



Creative build opens doors for local firm

By David Porter

Aaron Brown, founder of Rotorua company AB Builders, is hoping the recognition being won for the unique holiday home he built on Lake Tarawera will help him take his firm to the next level.

The 150sq m Tarawera Cabin, built for owners Mark and Erin Wansbrough, won the National People's Choice Award at the Architectural Designers New Zealand/Resene Awards late last year for Rotorua's Darryl Church. The design was also a finalist in the Residential and Colour in Design categories.

"It's continuing to gain a lot of attention from design and living publications," said Mr Brown. "It was a very bespoke design. You couldn't hide anything."

Mr Wansbrough said it was an unusual design. The designer had picked up on the theme that up to 20 friends and family had been holidaying at the site on a converted garage for at least six years. The cabin is designed with all rooms coming off a covered deck area that is the main socialising area.

The project took three years from concept to completion at the end of 2014, with delays caused by the need to take into account requirements caused by

the Christchurch earthquake.

"There were a lot of unknowns around the geotechnic aspects because we had ground that was quite similar," said Mr Wansbrough. "If we were building it now it would be a piece of cake, but then we were coming up with solutions on the run."

The build by AB Builders took around seven months.

"The quality of the work was very good," he said. "And as it went on Aaron started to get more into what we were trying to do and grew to love it. You could see he had become really proud of what he was doing."

Other projects AB Builders have been involved with include about eight months work on the Lumbercube mill in Rotorua.

The firm has been active in the Bay for the past decade and Mr Brown has three building staff plus an administrative assistant. He says the firm is now positioned to take on challenging and complex projects, and is in the process of joining the Registered Master Builders Association of NZ.

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Aaron Brown (inset), founder of Rotorua company AB Builders



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