



# WITH INTENTION

The thought put into this grand house is testimony to lives well lived

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**THIS PAGE** Emma Murray in the kitchen of her Remuera, Auckland home, chatting to step-daughter Sarah; the house was designed by architect Daniel Marshall but Emma created the interiors herself. “I’ve got my own ideas about what I like and what I don’t.” **OPPOSITE** The chandelier in the living room is by glassblower artist Katie Brown in collaboration with Daniel. “It’s not very easy to clean,” admits Emma; the black and white painting is by Scottish artist Callum Innes; the Williams sofa and Martin swivel chairs by Minotti came from ECC – Emma says Julie Emmerson of ECC was a great resource when furnishing the house: “She helped me with the layout.”







**THESE PAGES** The side-by-side properties were bought specifically for the view; the infinity pool gets a lot of use in summer; inside, the TV room in the background features mirrored shelving with sliding panels that hide the television and reveal sculptures and objects, such as the red glass sculpture by Emma Camden; top right is an image by UK fashion photographer Miles Aldridge from a Jean Paul Gaultier exhibition that Ian and Emma visited in Melbourne: "When Ian was ill I tracked down the photographer," says Emma; the painting, centre, is by Morten Lassen, bought by Emma at an auction in the UK.





In the narrow scullery slotted behind Emma Murray’s kitchen is a small piece of cool, smooth Greek marble where she rolls out pastry, often with her grandchildren. She spent some time in Greece as a child, so the touch of stone from that country speaks volumes about the thought she put into the details of this home. The Remuera, Auckland house may be grand but it’s filled with personal stories about Emma and her life. “There’s all parts of me,” she says.

It’s a house she’d intended to live in for many years with her husband Ian but sadly he passed away three years ago. “It was going to be our forever

home. We built it with the idea that we would live in one end of the house and the other end would be for if we needed care in later life, we could have someone. My parents were quite elderly when we were building this house so I was very conscious of the fact that people, when they get older, need care.”

The house was built in 2012 and designed by Daniel Marshall of DMA. “He was wonderful to work with,” says Emma. “He had lots of ideas. This is not what we envisaged at all. I had thought of almost an Italianate-type house.”

Emma and Ian chose the site for the views. There was an existing old brick house – “very hodge podge,” says Emma – that was demolished, and the section

**THESE PAGES** (from left) The shelving system and ladder were designed to hold artworks and books; some of the works include small quatrefoils by Max Gimblett, a tall green glasswork by David Murray and a colourful *Isobar Tower* by Dominic Burrell; the lights over the dining table are also by Katie Brown; the kitchen bar stools are Kai by Lapalma from ECC. “I sit and look out at the view all the time because it changes; there’s always something to look at,” says Emma; the outdoor armchairs are Ziggy by Gaga Design from ECC. In the TV room is one of Ian’s collected clocks; a sculpture by Waiheke Island artist Kiya Nancarrow is on the coffee table: “I love art and sculpture. I’m obsessed,” says Emma.







next door was bought as well. “The thing is that it is quite a large house but it does work as a single person house. I have a lot of people who come and stay,” says Emma.

With four adult children and step-children – Simon, Sarah, Stephanie and Stuart – and six grandchildren, she says she’s always busy. When, in separate incidents, two of her children injured themselves, they stayed here. “It just so happened that I put a lift in, because my father was disabled, so I had the perfect environment. And our eldest grandson came and lived for a while; he came to school from Australia. This house has actually come in handy.”

Emma was born in Kent in the UK, and her family lived for a time in Greece and Saudi Arabia in search of warm climes. When Emma’s brother met a Kiwi and moved here, she soon followed.

A friend would give her a lift every morning, but with such an unreliable car that the friend’s boss would often pick them up. That boss was Ian, who was a civil engineer. “That’s how we met. I married my husband at 21.” Ian already had two children, who lived permanently with the couple. “We grew up together,” says Emma.

