



THESE PAGES Shannon and Patria Moyle went to great lengths to extend the footprint of their M1 Maunganui home to capture views along the coast; six of the mahogany chairs were bought second-hand for their much smaller previous abode: "I hunted and hunted and didn't find anything I liked more than what we had," says Patria so she had the dining table and remaining two chairs custom-made to match.

# OF SAND AND SEA

This fun-loving family had always hankered for beachside living - now it's a reality

Words SUE HOFFART  
Photographs AMANDA AITKEN

If the wind is right, Shannon Moyle reckons he can hit his friends' house with a champagne cork. Which is fitting, given Shannon and wife Patria laughingly blame Pete and Gill's liquor cabinet and beachfront location for their own decision to build on this particular part of the Mt Maunganui coastline.

One Sunday morning, while the two couples recovered from a late night at Pete and Gill's seaside home, Pete told Shannon: "You should buy that place next door." Bloody Marys in hand, the men walked over to inspect the bach that had been on the market for several years.

There was some doubt that Patria would want to leave their newly finished, architecturally designed home overlooking the nearby golf course to live in a run-down 80sqm kitset home on the edge of the dunes.

"I'd do it in a heartbeat," she declared, upon seeing the vista that sweeps over the ocean and stretches north-west along Omanu Beach towards the landmark volcanic cone of Mauao.

**THESE PAGES** When sea breezes pick up, the left-hand side of the house offers more sheltered outdoor entertaining; Maratoki stone from a quarry near Thames was chosen for its gold and brown hues so that it tones with the couple's wooden furniture and the sand they overlook: "It was the best decision we made," says Shannon.





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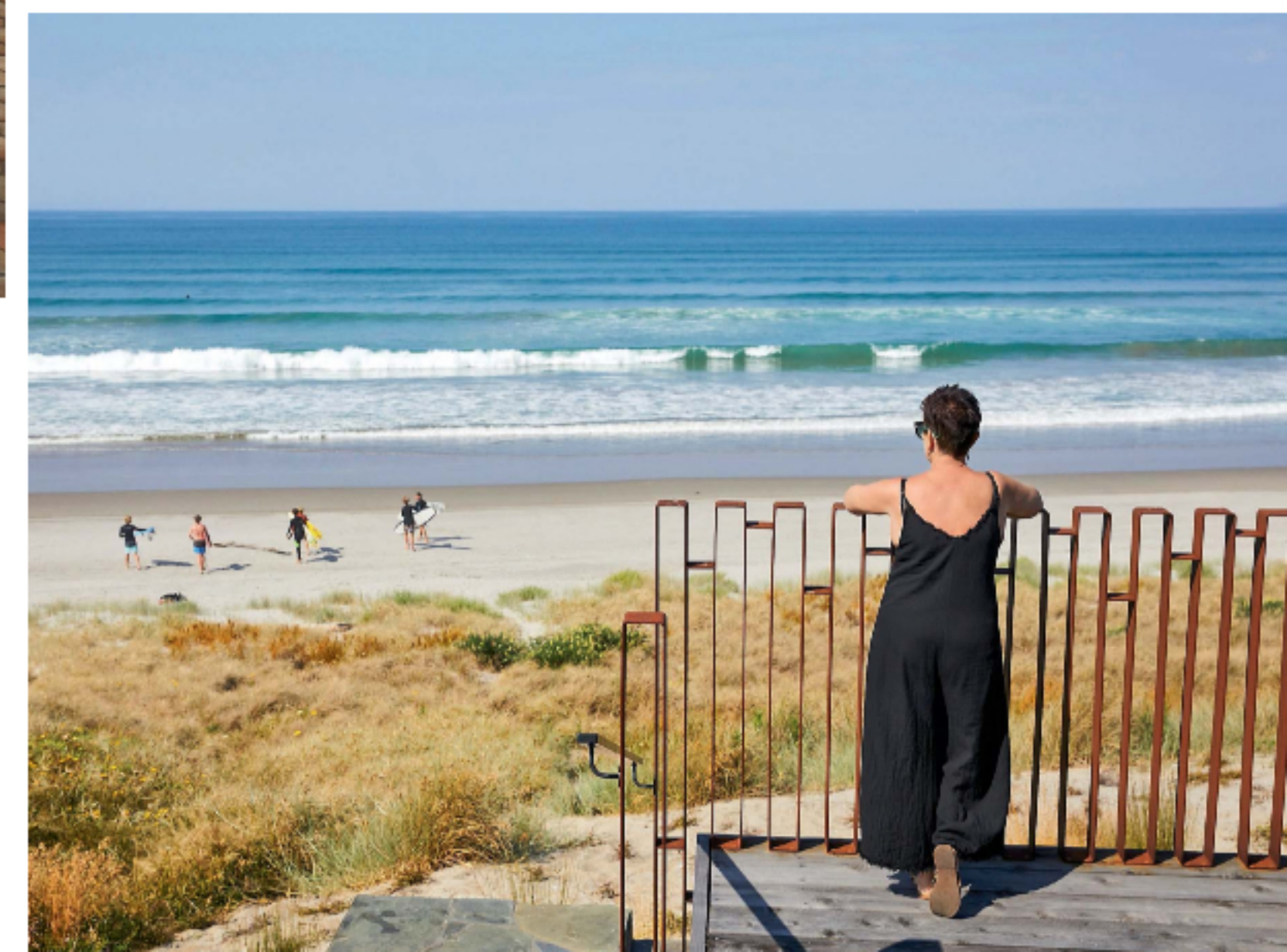


