



# Creative solutions for the future

Every space has meaning in any design by Daniel Casas. He tells **Jill Wild** about his passion for the business he got into after a chance class discussion at high school in Argentina.

**W**ELLINGTON'S Daniel Casas brings architectural flair to his design in a way he believes is very unique.

His credo is to make every space have meaning so, for instance, he believes garaging needs to be much more than a place for cars, instead to be a flexible space used in daily activities. Perhaps it's his Argentinian style or maybe that he grew up in a city world renowned for its exquisite old architecture, he isn't sure, but he imbues passion and embraces every project with enthusiasm.

Casas decided to become an architect after a chance conversation with a teacher at high school. She was a qualified architect having time out teaching maths at school and just happened to start a discussion about architecture in Casas' class.

"I had no background in it but

the idea really interested me so I talked to a few guys to find out more then decided to study architecture at university."

He graduated after six years of study and worked in Argentina, eventually setting up his own practice but in 2001 the country was devastated economically and he, his wife and daughter relocated to New Zealand.

"New Zealand was very welcoming and opened its doors to us, we were lucky and very happy to come here."

Casas initially worked for others to familiarise himself with New Zealand construction practices and eight years ago established his own studio.

"Since going on my own I've had some very good jobs both commercial and residential, most of

the projects around the \$800,000 to million dollar range from Tauranga to Greytown, Whitby and Aotea to Martinborough. It's fun and my clients have been amazing."

**Credo:** To design sustainable buildings with a small footprint, low profile and, where appropriate, multi level. We regard our architecture as a contribution to the planet and the future, so we want to problem solve in a creative and artistic way with appeal into the future.

**Materials:** I'm always interested in the latest products, searching for better insulation and using better technology to deliver the best value for money to clients. But essentially our focus is on volumetric forms with simple and clear shapes.

**Hallmarks of work:** We tend to contemporary design with a minimalist look, simple, clean lines. Colour for me is black and white in style and interior allowing people and their furniture to add the colour. And clients often say the spaces I design have a lot of natural light.

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**Style of working:** It's just like a first date, your first meeting with an architect determines if you want to see each other again and make beautiful buildings together. We invite clients to the office to enjoy an excellent coffee and some of my wife's La Casa Alfajores and discuss their building project to understand

expectations, dreams and the budget. During the first meeting, there should be a dialogue of ideas both specific to the client's project and to our design philosophies. This is a time to test communication, to see if there is a sparking or connection between the client and us, the architects. With all the relevant information, we develop our client's building dream into a reality, each project have its own particular journey, a journey that begins and ends with the client.

**Favourite projects:** A very recently completed home in Martinborough is perhaps my favourite right now, the client is delighted with the result. She communicates with me to tell me at varying times of the day how she is

enjoying the sun as it moves around the house and how different spaces are performing. We worked closely with the client and the project, from preliminary to construction, did not suffer any variation and at finish all our client requirements were met. But, we are working on the next favourites right now.

**Worst moments:** When the project is designed but it is not built for some reason. It is so sad.

**Designs you appreciate:** We appreciate all our clients' projects as if they were our own home because there is a lot of hard work and passion in each of these designs. Unless you are passionate and involved and understand a client's vision you can't deliver.

**Your own house:** My home is an existing 1970s house that was refurbished in a contemporary style, it is not my dream home, that is yet to be



built, but it is very comfortable.

**Ultimate dream design:** To design my own dream home without any budget constraints and perhaps another dream project would be to design a church.

Daniel Casas remains a registered architect in Argentina. In New Zealand he is a NZIA Graduate Architect member and licensed building practitioner and ADNZ Professional member.





This Daniel Casas Greytown home exemplifies his hallmark look of clean and simple lines.



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Taupo Lake House designed by Daniel Casas.





"Colour for me is black and white in style and interior allowing people and their furniture add the colour," Daniel Casas says.