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# WELL THAT'S JUST GREAT

Incredible ideas and craftsmanship combine to create an outcome that's nothing but sensational.





**THESE PAGES** In the kitchen, maple cabinetry crafted by Formatt Bespoke Joinery with handles by Studio Henry Wilson comes together with benchtops in Matarazzo stone from Universal Granite and a splashback made with Casa tiles from Onsite. A pair of Antony wall lights by Serge Mouille from Cult shine a light on *Living Room View* by Ella Dunn from Saint Cloche, while in the island opposite, a mixer by Perrin & Rowe from In Residence sits central, Twigg bar stools by Gebrüder Thonet Vienna provide seating and a vase by Gaetano Pesce from Babelogue holds fresh foliage from the garden. **PREVIOUS PAGE** The dining area sees Akari 75A ceiling lamps by Isamu Noguchi from Living Edge suspended above a Tree table by DK3, surrounded by Wire chairs by Charles and Ray Eames from Herman Miller, on a 1920s Sultanabad rug from Behruz. The bowl on the table is from Gina Fabish.

## THE PROJECT

Sumich Chaplin Architects, Arent & Pyke, Suzanne Turley Landscapes and RBJ Construction created this five-bedroom home in Queenstown's Speargrass Flat for a family of six.



The expansive vistas surrounding Tāhuna/Queenstown make an enticing environment for a tree-change move. The Sydney-based couple who own this home were also motivated to relocate by the idea of their young sons being brought up in rural Aotearoa, like one of them had been. After landing on a 35ha farm in Speargrass Flat as the place in which to establish themselves, realising their dream continued with the engagement of their ideal design partners. Through admiring other work they'd done in the area, Tāmaki Makaurau/Auckland's Sumich Chaplin Architects rose to the top of their list. From there, the expertise expanded to become a trans-Tasman collaboration between principal architect Matt Chaplin and interior designer Sarah-Jane Pyke, co-founder of Sydney-based studio Arent & Pyke. Early in the design phase, Matt flew to Sydney to workshop with the rest of the team. "We're an architectural practice that's very model-driven, in terms of our design tools, so I packed up our cardboard model for the Speargrass House and took it over," he says. "Having a physical form sitting in the room that we could refer to was a very good thing."

Between Coronet Peak and Lake Hayes, the property is elevated above the Wakatipu Basin, a location that provided ample environmental elements to take advantage of. "There were a few influencing factors that informed where the building platform would go," says Matt. "The journey to the >



**ABOVE LEFT** Part of the beauty of the 'great room' is its close relationship with the garden. "The grasses come right up to the glass, for a sense of connection that was very intentionally created by Sumich Chaplin and Suzanne Turley," says Sarah-Jane. **ABOVE RIGHT** The walls in the corridors are in Resene Double Biscotti. **BELOW** In this bathroom, glass block vases from Gina Fabish sit on a floating vanity in Super White Classic marble from Slabco. The light and mirror are also bespoke by Arent & Pyke.



site takes you up a long driveway onto a plateau that feels like a very natural place to be. Even though you're in this very large landscape, you feel quite held and safe, with the nearby hills forming a little basin around you. It's very private — you see everything, everywhere, all at once, without a neighbour in sight."

Drawing on the New Zealand farm vernacular, a series of barn-like forms come together around a central courtyard designed by Tāmaki Makaurau/Auckland-based landscaper Suzanne Turley that's integral to this dwelling. You're never far from it as you move through the home — in fact, the only rooms that take you away from it are the bedrooms and bathrooms, which link to landscapes of their own.

The hierarchy of the spaces is indicated by their height, with the living areas housed in the tallest pavilion, and the secondary spaces, guest suite and garage connected via flat-roofed, glazed galleries. "There was an old deer shed on the property with ramps to back a truck up to," says Matt. "It was quite a striking structure that I ended up mimicking in the main roof form, but in reverse, with big, high windows that kick up to look at Coronet Peak in one direction and the Remarkables in the other."

Other reference points were the historic buildings at the bottom of the driveway — most of them in century-old, whitewashed stone. "Sumich Chaplin has always wanted >



**THIS PAGE** To this vignette, *Sky Piece* by Teelah George adds a shot of blue, one of three hero hues in the interior colour palette. Silvery grey and saffron are the others, the latter seen here in a rug from Behruz and a reupholstered vintage armchair from Geoffrey Hatty. Among the items atop the Brick 36 table by Gervasoni from Anibou are a Lampampe light by Ingo Maurer from ECC and a vase by Gaetano Pesce from Babelogue.



**THESE PAGES** "The general pathway through the house is constantly connected to the courtyard, which is forever changing with the seasons," says Matt. "You've got close views of the garden and then you've got this big, dramatic backdrop beyond. It works well in that while you're in the house, you're aware of the near and far environment around you all the time."



to limewash a stone building, but it's hard to convince clients to build an expensive stone house and then paint it!" says Matt. "Context is everything, though, and it made sense to pursue this finish here."

Wrapping around the main pavilion, the painted schist continues inside, where design decisions have been confidently executed to establish a nurturing home base for family life on a farm with four boys under 10. What the architecture begins, the interior design seamlessly picks up; there's a natural synthesis between the robust functionality required of a hardworking country home and the softening of spaces through the well-considered application of colour and texture.

"Intimacy is just so important," says Sarah-Jane. "What's beautiful about this home is that it's everything you need and nothing you don't. I'm not pretending it's small — it is big, but it never feels overwhelming, and creating intimate moments within the interior was critical to that."