Until that moment, the couple had not seriously considered living right beside the sea, imagining it as far too expensive. However, Shannon had always secretly yearned for beachfront living, having grown up nearby and constructed a series of grand coastal homes alongside his builder father. Perhaps, the couple decided, they could make this waterfront notion work after all.

So they put their new house on the market and bought the vastly smaller, older one. Then, because their own furniture was too big to fit, Patria indulged her fondness for mid-century furnishings and filled the place with second-hand purchases. The couple also gave the kitchen and exterior a makeover before moving in with children Baxter and McKenzie.

"I think you grow up thinking you need a big house," Shannon says. "But when you build a 500sqm house, you're living a long way from one another. And we had a lot of fun in that little place. You live in each other's pockets. It's

**THESE PAGES** (clockwise from above) Guests are often fascinated by the kitchen island, topped with fossilised river stone; it took 18 months to build the house but most of the tradespeople had worked with or been trained by the Moyle: "It was kind of like family on site," says Patria McKenzie and Baxter with Patria and Shannon on the steps leading to their pool deck. Patria can keep an eye on the children from the deck; in summer, the younger Moyles tend to dash between the sea, spa and pool.



**THESE PAGES** Lockable metal doors slide back to access surfboard and beach toy storage beneath the pool, as well as access to the pool filtration system and a tap to hose off sandy gear.





**THIS PAGE** "When it comes to interiors, I'll always like ugly but interesting, something that's a bit of quirky," Patria says of the elephant wallpaper in the main floor bathroom; the mahogany cabinetry was made by M1 Maunganui firm Blackmore Design. **OPPOSITE** (from top) A spiral staircase was on Patria's wish-list for the house; this one leads to the master bedroom; the handmade terracotta tile design was inspired by a similar floor in an Auckland restaurant. Patria jokes the children are only allowed into the master bedroom if they're delivering coffee or wine.

quite neat, as a family, because whatever's happening is happening to all of us; the good, the bad, whatever."

"We really did learn what things counted," says Patria. "Like having a second toilet. And having a big fridge."

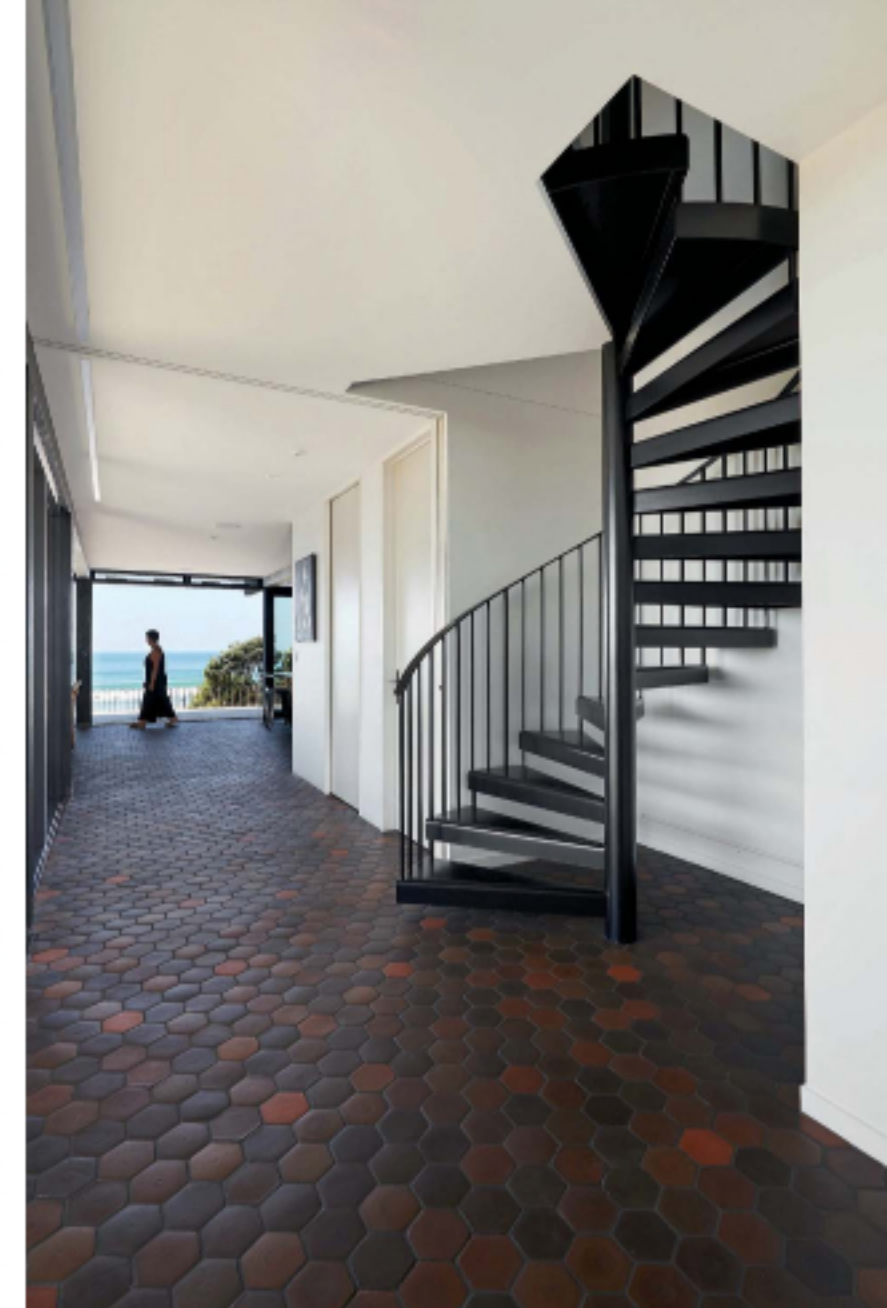
The downsizing experience influenced the configuration of the four-bedroom home they ultimately built on the site. They were determined the children's bedrooms would not be too far from the hub of the house and that they could do most of their daily living in 80sqm.

