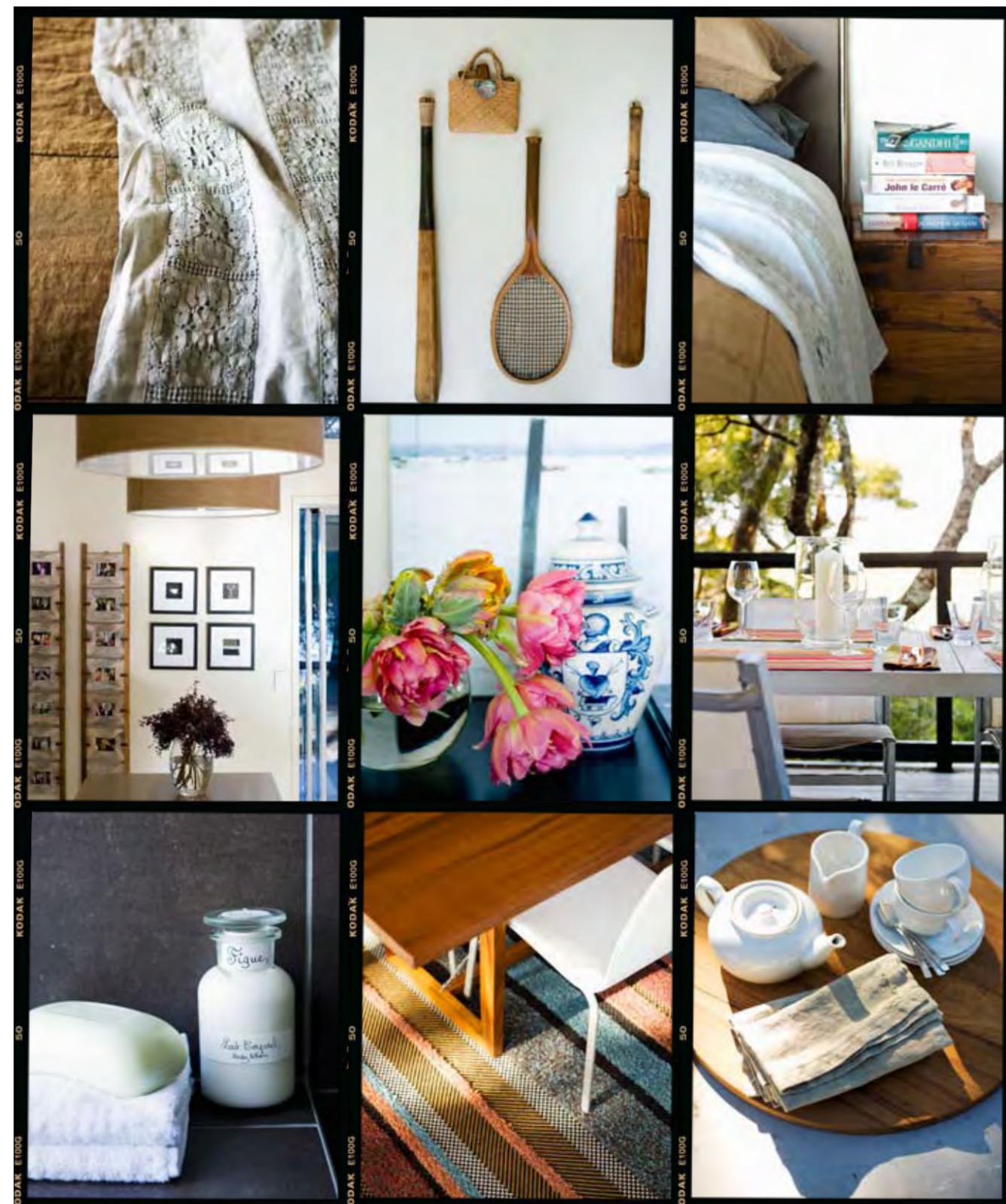


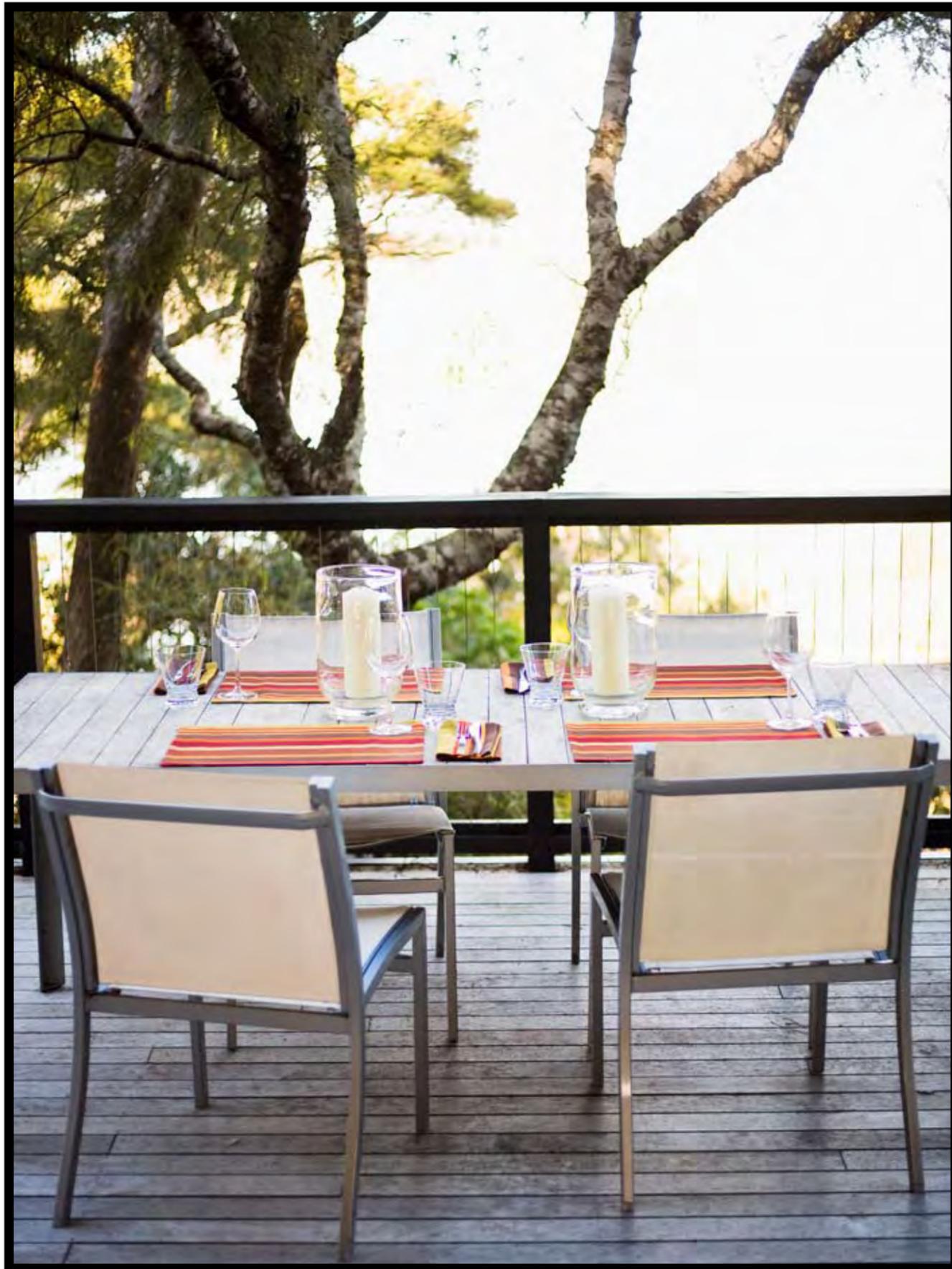
To the TREETOPS

A holiday home was the last item on this couple's to-do list, but this cosy weekender has become a retreat from their busy lives

