



DIAMONDS

ARE

Respectfully reinvented for a new era, this heritage house connects pieces of the past with pared-back perfection in the present.

FOREVER

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For the best part of four years, a car jack held up the kitchen sink at Julie Donaldson and Tim Woods' place. If you overfilled the bowl, it'd start to sway, sending water trickling down the sides.

"The house was very, very original!" says Julie of the century-old Auckland bungalow. "It was pretty bad for a while, but there wasn't any point putting even \$5000 into the tiny kitchen because we knew it'd eventually have to go, so we just had to suck it up."

Despite their literally rocky start in this Northcote Point home (whose many foibles included cramped, cold rooms; next to no storage; no shower; and even a disused outdoor toilet), the couple keep a framed newspaper clipping of the real estate listing they spotted more than a decade ago. The dwelling had been owned and well cared for by a man who'd lived his entire life here, and with its good bones and lovely feel, on a large section in a great neighbourhood, the minute they saw it, they knew it was a diamond in the rough.

The pair had never renovated before, but Tim works in construction so was a dab hand on that front when the time was right. Plus, they had another secret weapon — Julie's brother Gavin Donaldson of Neu Architecture. With an architect in the fold (along with the "amazing" team from Broswick Builders he recommended, and interior designer Sonja Hawkins, who they hired to design the kitchen and provide direction for the bathrooms and laundry after a tip-off from Julie and Gavin's event-stylist sister Claire Donaldson) they were able to upgrade >

**TOP LEFT** The bungalow's traditional streetfront was returned to its former glory through the removal of multiple facade layers that had been added over the years and the reinstatement of the original trims. From here, the architecture takes a cleaner, more modern form, the minimalist living beginning at the front door, which is accessed via a keypad Julie championed to avoid the jumble of keys. An initial landscaping plan by Topia helped do away with the existing ramp access and set the stage for the tiered front garden. **OPPOSITE** In the extra-wide hallway, one of two new archways combines with the original moulded ceiling to form an elegant vestibule at the front door. Old and new meet again in the flooring, the existing kauri boards blended flawlessly with others reclaimed from a former brothel by the builders.

## THE PROJECT

With Gavin Donaldson of Neu Architecture, Julie Donaldson (export manager for The Beauty Collective and co-founder of Everdaily) and Tim Woods (general manager of a property company) renovated this three-bedroom bungalow in Auckland's Northcote Point for themselves and their children Ari (8), Camile (6) and Jossi (4).





**ABOVE** Along with generous windows, four enormous doors by CT Joinery were Gavin's savvy solution to the south-facing extension and also maximised the home's high stud. Before, there was limited access to the backyard through a wonky laundry lean-to and the renovation firmly closed that chapter, but not callously, as evidenced by the TLC he also gave details like the decks. Whereas the planks at the front of the house are wide in a nod to the original deck, the ones at the back are thinner and all single pieces, deliberately devoid of joins. Most family meals are served at the kitchen island topped with Alarti marble from Artedomus, which Sonja designed to be akin to a farmhouse table. **OPPOSITE** The hedging the couple established when they arrived 11 years ago now makes the outdoor shower totally private. The towel hanging here is by Baina.



within their budget — and with the comfort and care only family can provide.

Julie enthuses about the incredible job Gavin did of honouring the bungalow's heritage, sensitively preserving details such as the wide central hallway, which he turned into the key architectural element. Running right through to the back garden, it informed his design of the rear extension and allowed for another hero feature: four large sliding doors that open up the entire back of the house to the new verandah and lawn.

"We spent a bit of time trying to work out whether to keep the hallway or not, because it meant forfeiting a fourth bedroom, but we made the right choice," says Julie. "Now the kids hang out in it more than they do their bedrooms, using it for all sorts of fun and games."

This home is full of deft details, yet it's also steadfastly minimalist — from Julie's restrained décor to the multiple uses assigned to single spaces. With the addition of cavity sliders, the original front living room now doubles as a guest bedroom, while the laundry also functions as a scullery. Here, dual built-in bins take the place of a cumbersome washing basket. The washer and dryer are stacked inside a cupboard opposite a wine fridge next to a sink below a window that slides open to form a bar accessible from the garden when entertaining. The bench is big enough to be used to prep food when catering for a crowd, and above it all hangs the drying rack Julie chose over a clothesline in the backyard.

Abundant storage contributes to the home's minimalist appearance, including an attic space accessed by a pull-down >



ladder, and a double garage, which Julie says is Tim's favourite space. "It's got carpet in it and is very organised. He keeps it tidier than the house!"

