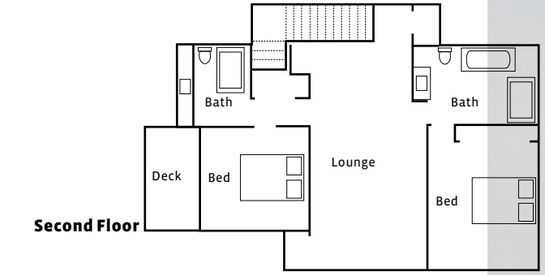
While MRA Ltd provided the design, it was John Chalk from **John Chalk Builders** in charge of the actual construction. The experienced builder worked hard to create the straight, square lines requested by the client, "with as little detail showing as possible when transitioning from one exterior cladding to another." John

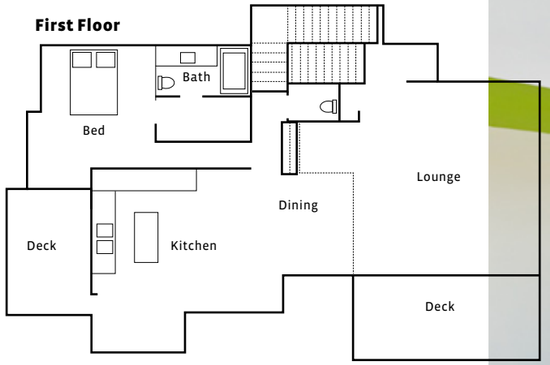
"The living level (middle floor) works really well for us, and it's really nice sitting as a family for meals at the kitchen table. We had a breakfast bar in our last house so we never really sat down properly together. In general, the whole house works so well for our family over the three levels. Our son is fortunate to have his own floor downstairs, and our other two children have the top level to themselves."

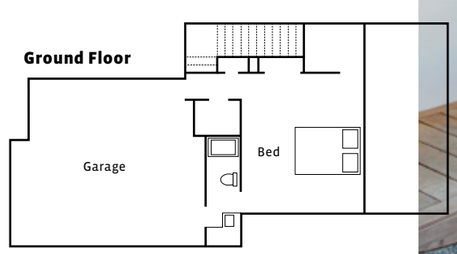
also used a number of other unique techniques, building with steel framing and concrete filled polystyrene blocks. An external stairwell was also incorporated, which had to be made to a certain size to allow for an exact number of weatherboards. One of the most challenging aspects of the construction was the time consuming aspect of joining the different exterior cladding materials together. "The steel frame had to connect to the building wrap, then a cavity batten with a thermal break, and then that had to be connected to the aluminium cladding with the appropriate fixing," says John.

David and Marie cannot believe how warm their first winter has been in their new home, and they attribute this to the energy efficient materials used during construction. **Styrobeck Ltd** supplied the Ambionse Insulated Concrete building blocks an Insulated Concrete Formwork Building system, for all the exterior walls, made from two 50mm layers of polystyrene. These were then filled with 20-25mpa of concrete and reinforcing steel for solid construction. This method of construction is highly energy efficient, and interior temperatures without any heating assistance can usually remain between 18-22 degrees all year around. The blocks are also fire rated for up to four hours, and provide superior acoustic benefits.

The house features simple, clean lines, and has a very modern, uncluttered style







ABOVE When the home was first designed, the ground floor was going to be an office with separate access. Now, it's used for David and Marie's son, who loves having his own space while he's at university. The master suite is located on the middle level along with the living spaces, and the guest bedrooms are on the top floor.

inside and out. Part of this was achieved by the use of extensive windows, doors and other glasswork, including an external frameless glass balustrade by **New Bright Glass**. This was made from a Grade A 12mm clear toughened glass dual disk system, with marine grade stainless steel anchor fittings. This was also used for the front door, glass wind barrier and the self-latching gate. New Bright also supplied glass for the interior of the home, with a 23mm clear toughened glass Skylite on the ground floor deck, featuring anti-slip safety vinyl. The glass showers in the home are frameless, and are made from strong 10mm toughened glass.

David and Marie are full of praise for everyone involved in the creation of their much-loved family home. The design allows them to happily co-exist with their children, providing them all with their own personal spaces, and their animals love it too. ■

THE SPECS	Auckland 300 Sq m	2	4	4 + powder room

Directory

DESIGNER
MRA Ltd
09 299 2034
www.mra.net.nz

BUILDER
John Chalk Builders
021 211 6251

BALUSTRADE
New Bright Glass
0800 888 618
www.newbright.co.nz

CLADDING
Nu-Wall Aluminum Cladding
0800 689 255
www.nuwall.co.nz

BUILDING MATERIAL
Styrobeck Ltd
09 278 7175
www.styrobeck.co.nz/ambionse