



OFF THE BEATEN TRACK

A meticulously designed retreat blends into the breathtaking beauty of an isolated bay on New Zealand's South Island

WORDS MARY KEENAN PHOTOGRAPHY SIMON DEVITT/ANNANDALE



Set against a magnificent backdrop of lush green hills and rocky cliff faces, with views over the sparkling water of the Pacific Ocean, sits Annandale. One of New Zealand's oldest farms and now a luxury lodge, the 4,000-acre sheep and cattle station is located in Pigeon Bay, part of the South Island's Banks Peninsula region, around 70km from Christchurch. Remote, unspoilt and peaceful, the area is home to many small bays and features an abundance of wildlife, including rare Hector's dolphins, seals and whales.

In 2005, Texas-based real estate developer Mark Palmer returned to his native New Zealand, looking for an opportunity to invest in a farm. 'I find the South Island spectacularly beautiful and I fell in love with Pigeon Bay, which is a wonderfully untouched and sleepy inlet. It reminds me so much of New Zealand as it was 50 years ago - the small community is friendly and everyone really cares for each other,' explains Mark. 'However, my main motivation for purchasing Annandale was that it is an extraordinary farm for growing livestock. This is very productive coastal hill country and we carry over 7,000 sheep and 600 cattle in a typical year,' he explains.

When Mark and his wife Jacqui bought the property it contained a historic homestead and a small, derelict shepherd's cottage. 'Our original goal was to restore the original buildings to their former glory while adding a touch of modern-day luxury to make it a wonderful place for our family to stay,' explains Mark. 'But along the way I thought it would be a shame not to share the opportunity to enjoy it with others, too.'

But it didn't stop there. The property developer in Mark recognised the extraordinary potential of the location and what started out as a restoration soon turned into a massive project that saw the addition of another two cottages - Scrubby Bay and Seascape. Seascape is situated on the very outskirts of Annandale in a secluded, hidden inlet called Whitehead Bay. Mark first saw the site when he was leaving after his initial ▶

Previous page A hanging bubble chair positioned in front of the expansive glass windows provides the perfect spot to take in the incredible views.

Right, from top 'Seascape's longevity makes it eco-friendly,' says architect Andrew Patterson. 'Unlike most lightweight beach properties that need to be significantly maintained or rebuilt every 50 years, this structure will last hundreds of years, saving a lot of unnecessary resources. Its lifespan exceeds that of a typical coastal property making it very sustainable.'

PHOTO BY SHUTTERSTOCK



'SEASCAPE'S LONGEVITY MAKES IT ECO-FRIENDLY'





Clockwise from far left An outdoor fire warms the deck in cooler months. Unfussy concrete and timber were used for the floors and walls to enable an uninterrupted transition between indoor and outdoor areas. The wide deck space opens up completely to the rugged coast and view.



viewing of the farm by helicopter: intrigued, he asked the pilot to land on the spot. 'It was a sunny spring day, the water was sparkling below and I was captivated by the location's beauty and sense of place. That experience was what led me to purchase Annandale in the end,' Mark reflects.

His vision for Seascape was to create a private escape that was romantic and intimate whilst not compromising the natural surroundings in any way. Auckland-based architect Andrew Patterson was chosen to bring his ideas to life. 'It was important for the project to be designed by a New Zealander who was willing to be innovative,' explains Mark. 'I was impressed with Andrew's work and his brief was to develop a space that would allow its occupants to be engaged with the dramatic and beautiful setting – the architecture needed to enhance the experience rather than define it. Andrew really embraced the concept of harmony and creating a sense of belonging.'

The remote location of Annandale – coupled with Christchurch's devastating earthquake in 2011 – caused the construction of Seascape to be challenging, taking a total of three years to complete. Barely visible from the farmland above, the structure is integrated into the escarpment above the site,

while a turf roof causes it to blend seamlessly into the landscape. The cottage's structure uses an interlocking geometry to provide sweeping views along the face of the cove from everywhere within. The interiors of the one-bedroom retreat are incredibly simple: stone cladding was quarried from the farm, while the combination of concrete and native timber ceilings add to the dwelling's sense of environmental authenticity. Cowhides, leather, wool and cashmere balance out the concrete floors and walls, lending a sense of comfort, warmth and luxury. A concrete dais separates the king-sized bed from the open-plan living and dining area which leads out on to an expansive wooden deck complete with a fireplace and spa bath. On-site water harvesting and waste-water treatment ensures that Seascape is self-sustainable.

When asked what his favourite thing about Seascape is, Mark doesn't hesitate. 'Seascape is an amazing place to be when a storm closes in. Taking in the crashing waves and nature in all of its fury with someone you love in front of the fire is pure magic. Above all, it's a total escape. Seascape provides the perfect place to leave behind our busy lives and revel in beautiful surroundings that make inhabitants feel relaxed, refreshed and rejuvenated.'

• For more information visit www.annandale.com ▶



‘THE ARCHITECTURE NEEDED TO ENHANCE THE EXPERIENCE, RATHER THAN DEFINE IT’

The king-sized bed sits above the open-plan living area on a raised concrete dais. **Below** The concrete floor and tub perfectly complement the exposed stone walls in the modern bathroom.

STYLE FILE How to get the look



Outdoor fire feature
Ecosmart Fire, Dh8,900



Side table
Chattels & More,
Dh3,199



Throw
Zara Home,
Dh595



Chair Flamant, Dh2,710