STORY RACHEL SMITH STYLING TONI BRIGGS PHOTOGRAPHY KIEREN SCOTT



Building a weekend escape on the shores of New Zealand's Mahurangi Harbour {opposite} gave Dayle and Dennis Bygrave, owners of textile importers Seneca, ample room to flex their creative muscles and the perfect excuse to dip into their stock of luscious fabrics. "The decorating was fun; being in textiles, I could go into the showroom and just pick out all my favourite things! But we did stick to the budget on the interiors and it wasn't extravagant," says Dayle. As well as goodies from the Seneca warehouse – including earthy-toned linens {top left & top right}, Society 'Bon' napkins {bottom right} and a striped rug {bottom centre} – the couple have decorated their holiday home with simple yet meaningful objects, from family photos {centre left} to Dennis's sporting memorabilia {top centre}. >



So often in the property game, inspiration is everything. What repels one buyer stokes another's imagination – and the dense piece of bush Dennis and Dayle Bygrave fell for in the sleepy hollow of Scotts Landing, just an hour out of Auckland, is a case in point. Scrambling up a tree to see what lay beyond the thick flora – “We helped each other up,” laughs Dayle – clinched the deal. There, across the bush, stretched the tranquil panorama of Mahurangi Harbour, a million-dollar view and the perfect spot to build their bush and beach retreat.

Busy with the demands of running Seneca, their Australasian textile importing business, the couple had only recently downsized to a city apartment in a bid to simplify their lives. A trip through Victoria's Yarra Valley with Dayle's younger brother Kerry sparked an idea. “We were telling Kerry he should get a holiday place out of Melbourne,” Dayle remembers, “and months later, back in New Zealand, we started thinking maybe it wasn't a bad idea for ourselves!”

The Scotts Landing plot they bought ticked all the boxes, offering a quick escape from the big smoke to a paradise of untouched bush, with a relaxed community vibe. Picking up a good merlot or basket of fresh produce is easy; the Matakana wine region is just 15 minutes' drive away and there's a farmers' market there on Saturdays. “It's all at your fingertips, you're just not right in the middle of it,” says Dayle.

Building began 18 months after buying the land. Frequent pow-wows with architectural designer Peter Were and their builders at The House Company helped ensure the house – a virtually no-maintenance structure designed to blend into the surrounding bush – was finished on time and to budget. “We wanted a house on a small footprint, that would fit in as easily as possible. There was very little excavation. It's basically built on poles,” explains Dayle.

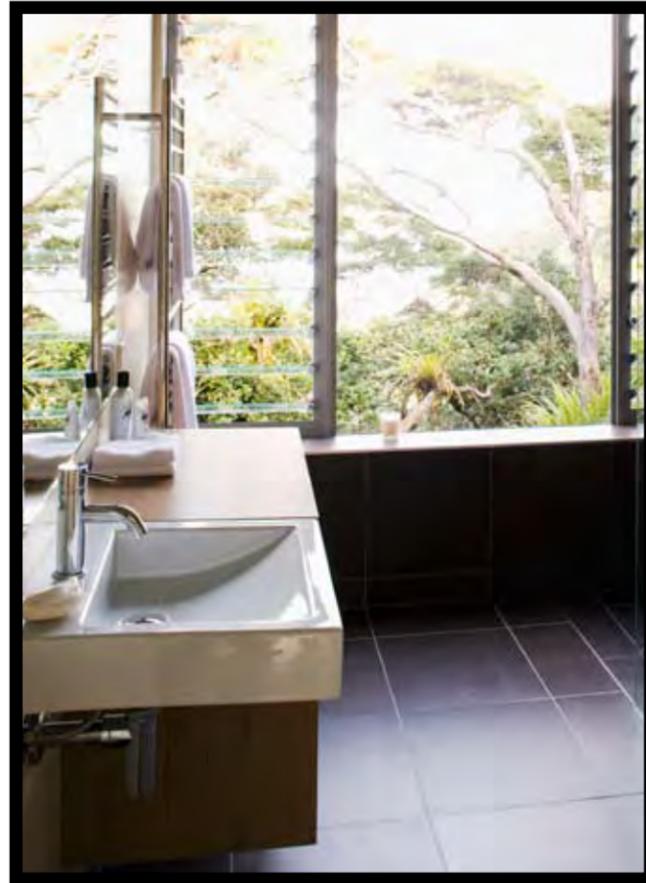
The result looks and feels a little like a tree house facing the sea. Like a typical New Zealand holiday home, or bach, everything in the simple layout flows around the cosy, central living area and kitchen, providing a natural hub for shared cooking or conversations. Bi-fold doors on both decks slide back to bring the outdoors in. A master bedroom, ensuite and study are found at one end of the house, while at the other lies a guest bathroom and two guest bedrooms, one with a private deck overlooking the sea. “It's a place for the whole family to be together – that's what we love about it,” says Dayle, who is stepmother to Dennis's four adult children. “Instead of visiting us for dinner, the children come for the weekend, as do friends, so you get to spend real time with them.”

