

**Wide open space:**  
New Zealand native  
plantings and an  
expansive lawn  
fringe Henry and  
Jenny Studholme's  
new home in  
Hororata.  
Photos: DAVID KILLICK



# Living in the house

## design

A new rural home is the fulfilment of an 18-year dream for a Canterbury couple, writes **David Killick**.

**E**ighteen years ago Henry and Jenny Studholme had nothing. Victims of the 1980s Rogernomics economic reforms, they lost their farm and had to start all over again from scratch.

They raised their four daughters in "a shoebox" of a house in the Mid-Canterbury village of Hororata, while Henry built up a successful new business – Prime Smoked Salmon.

"We waited until we could build the house of our dreams," says Henry.

And now they have.

People sometimes ask, why such a large house when their daughters are grown up? It's still a family home, the couple say. There is ample room for daughters, sons-in-law and grandchildren (two and counting) to come and stay.

The house is the outcome of a happy partnership between the owners and designers. Matthew Lester, of Earthwork, began landscaping two paddocks in 2001.



**Thoughtful approach:** Interior designer Karen Smith, of Casabella, shares a word with Henry and Jenny Studholme. Jack Russell Trixie insists on being involved.

Now, tussocks, toetoe, and cabbage trees are thriving, and should encourage birdlife. The site has splendid views of Mount Hutt.

Kaiapoi-based architectural

designer Robin White designed a home that ticked all the boxes.

"It had to be not pretentious and quite rural in its appeal," says Jenny. "Not rustic, but comfortable."

Builder Mark Prosser did "an awesome job". The house won a gold award in the \$600,000 to \$1 million category in the 2008 Master Builders Canterbury House of the Year Awards.

Christchurch interior designer Karen Smith, of Casabella, was involved from the outset, and chose both exterior and interior colours, fabrics and furnishings, and commissioned special pieces of furniture.

"The great thing was Karen really listened to what we wanted," says Jenny.

Kaiapoi-based kitchen designer Rachel Evans designed the kitchen – very much a focal point for friends and family.

The Mid-Canterbury golf resort of Terrace Downs was the inspiration for the riverstone and cedar construction.

With so much stone around the country, Henry can't understand why more people don't use it for building. Spouting is long-lasting copper and roofing is long-run iron.





**In harmony:** Manufacturer David Shaw made some of the furniture. Colours are rich and vibrant.



**Old and new:** The oak dining table came from the Studholmes' former home.

# of their dreams

Step inside and you find yourself in a large double-height atrium. The space is a luxury, but it makes you feel welcome.

A colourful photograph of Utah's vivid rock formations, which the couple call a "guardian angel", looks down from on high.

A wrought-iron chandelier and a wrought-iron balustrade lend drama. To one side is a table and mirror, while a powder and cloak room is tucked around the corner.

Textured, earth-coloured wallpaper was handmade, harmonising with wide ceramic tiles.

Textures are important, says interior designer Karen Smith.

"It's very grounded and warm. The whole idea is to just come in here and feel comfortable."

Gold and yellows also echo the tussock-filled landscape.

These colours contrast with rich reds, including stripes, a charcoal carpet, beautifully patterned curtains from Designers International, and gold curtain rails in the lounge.

The classic-looking sofa and

armchairs were made specially by Christchurch manufacturer David Shaw; another armchair that belonged to Henry's great grandfather, was recovered.

A focal point is the large riverstone fireplace. The Jetmaster open fire provides ample heat in winter; combined with a logburner, heat pump, and radiators, the house never feels cold even when it snows. As an indication of the level of detail in the home, the radiators have been powder coated to match the decor of each room.

Karen Smith also designed the large rimu bookcase and entertainment unit. The massive oak dresser is another family heirloom.

Double leadlight doors lead through to the dining area, casual living room, and kitchen. The room is angled to follow the sun and encompasses two sets of bifolding doors that open out to the deck.

The oak dining table and chairs and blue leather soft furniture also came from the old house, while another entertainment unit swallows



**Warm welcome:** Earthy colours greet guests in the atrium.

up a big-screen TV – Henry and Jenny didn't want to have technology on display and dominate the room.

Visitors always gather in the kitchen. With its huge granite benchtop, walk-in pantry, textured

cream joinery, Italian handmade tiles, gas hob and sophisticated oven by Miele of Germany, the overall feel is contemporary classic.

"It's got to look good, but be functional, too," says Karen.

The west wing of the house contains three bedrooms and a bathroom. One facing west is known as "the sunset room" and is red; the east-facing one is in gold and yellow and known as "the sunrise room". The third room is coloured in green stripes.

Stairs climb to another bedroom, in teal blue and chocolate. It has a walk-in wardrobe and marble-tiled ensuite.

Also on this level is a work room or study, with its own projector and screen, and balcony.

Henry and Jenny are delighted with the house.

Jenny: "We just love it." Henry: "People often say they would have done something differently, but I can't think of a single thing."

It would be hard to find higher praise than that.

## WHAT'S SPECIAL

- **Design:** Robin White Design, Kaiapoi.
- **Builder:** Mark Prosser Builders Ltd, Christchurch. (The house won a gold award in the 2008 Master Builders Canterbury House of the Year Awards.)
- **Construction:** Riverstone, cedar, Smartwood joinery, double glazed, copper spouting, longrun iron roof.
- **Interior design:** Karen Smith, Casabella, Christchurch.
- **Kitchen design:** Rachel Evans Design, Kaiapoi.
- **Landscape design:** Earthwork Landscape Architects, Christchurch.