



Designed with the landscape in mind

Sue Russell

An amazing build designed and settled in total sympathy with its environment has received accolades from judges in this year's ADNZ/Resene Architectural Design Awards, announced July 8.

The 'Cabin and Trees' project is a secondary dwelling, a cabin to be used for guest accommodation on a plot of land at Tamahere, on the outskirts of Hamilton.

It's design and construction works in total sympathy with a magnificent stand of mature trees on the property and for architectural designer Tane Cox, from Hamilton-based Red Architecture, the homes unpretentious clean lines coupled with a celebration of timber in the materials used inside and out is perfect.

"The owners wanted the trees which tower above the cabin to be celebrated.

"I was fortunate to be given a wide brief and decided that to do justice to the trees I would essentially emphasise, in the cabin's design and especially in the materials used, the way a tree forms," Tane explains.

He says the really neat part about the home was how simple it was.

Inside, Siberian larch was used on the walls and sarked ceiling throughout and while that could risk seeming over-powering, in fact, the wood's 'not quite perfect' look breaks the scale and volume of its use into proportions that feel just right.

"Where we've painted, we've chosen white and dusky pink so that the timber inside is doing all the work," Tane says.

"It also works well to brighten the area inside. Coupled with this the outside is brought in as carefully situated windows show-case individual trees."

Certainly the simple design works and when viewed from the outside, the 90sqm cabin's rich and diverse pallet of dark cedar planks wraps the home, just like darker bark wraps and protects the lighter timber inside a tree.

'Cabin and Trees' received three awards; the Residential Compact New Home up to 150sqm Architectural Design Award, the Residential Interiors Architectural Design Award and the Resene Colour in Design Award.

Founded in 2008, Red Architecture is a boutique practice.

"We try to keep pretty small. It was just myself for a few years and now we have a couple of graduate architects on board."

There was a time when the team on board was larger, however Tane is happy to have down-sized somewhat.

"Bigger and busier is not always better. We lost a bit of quality control and felt like we were over-committed."

Though based in Hamilton Tane says the company takes on design projects in other locations more than locally with a niche developed in Raglan, Tauranga and The Mount and some work in Auckland.

"We've got a job in Queenstown at the moment."

Tane has found membership of Architectural Designers New Zealand to be very positive professionally.

The organisation, full of passionate Architects and Designers, trained through a variety of streams, all have one thing in common. They value attention to spatial elements.

"ADNZ are intent on offering support to designer members and to ensuring standards are upheld. You also get to meet and discuss design with like-minded people."

Asked to comment about values clients bring to the table Tane says he's observed a subtle yet significant shift in clients wanting to build smaller and sustainably - in every sense of the word's application - in a build.

"I see clients really thinking hard and valuing just how much space they really need to live well in and I celebrate that."

The small Cabin and Trees project is an excellent example of what can be achieved approaching a space with those ideals on board.



The Cabin works in total sympathy with a magnificent stand of mature trees,