In fact, the home has given their entire extended family a good reason to get out of town more often. Is Dayle threatening to draw up a roster? “Not yet,” she laughs, “but everyone's got their own key already!”

FRONT DECK {opposite} Overlooking the sea, the front deck is dedicated to eating alfresco, with an iroko hardwood table from Simon James Design. A native kowhai tree provides shade and lures lively local entertainment, such as the honey-eating tui and, at night, the morepork, a native owl. “Most people have never seen a morepork because they only come out at night; our friends can't believe it!” says Dayle.

LIVING ROOM {top left} Fabrics from Seneca star in the comfy living room, which features luxurious ottomans in Élitis 'Bantou' linen, raw silk JAB cushions and a funky sofa covered in Etro 'Shannon' striped linen. “It's one of those really deep, 'curl your feet up' types,” says Dayle.

KITCHEN {top right} Grey-washed solid oak benchtops lend a natural feel to the open-plan kitchen, and are lovely to work on, too; “Everyone comments on that,” says Dayle. Sleek, custom-made cabinetry keeps the space uncluttered, but quirky touches here and there reveal the couple's creative flair {top left}: floor tiles as a splashback, a glass vase displaying a purple cluster of heather, and moulded Magis 'Bombo' bar stools from ECC, perfect for a chat under the warm glow cast by lampshades in Élitis 'Tressage de Cuir' woven vinyl. >



we love...

a bathroom with a view {above}

The home's bathroom is a hit with guests, who can wash away their cares with a view and just the birds for company. "When you're in the shower, you're basically in the trees - you can just look out and it's totally private. Guests say things like, 'I love using that bathroom, looking out over the trees - and there was a wood pigeon sitting watching me shower!'" laughs Dayle. Provence Sante soaps and Mathias Paris candles from Saison (visit www.saison.com.au) provide added resort-style luxury.

MASTER BEDROOM {top left} A sanctuary of earthy colours, Dennis and Dayle's bedroom took shape with help from her brother Kerry in Melbourne and architectural designer Peter Were. "I'd ring them both and throw ideas around," says Dayle. Crisp Society bedlinen from Seneca in calm, natural hues were chosen: 'Mac' sheets in Pearl are offset by 'Rem' pillowcases in Nutmeg and Blue, and a 'Rem' quilt in Pepper. The ensuite, with its floating solid-oak vanity, deep bath and toe-warming under-floor heating, exudes day-spa calm. A lick of Resene paint in Oilskin lends a muted touch.

STUDY {left} Even though a holiday home should be about escaping the office, the couple find themselves doing a fair bit of work here - and the space doubles as an extra bedroom, too. "It's a good place to have an afternoon sleep in winter," says Dayle. The sofa has been upholstered in Marvic 'Renishaw' fabric in Flax, complemented by a beige Society 'Nuit' throw from Seneca. Personal touches can be found everywhere: the cowhide rug is from a friend's farm, and Dennis's sporting memorabilia adorns the walls. "He's occasionally given pieces by friends, or finds them in an obscure shop or when we're travelling overseas," says Dayle.