Their first family home was in Howick, which they renovated and added onto as they had more children. After returning to Auckland from a stint in

**THIS PAGE** A grandfather clock collected by Ian; inset into the wall next to it are pocket doors that close off the TV room to keep it cosy in winter; the ceramic artworks on the wall in the hallway beyond are by John Roy: “Ian loved those.” **OPPOSITE** Looking down the stairwell to the oversize front door; the artworks are by Emma’s friend Sandy Fisher; Emma was adamant the ground floor entranceway not be dark and gloomy so there are skylights overhead; the pendant lights are Tom Dixon; louvres outside the windows are occasionally nested in by birds: “It’s very sweet but they make a mess,” says Emma.





**THIS PAGE** The Peter Stichbury work at the end of the hall is a recent acquisition and one of Emma's favourites.

**OPPOSITE** (clockwise from top left) A painting of Greece in 1966 by local artist Paul Brand that Emma inherited from her parents: "It always used to annoy Ian because he reckoned the perspective was all wrong. But I said, 'No, really this is how Athens was. People still used donkeys in those days.'" A work by UK artist Piers Ottey in the master bedroom, which Emma calls her little piece of paradise.

Emma enjoying the lawn with grandson Felix and daughter-in-law Erin. Emma and Ian travelled to Italy to choose the marble for the bathrooms.



Hawaii, Howick suddenly seemed very far out of town so Emma drew a circle on a map and had a real estate agent find them a place within it. They did that in those days, she says. So they moved to Remuera, renovating and extending again.

A holiday house came next. "We built a house down in Taupo – that's when we started building. Then we built this house."

Emma says Ian had a brain for building. "He was really handy. He was very, very intelligent. I got a masters degree in geography after I had the children, mainly because I was fed up with him being so clever." Emma has continued to be involved with several charities the couple had supported. "I still support



**THIS PAGE** The manicured grounds are by Humphreys Landscaping; only the large *Cedrus deodara* tree stayed from the existing gardens; the six-car garage has two entrances. **OPPOSITE** (from top) *Gaia* by Italian sculptor Lorenzo Quinn – son of actor Anthony Quinn and known for *Support* and *Building Bridges*, installations of giant hands emerging from and crossing Venice canals; in the background is a work by Terry Stringer. Plantings include *Gardenia jasminoides* ‘Veitchii’, lancewood, *Selliera radicans*, *Buxus* ‘Green Gem’, *Libertia peregrinans* and star jasmine.



the Auckland University School of Engineering. We give engineering scholarships; tomorrow night I’m hosting 80 students.”

There are many tributes to Ian dotted throughout the house. He and Emma collected – cars, art, wine, clocks and more. Emma is particularly keen on cars. “I started following Formula One as a teenager, that’s what got me started.” In the six-car garage, alongside a rare Porsche, is one of the Ferraris that Ian gave her. “She’s the first Ferrari we got, in about 2013, but we started collecting long before that. We started with an E-Type Jag and we carried on from there.”

There are also clocks everywhere. “He was so

obsessed with clocks. Same with cars. I’d say, ‘Ian, you need an interest,’ and next thing you know it became an obsession. He did like collecting things. None of the clocks go now, I need to wind them.”

Emma says she started collecting art as soon as she met Ian. “My mother always collected art. My mother painted, her father painted, her grandfather painted, so we’ve always had art in the house. I grew up with every single wall covered in art. And there was always art in every single house I went to. I guess I look at pieces and just love them. I know where I bought every piece and everything means something to me.” ■

## Q&A

**My decorating style:** A bit eclectic.

**Best seat in the house:** In the summer I have a couple of beanbags out on the lawn deck and have a glass of something and watch the sun go down.

**Favourite appliance:** The warming drawer. You think it’s going to be useless but I’ve used it for all sorts of things. And the drying cupboard in the laundry with a hanging rail and a boot rack. It’s fantastic.

**This house is always warm:** I’ve never used the heating, just the tiny little gas fire.

**Best labour-saving devices:** Rubbish and recycling chutes in the scullery that drop into bins in the utility room.

*Emma Murray*