

Waimana marae wins design award



The wharemate at Tanatana Marae of Waimana has won a supreme design award for architecture. Supplied photos.



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An Eastern Bay of Plenty marae has won one of the most coveted architectural award titles in New Zealand.

Waimana's Tanatana Marae has been awarded the 2016 SUPREME ADNZ Resene Architectural Design Award for its wharemate (house of mourning) which was designed by Aladina Harunani of Apa Architects & Project Managers.

The prestigious awards, which were announced over the weekend, received more than 149 entries and were judged by leaders in the design and architecture community.

Tanatana marae is home to Ngāti Rere, a hapū of Ngāi Tahu. Located at a riverside settlement in the heart of Tuhoë country, it's one of 12 marae along a 20km stretch of road known as the doorway from the North into Te Uruwera ranges.

Tuhoë tradition is unique in that the deceased are not mourned in the whareniui meeting house, but rather in a wharemate. Harunani was commissioned to design a wharemate for whānau to mourn over a three to four day period. The contemporary design would sit alongside a traditional whareniui.

Marae committee representative Martin Rakuraku says the temporary shelters used in the past were no longer suitable and a permanent building was required.

“Traditionally the oratory takes place outside, whether it's rain, hail or sunshine. But we do occasionally get bad weather here and it's important for people to be warm and comfortable.

“We decided we wanted this new building to house the mourning family and to be a symbol of the future.”

ADNZ judge and Chief Architect at the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment Dr Duncan Joiner says the symbolism within the building's basic structure was particularly meaningful.

“You can see the big shallow arches which end like fingers stretching out and grasping the land, as well as the pou reaching up to the sky. It's simple but enables quite complex emotions to take place.

“Both practically and metaphorically the design is now an integral part of the marae process. It's not something that's hidden away – it's there, and the idea is boldly but very sensitively presented.”

Martin says the new wharemate is an awesome blend of old and new.

“It's almost spaceship like and attracts visitors from all over.

“As well as offering his architectural expertise, Aladina's background is similar to ours in terms of culture, which he also brought to the project. Now we are much better positioned to carry out our tikanga [spiritual practice] and we've got an incredible building as well.”



The wharemate design is pragmatic, accessible to elderly kaumatua and people with disabilities. There is mattress storage for sleeping arrangements and a physical connection with the whareniui. The interior comprises two main spaces – a front room where the body is placed and a sleeping space behind, where family members stay overnight.

As well as providing openness and closure between the two spaces, the central patterned tukutuku panel slides vertically to reveal an LCD screen, enhancing traditional protocols with modern technology for multi-media retelling of the deceased's life story.

ADNZ CEO Astrid Andersen says designing for very specific and complex cultural requirements demands a considerable amount of skill and sensitivity from a designer.

“It is inspiring to see a striking contemporary design, which is beautiful in its simplicity, fulfil the requirements of a complex brief. The design is a celebration of life, death, traditional life and a nod to the future. Congratulations to Aladina Harunani, what an accolade – to win a supreme award in his first year of ADNZ membership.”

A Mount Manganui compact home was also recognised at the national awards. Hamilton designer Tane Cox received a Residential Interiors Architectural Design Award for his work on a project titled 'A-cute House'.

Held annually, the ADNZ | Resene Architectural Design Awards celebrate the most innovative, creative and aesthetic architectural designs across the country. Presented to architectural designers in both residential and commercial sectors, the awards acknowledge outstanding design in the categories of new homes, interiors, alterations and additions, commercial and industrial design.



The tukutuku panels slide to reveal an LCD screen. Supplied Photo.