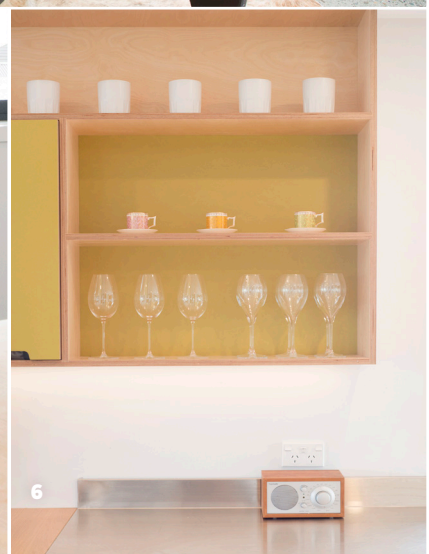




A magical Maitai transformation

The setting was the drawcard for a Nelson couple to buy and renovate, explains **Brenda Webb**.





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PHOTOGRAPHY DOMINIQUE WHITE

Anyone who has walked the banks of Nelson's Maitai River will have been wowed by its tranquillity and captivated by the views.

It became a favoured dog walking route for Cathy McBride and Martin Byrne; so much so that when a house there came up for auction they bought it – warts and all.

“We basically moved from our beautiful 105-year-old villa to a 1970s time capsule – a concrete block house complete with brown glass and bronze aluminium joinery,” says Cathy. “But ask anyone who knows the area and they will know ‘that house’ because it’s just the best location ever and I had lusted after it for many years.”

It was during one of their dog walks that Cathy and Martin noticed an auction sign in front of the house. They went along to the auction and the house became theirs, complete with its distinct 1970s décor including brown carpet and orange benchtops. Undeterred the couple lived there for a year before embarking on any

1. Timber, gleaming stainless steel and funky cabinetry in the kitchen
2. Welcoming chairs invite guests to enjoy the deck area
3. Bright colours are a feature of the renovation
4. A statement lightshade over the stairwell
5. An unusual mortar and pestle
6. Open-plan shelving provides space for collectibles
7. Neutral walls allow art and furnishings to shine
8. Colour pops on doors provide interest



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“It’s technically a renovation but in fact there is very little of the original house left.”

CATHY MCBRIDE

renovation and while they thought they would find everything wrong, they were pleasantly surprised. “There was a lot right – the layout was good and the house was actually very innovative for its time, particularly with its orientation towards the sun and maximising the views.”

A holiday feel

They began looking at renovation ideas and Cathy, who does a bit of design work, started to draw plans which they took to architectural designer Tony Karsten to tweak. “Our brief was that we wanted the house to have the feel of a holiday home – the view was so peaceful and scenic and we wanted to retain that ... as if we were on holiday. It’s technically a renovation but in fact there is very little of the original house left. The old bones are well and truly buried – it casts the same shadow, that’s about it.”

- 9. The outdoor pool is perfect for Nelson’s long, hot summers
- 10. Polished concrete floors add sophistication
- 11. Enticing seating around the pool



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Restricted by rules and regulations because of the house's proximity to the river, the original footprint had to remain. The look and feel is very much Tony Karsten which suited the homeowners perfectly as they love his style particularly the aesthetic appeal, the clean lines and the use of concrete and steel.

Builder Jason Gardiner was recommended by two independent parties and Cathy and Martin found him and his team enthusiastic to work with. "The guys were amazing and I missed them when it was all finished. It was an enjoyable process and we enjoyed seeing everything happening."

Cathy says the three bedroom, two bathroom and two lounge home is very easy to live in being modern, simple, easy going and warm. Those bronze aluminium windows were all replaced with double glazed windows and, with most walls being removed, extra insulation was added. A new kitchen featuring a large stainless-steel bench was installed along with new bathrooms, new interiors and new furnishings.

"It really is like a new house and we are thrilled with it," says Cathy.

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12. Texture and colour in the bedroom furnishings

13. Dark grey sofas complement the light grey carpet

14. A timber vanity adds warmth in the bathroom

15. Brightly coloured Roman blinds in the bedroom

16. Light tiles and a glass partition modernise the bathroom

17. Throws and cushions add drama, texture and colour