ARTWORKS (TOP LEFT) PAULA HOBSON

GUEST BEDROOM For Dayle, raiding her textiles showroom to create her home's striking colour palette was "the best fun". For her guests, it means spending the night wrapped in luxurious Italian linens in a delicious range of hues. In this room, Dayle softened the dark upholstered headboard with Society 'Rem' linens in pretty shades of violet and beige. Striped linen curtains from JAB were chosen to create a soft, relaxing feel, and to diffuse any echoes from the timber-look floors, which feature throughout the house. >



Inside story

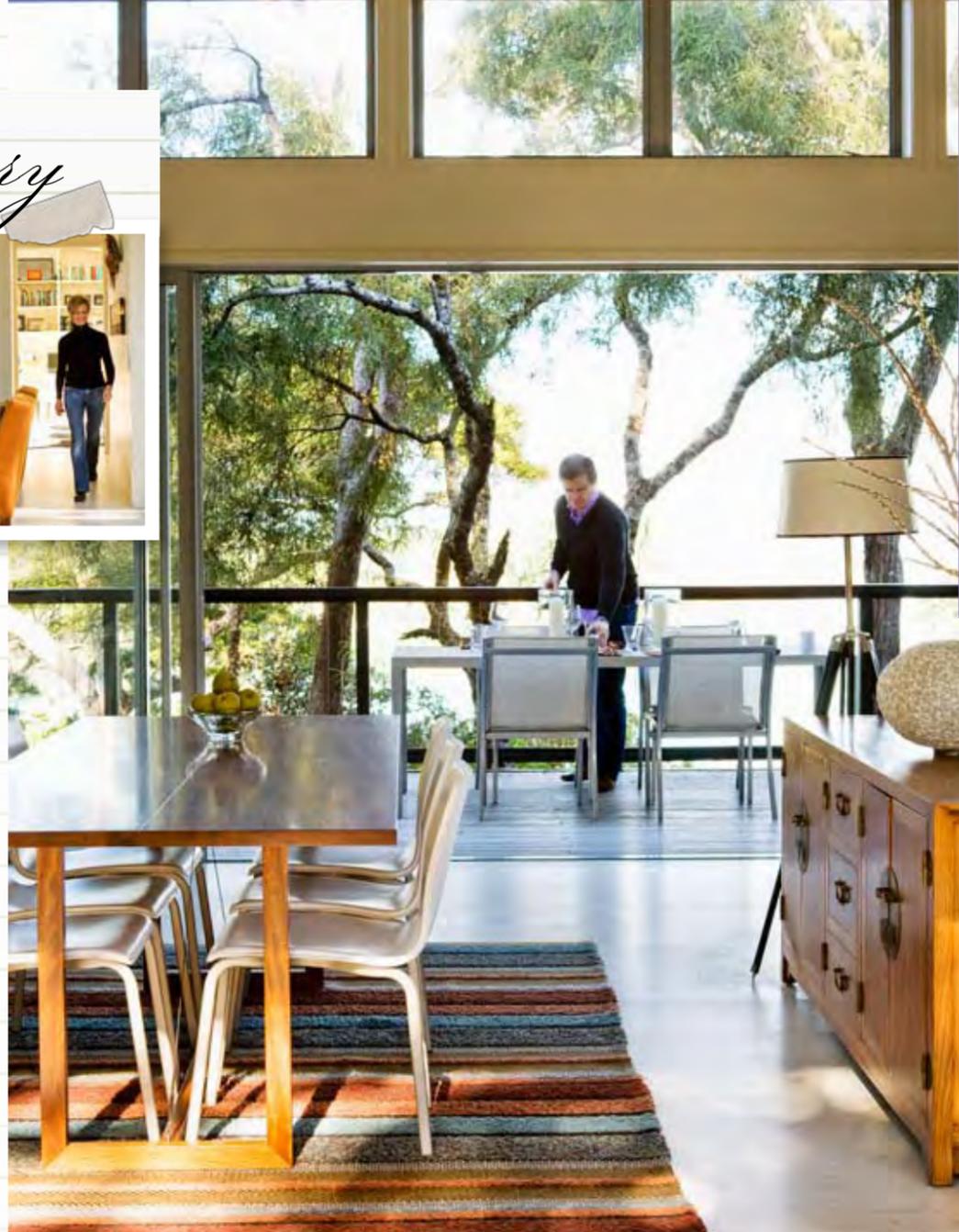
Who stays here? Dayle Bygrave (inset), 52, and her husband Dennis (right), 57, owners of textile importer Seneca. How would you describe your style? Dayle: "Relaxed, casual comfort."

