



A DREAMWORTHY DOWNSIZE

When it was time for a Hamilton couple to downsize, they decided to do so in style.

Words **Soraya Nicholas** Photography **Rhys Palmer**

JUST OVER 20 YEARS AGO, TED AND Avis Parker sold their farm and moved to a 12-acre lifestyle block. More recently, they decided to downsize once more, ready for a smaller property. “We moved to the farmlet, just out of the city, and started a business in town,” says Avis. “But it became very hard working all week then maintaining a big property in the weekends.” About the same time that the Parkers were considering a move, the tenants from their rental property close to town decided to move out. So Avis and Ted moved in temporarily, then proceeded to pull the house down and start from scratch. “At heart we miss the country, we are still country people, but we previously had an acre and a

half of gardens, so we were ready for a nice little formal garden!” The Parkers also loved being able to go off on a two-month overseas sojourn recently, without having to worry about a large property in their absence.

Their former rental house did not appeal to the Parkers, but they could see that the home did have merit. “The old house had been so well placed for sun,” so solar gain was utilised all day. “The basis of the old footprint spoke to us, that we shouldn’t alter it too much,” explains Avis. “So we pulled the house down and used the footprint, plus extended the upstairs and pushed it out slightly.” To design this new plan, Avis and Ted engaged the services of **Envision Architecture Ltd.** Architectural

designer Jamie Bruce explains that, “there was the original brief – a new top floor with bedrooms, bathroom, ensuite and dressing room, and some reconfiguration of the ground floor – but I remember working through the aesthetics of the finished building with Avis until we were both happy. Avis had magazine clippings of the features she wanted to incorporate, including the strong pillars and pergola, the plastered finish and other details which we included.”

The house is French Provincial in style, and feels warm and homely, exactly as the Parkers had hoped it would. “Our architect did a superb job,” says Avis. “He even made sure the walls were designed so that pieces of our existing furniture

■ **THE
SPECS**

Hamilton
\$300,000 - \$400,000
210Sq m



could be placed. A lovely man who created easy to follow drawings.”

To execute the plans, Avis and Ted turned to Daniel Klinkenberg of **Urban Residential Developments Ltd.** Avis describes him with genuine conviction as a “young man who has done extremely well for himself. His attention to detail is incredible, he’s a real perfectionist, and he even left our site clean and tidy every single night.”

The home has been crafted with very close attention to detail, and this is a trait Daniel is known for, and sees him recommended by many of his clients. Plaster was used on the exterior of the Parkers’ house, with Hebel selected for the pillars. Wrought iron was cleverly incorporated as an external feature. From inside, doors open out to the exterior, keeping the entire home light and airy. “The living room opens right out to the summer alfresco area,” says Avis, “and other doors open to the front terrace.”

The solid plaster surface forms the basis of the exterior, and keeps the house true to its modern lines. **A-One Solid Plasterers** were in charge of creating this effect, and they used a sand, cement and lime mix for maximum effect and longevity. This creates a natural colour that can later



be painted over. The system used here has been preferred by many successful plasterers for years, due to its extremely durable composition. The process of putting an air cavity between the house and wall is crucial to the success of any good plastering system. An Adobe style finish was selected by the Parkers, which gives the home an almost Spanish/Mediterranean appearance from outside.

The exterior is balanced by off-white powdercoated aluminium joinery, supplied by **Rylock Waikato**. Avis and Ted chose a combination of arched and

ABOVE The exterior cladding is a solid sand, cement and lime mix of plaster. **LEFT** The formal garden features buxus hedging, climbing roses and shaped toparies.



BELOW The Parkers wanted a home that could comfortably take the furniture that was originally from their large farm house.

casement windows, French doors and bi-fold sliding doors, all with grey tinted glass. The top hung bi-fold doors with flush sills are unique, as they are easy to wipe clean, have no ugly channels to collect dirt in, and provide the ample indoor/outdoor flow of which the Parkers are so fond. The combination of different types of joinery mean the house is not stuck in a particular era of design; it is instead comfortable and enjoys different moods depending on the room. The exterior joinery decisions were made particularly easy due to the personal service and knowledge from the **Rylock Waikato** staff.

One of the things Avis likes best about her home is the warmth it exudes, and this is in part due to the warm wall colours, and to the furnishings incorporated. The backdrop to all the pieces and colour choices in the home are the interior surfaces, and **Drywall Stopping Systems Ltd** take credit for achieving the smooth interior plaster lines. All of the plastering work completed inside is to a level four paint finish, with a level five skim coat applied to the entrance stairwell for optimum effect. This was



OUR PLACE with Ted & Avis Parker

What is your favourite room?

Avis: The kitchen/living room because it’s such a lovely open space. It’s the room we entertain in because it’s the main centre of the house.

Favourite buy?

Avis: When I was decorating our bedroom I finally found the perfect champagne coloured fabric for the drapes. I knew then that I had found the fabric to make a bedspread from too, and I just thought, yes, I’ve found it.

Most expensive/extravagant buy?

All the furniture is from our old farmhouse, but the one thing we did buy was an antique cabinet to house our 150 year old tea set from England. It is the perfect place to display it.

What do friends and family like most when they come to visit?

Women friends say they love the way things have been put together. In general, they just like the home the same as we do, because it’s comfortable and welcoming.

Advice to others preparing to build?

Make sure your architectural designer has designed the house exactly as you want it. You must have a great rapport with this person, and they must want to create the home you want. You also need a great builder who will work with you and your requirements. And don’t forget to enjoy the experience!



done because of the critical lighting in this area, meaning there is a high risk that light will show up joints. Taking the time to complete a fifth coat minimises this risk.

As with most new homes, the Parkers' kitchen and bathrooms are standout features all on their own. To enable them to work successfully as wet areas as well as look great, the services of **Laser Plumbing Hamilton East** were employed. They installed all of the plumbing related fittings, as well as completing the necessary gas fitting and laying all the drains. Copper was used for the hot and cold water pipes.

Avis and Ted are extremely happy with their decision to downsize, despite missing their country heritage. This is in part because of their new location, but even more due to the fact that they love their house so much. "We really use this house, it just works so well for us," says Avis. "All the space we have we live in. It was a house designed to be lived in, with every room used, and that's exactly what we do." ■

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