Now the children are a few years older - 11 and 13 - the family counts a second living area, a swimming pool and an extra shower for their busy young athletes among the nice-to-haves.

Both Shannon and Patria had strong ideas about aesthetics and building materials, courtesy of their experience in the building industry. She has worked as a designer in residential property, while he is director of a construction and development company.

Their own building wish-list included a 1950s ambience, an internal courtyard, a spiral staircase and stone chimneys piercing the roof line. Shannon wanted a garage large enough to hold their boat, a beloved Chevrolet Bel Air classic car and a workshop. And they were determined to retain the view that had captivated them both the first day they stood on the site.

It took 140 piles, drilled 7m into the ground, to achieve the essential extra 3.5m of floor space that reached out towards the sand dunes and the view. "But



'This house is an expression of us'





**THIS PAGE** (from left) In the main ensuite, a rock wall leads to the shower where a glass wall is printed in a palm leaf design; high windows are positioned throughout the house to regulate airflow. Shannon's cousin Dwayne Moyle created the botanic artwork in the main entrance for an art school assignment. **OPPOSITE** Garages sit on each side of the front entrance; a sculptural pendant in the hall sourced from an Australian website echoes one used over the dining table.



## 'WHEN WE PUT IT TOGETHER, IT WORKED. YOU JUST HAVE TO BELIEVE IN YOURSELF'

it's the best 3.5m," says Shannon. Patria jokes that if coastal erosion strikes, they'll wind up with a fabulous pole house.

Although the couple had built and renovated several times over, every previous house was finished with an eye on the market. Would another buyer like it? "This time it was 'go for your life,'" says Shannon. "This house is an expression of us and our personalities. That's not an open cheque book but it means if it's orange you like, then do it. Patria has got that vision and confidence around colours and how they'll work together, which I reckon is incredible."

His wife admits her self-assurance occasionally wavered. "I definitely did have moments of 'oh my God'. Like when the floor tiles arrived. And when McKenzie said 'that wallpaper is absolutely disgusting'. But when we put it all together, it worked. You just have to believe in yourself."

The Moyles are also big believers in fun. In the garage, a dedicated dress up room is crammed with costumes for parties. Their children frequently wander in off the beach with friends who end up staying the night. And Shannon claims the beachfront location has an added bonus; when their own friends are over, the noise of the sea masks the sound of music played at full volume. ■



## Q&A

**Favourite costume party theme:** Rubik's cube, where you dress in six different colours but aim to end up wearing one by the end of the night. So everyone has to swap all their clothes. (Patria)  
**Our architect:** Mark Carnachan really listened, which is quite unique. I know because I'm in the industry. Honestly, Mark's first take on the layout was 95 percent what you see. (Shannon)

**We have no:** Wall for a TV in the main living area. We do have a projector we use on the window blind but it's not worth losing glass for a TV. (Shannon)

**And no office either:** Because if you could sit with a laptop in the lounge or at the kitchen bench with that view, why would you go to an office? (Patria)  
Shannon and Patria Moyle