This impeccably renovated home is the embodiment of the 'less is more' philosophy Julie and her business partner Claire Whitehouse apply to their new eco-cleaning brand Everdaily. "I hate clutter, so I've tried to reduce it in our home, and that's exactly what Everdaily does for cleaning," says Julie of the non-toxic concentrate they've devised to be diluted according to your needs in different rooms and used in refillable bottles with a utilitarian cool.

The pared-back colour palette she chose for this house was also driven by her desire for simplicity — blended with a touch of the jitters. "I'm a bit scared when it comes to colour, so I always revert to white, and when I do add some colour, it's off-white or grey," she says. "I tried to do colour in some of the rooms, but then freaked out and changed it back. There are a couple of grey curtains that I still wish I'd made white..."

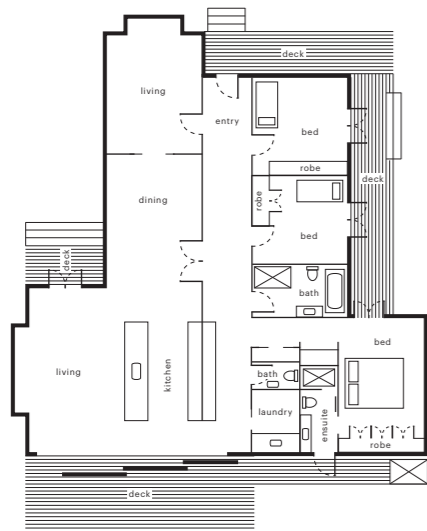
All white everything might not sound like a recipe for relaxation with three young kids in the house, but close to it suits this family just fine. "Life is hectic, so it's really nice coming home to a spacious, warm, light-filled home," says Julie. "The renovation has changed our lives. We can actually invite family and friends over and fit more than two of them inside!"

Rest assured that car jack is now just as it should be too — stored in Tim's immaculate garage. ■

**ABOVE LEFT** The items in the rear living space include tables from La Madu, a Marie vase from Nest, a chair from Città and an Emerson rug from Ornament. **ABOVE RIGHT** In the kitchen, shelves made from Georgian wired glass on either side of the rangehood (pictured on page 90) are decorated with a few selected objects, while everything else is tucked away in the cabinetry by Bremich. One cupboard is designated for tech connections, ensuring no modems or cables are visible. The stool in the foreground here is by Kristina Dam from Ornament and the Lindis throw is from A&C Homestore. Reinvention is the key to the formal dining table; it's a hand-me-down from Julie's sister's event company that Julie repaints regularly — brushing over spilled candle wax and scuffs to make it as good as new.

**LIVING** Cavity sliders allow the front living room to be used as a guest bedroom and kids' playroom. Among the pieces pictured here are cushions, a Teak Tooth side table and an urn, all from Ornament.





**TOP** Inspired by international homes Sonja had visited, the children's desk in the hallway is a great way to put the fun into the function of a circulation space. Above it are *Piha* by photographer Duncan Innes and a Caravaggio Read light by Fritz Hansen from Cult. The Marie Earth pot is from Nest and the stools were a score from a store that has since closed. **RIGHT** An entire wall of Ari and Jossi's room is devoted to built-in, kid-height storage. Their Talia bunks are from The Bunk House and the light shade is from La Madu.



**MAIN BEDROOM** This calming sleep space has connections to the garden through both the ensuite and a door in the bedroom leading to a new outdoor space on the eastern side of the house that's well-used on sunny mornings. Below a holiday snap of Tim framed by Factory Frames and another Caravaggio Read light by Fritz Hansen from Cult, a Terrazzo table from Nest sidles up against the bed made comfy with linen from A&C Homestore.



**CAMILE'S ROOM** The couple did make a few essential tweaks in the years before their renovation (which won the Auckland Registered Master Builders 2019 Supreme Renovation of the Year award), including insulating. When they opened up the walls to do so, they discovered the house was sheathed in kauri sarking boards, and they retained this one for posterity. On the floor here is a kitchen playset by Hape, a bag by Herschel and an Arnoldino stool by Martino Gamper from A&C Homestore.

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**ABOVE** Timber shutters from Santa Fe appear throughout the home, as do tongue-and-groove panelled walls. The cabinetry here (and in the ensuite) is by Fabulous Kitchens, the Buddy tapware is by Progetto from Plumblinc, the Arki basin is by Omvivo from Artdomus and the Otto bath is by Elementi from Robertson. **LEFT** Like the rest of this dwelling, in the laundry there's a place for everything and everything's in its place, including Julie's Everdaily products on the bench. The drying rack by George & Willy can hold a full load of washing, which keeps the backyard clothesline-free and means no more having the washing rained on by lunchtime when you're at the office — Julie's pet peeve.