Dubbed the 'great room', the public living area that occupies the main pavilion posed a particular challenge to the aim of creating a domestic feel, but through on-site sampling and testing of how everything would come together, the two practices resolved the generous space spectacularly. The recycled timber trusses that stretch out across the soaring gabled roof are a striking feature that's amplified by the bold >



**ABOVE** Within schist painted with Resene Triple Blanc, the chiselled pillars of the Oamaru limestone fireplace surround rise above the slab of flame-finished granite that forms the hearth. Arent & Pyke elected not to hang an artwork above the fire and instead place the focus on a wall light they designed and had made by Oliver Wilcox of Lost Profile and glass artist Lisa Cahill. Between the Budapest sofa by Baxter (left), Inout 707 chairs by Gervasoni and Zeno Sofa by Flexform, there are ample places to relax. **OPPOSITE** The tile-topped coffee table designed by Arent & Pyke and made by Formatt Bespoke Joinery and a Wheel of the Cloud rug from Behruz pull blues into the scheme and team like a dream with the brown tones inspired by the sun-bleached paddocks outside.



**THIS PAGE & OPPOSITE, BOTTOM** Here, bedside tables by Arent & Pyke and Formatt Bespoke Joinery (like the one overleaf) flank a headboard custom-made with fabric from Christopher Farr. Lighting is layered in via Roy wall lights by Viabizzuno from Inlite, an Akari 1P lamp from The Noguchi Museum, a Lauriston 4 Light pendant by Jonathan Browning Studio and a Biagio table lamp by Flos x Tobia Scarpa from ECC (opposite).



**ABOVE RIGHT** Among the other divine inclusions in the same bedroom are curtains by Simple Studio, a Minotaure armchair by Pierre Augustin Rose, *Drone* by Marisa Purcell and a Panna Cotta side table by Molteni & C. **ABOVE LEFT** Its elegant ensuite combines a vanity top and floor in travertine from Slabco with tiles with a crackled glaze from Artedomus.



decision to paint the ceiling above them black. Bookending this room is a substantial kitchen at one end and a monolithic fireplace at the other, and in between, a pair of oversized pendant lights punctuate the lofty void, giving the dining zone a presence of its own. Each detail plays its part to anchor the architecture.

As a nod to the rocky, alpine environment and garden design, stone was key to the interior material palette. Hand-cut, oversized Ceppo di Gré marble tiles pave the journey from the main entry, through the glazed links to the couple's retreat and the boys' bunkrooms, and down the length of the 'great room' that runs alongside the courtyard. In the social zones of the home, the marble is exchanged for European oak topped with eye-catching rugs. This timber and the maple cabinetry were selected for their resemblance to the speargrass that's native to this region.

Meanwhile, the aforementioned marble is carried through to the bathrooms, where multiple types team with travertine and tiles that individually and collectively bring character to these self-care spaces in highly crafted floor, wall and vanity applications.

Arent & Pyke are known for their vibrant, joyful schemes, but working with the Central Otago light was a new experience for them. "One of the fascinating things about colour is that, of course, it's a play on light," says Sarah-Jane. "The light in >



**ABOVE LEFT** Special details in this bedroom include candlesticks by Gary Hunt from Babelogue, *Just Started Walking* by Claudia Bagnall from Saint Cloche, a Gravity lamp by Gubi from Cult, a headboard custom-made with fabric from De Le Cuona and (as in the bedroom on the previous pages) bedding by Society Limonta from Ondene. **BELOW** Set up to cater for the rigours of four kids, the laundry includes cupboards that are dedicated to jackets and shoes, so they're easily accessed on the way out the door to school.

Sydney is very different to the light in Queenstown, so we knew we'd do our selections on site. When clients say, 'What do you mean, you have to sample three colours? Aren't you the colour people?' We reply, 'That's why we're the colour people – because we sample three colours and we get it right.' We really work to understand the alchemy of all the elements, and realising that in person makes for a lasting result.

"When it comes to materials and finishes, you want to have a bit of [room to move]," she continues. "There were a lot of design decisions here that were extremely well thought out, and then part of our process is to leave space and be open to what you discover and can create in the moment when you're there."

Both Arent & Pyke and Sumich Chaplin believe the success of this home increased exponentially with the opportunity to collaborate. "There's some really clever people around that help pull projects like this together," says Matt. "None of this is done by one person. There's a big team that gets a house to the end, a lot of craftspeople and talented little industries that help achieve this result."

Speargrass House is now being filled with the memories the homeowners always hoped to create for their children. Although the build may be finished, between the garden, greenhouse and orchard, there's plenty on the go to immerse the family in farm life – and that was the goal from the outset. ■



**THIS PAGE & OPPOSITE, TOP RIGHT** LC14 Tabouret Maison du Brésil and LC14 Tabouret Cabanon stools by Le Corbusier from Cassina come in handy in both of these bathrooms, which also showcase Calacatta Vagli marble, Kit Kat mosaic tiles from Di Lorenzo, Italian Terrazzo wall and floor tiles from Tile Space, a Trapeze 2 light by Apparatus from Criteria, a vase from Gina Fabish and bespoke Arent & Pyke mirrors.



**THIS PAGE** Sarah-Jane says the key to creating a forever home is thinking past, present and future simultaneously. It's no mean feat, but the combined forces of this stellar creative team have achieved the goal with this modern yet grounded composition. **OPPOSITE** Frame loungers by Paola Lenti from Dedece catch some rays by the pool on the northern side of the main pavilion.



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**“LONGEVITY WAS A BIG PART OF THE BRIEF. WHAT WOULD BE TIMELESS BUT FEEL CONTEMPORARY?” SAYS SARAH-JANE.**