Your top decorating tip? "Consult with a professional, even if it's just for a one-off appointment. It can save expensive errors and give you a sense of direction – we hear about a lot of designers going into jobs to fix them up!"

How do you create a lasting look? "Buy quality fabrics – not over the top in price, just good quality that will last. We have loose sofa covers that we change from winter to summer and they're going strong after four years." Biggest splurge? "Probably the blinds in the living area. It's the most amazing woven vinyl fabric, from Élitis."

Is it lovely being so near the water? "Yes! There's a path just down the road to the water, or you can go down through the bush to a really lovely little beach. It has other houses on it but you just never see anyone there. We keep kayaks down there."

What's the best thing about your bach? "We tried to design it so it works in all seasons. In the winter, it can get stormy, but we have the fire going and the house is snug and warm. In the summer you can open it all up, slide back the bi-fold doors and just walk straight through the house. It's great."



DINING ROOM {above} Honeyed timber tones warm the open space, completed by a sleek Nonn 'Kenzo' iroko dining table, found at Belle Interiors in Christchurch, and a solid wooden sideboard ordered from Shanghai. A stripy rug from Society fits neatly underneath the table and chairs, and defines the dining space.

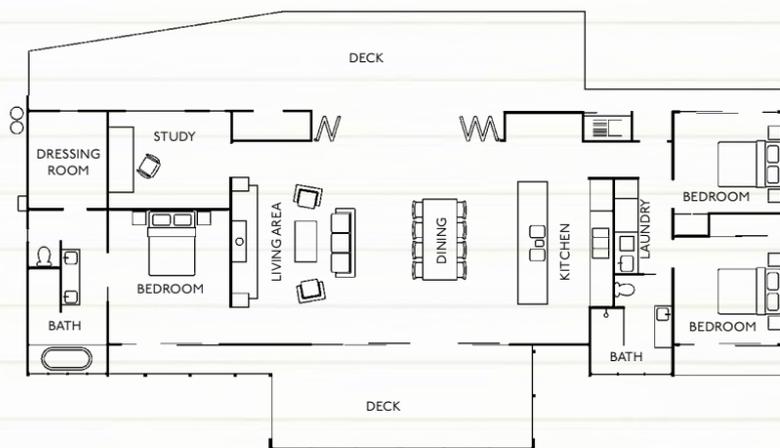


ILLUSTRATION WWW.KENZIEDSIGN.COM

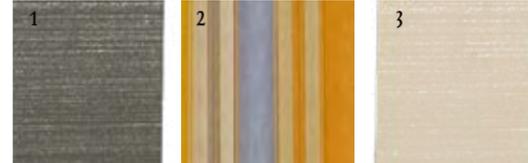
LIVING ROOM {opposite bottom & right} Shelves of books and knick-knacks give this room a lived-in feel, while walls in Resene's Parchment create a crisp backdrop for *All the Way Home*, a painting by Christchurch artist Cameron Foggo. Mounds of cushions and a built-in gas fireplace keep everyone snug, making the home a comfortable retreat in winter as well as summer.



Save find

Re-create these raw silk cushions in fabric from JAB's Ganges collection, \$300/metre, Seneca.

"Everything had TO BE SIMPLE AND STRAIGHTFORWARD IN THE DESIGN AND MATERIALS."



great idea

a textured facade {above} "A lot of people comment on the exterior," says Dayle. "We used an old French product called Onduline. It looks like corrugated iron and is a mixture of paper and bitumen, with the texture of old egg cartons – that slightly stippled feel." Onduline's natural colour is black, which meant the couple didn't have to paint it. For more information, visit www.onduline.com. The couple also invested in easy-to-clean aluminium window frames, ideal for a home by the sea.

colour & materials

- 1 Paint Spacecote low sheen in Oilskin, \$36.90/litre, Resene Paints.
 - 2 Fabric Etro 'Shannon' in Multi, from \$295/metre, Seneca.
 - 3 Paint Zylone sheen in Parchment, \$34.90/litre, Resene Paints.
- CONTACTS: The House Company, call +64 800 600 620 or visit www.thehouseco.co.nz; Peter Were Architecture & Interiors, call +64 9 361 3211 or visit www.peterwere.com.

Due to the printing process, actual paint colours may vary.