

Whites Road House

Whitford, New Zealand

TIM DORRINGTON ARCHITECTS

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The clients discovered this 2-hectare (5-acre) rural property situated 40 minutes from Auckland City and fell in love with the bush aspects and seclusion so close to the city.

The underlying concept of the design entailed an arrangement of gabled forms lightly sitting on the land, with a horizontal verandah linking these together and providing circulation. Basalt stonewalls that emerge from the ground were added as a third compositional element. These mass elements help anchor the rest of the structure in its site.

The 615-square-metre (2018-square-foot) house comprises four gabled structures arranged loosely on the site; each contains distinct functions such as bedrooms, living rooms and garage. Linking these gabled forms is a flat-roofed veranda that at two points spills out to be supported by stonewalls, providing the space for a family room and guest bedroom wing.

The brief required flexibility for family living with a focus on entertaining.

The majority of the ground floor is made up of entertaining spaces that flow together: bar to dining, entry to kitchen, kitchen to family room. These all open onto an outdoor entertainment area including a pool, BBQ and pizza oven.

There is no obvious differentiation between these spaces, creating a casual and inviting feel to the public areas of the house.

A full commercial bar, albeit on a small scale, complements the entertainment facilities; the bar is modelled on the clients' concept of an ice cube. A further requirement of the brief was a wine cellar, which the architect designed as a cave located under the house. This is accessed internally via a glass elevator and externally through a recycled stormwater concrete pipe.

Again with entertaining a consideration, the kitchen is designed in two parts: the slate block acts as the public hub of the kitchen where the cooking is carried out. Hidden behind oak panels is a full butler's kitchen for preparation work, storage and cleaning.

Fundamentally the house is a white-painted space with accents of natural materials such as the basalt walls, oak panels of various colours, stainless steel and natural white stone flooring. The entry glass corridors give a sense of space and openness, flooding the house with light and bringing in the green of the surroundings, which complements the pared-back colour palette.

Photography: Emma-Jane Hetherington







