

# OUT HERE ALONE

In an isolated Banks Peninsula bay, an exquisite, jewel-like home by Pattersons looks out on an unforgettable view.



## BIO

**ARCHITECT**  
Andrew Patterson of Pattersons.  
**WELL-KNOWN WORKS**  
Patterson is one of New Zealand's most celebrated architects, designing not only beautiful homes, but a range of important public buildings, including the new Christchurch Botanic Gardens Visitor Centre and the Len Lye Centre in New Plymouth, currently under construction.

This might be the definition of glorious isolation: an isolated bay on the northern side of Banks Peninsula, a half-hour drive on a four-wheel-drive track from the nearest public road. The home on these pages is part of Annandale, a 1600ha farm owned by Mark Palmer, a New Zealand businessman who divides his time between the farm and the US. Since he purchased Annandale, Palmer has carefully renovated the farm's original homestead and brought its magnificent gardens back to life. He has also overseen the restoration of a shepherd's cottage on the remote northern reaches of the farm, a half-hour drive along a gravel track from the homestead. The farm itself is now functioning efficiently and is fully stocked. He has planted thousands of native trees.

The home on these pages – which is officially known as “Seascape” but which had the working title of “the honeymoon house” when it was being designed – is one of the next steps in the farm's development as a destination for luxury travellers (it is available as a luxury rental in the Annandale coastal farm escape and luxury villa collection). It is located in a bay where the hills rise abruptly from the sea, where visitors can feel as if the rest of the world has almost ceased to exist. “It was not a beach for a big building,” Patterson says. He worried that an oversized structure would “kill the spot”.

Palmer first noticed the bay from a helicopter almost a decade ago. It was located on the property's northern extremity – at that stage the farm's road didn't extend that far – and he asked the pilot to set him down so he could admire the view of a magnificent headland topped by an intricate, comb-like rock formation with



three pillars (part of the formation later collapsed in the Canterbury earthquakes, but it remains resolutely picturesque). “It was just magic,” Palmer says. “I thought, where in the world do you find a place like this?” He decided, then and there, to have something designed to maximise the enjoyment of the site, a building that “was intimate and romantic and about the water and the view – we didn't want to distract from the natural beauty of the place”.

Palmer had already been working with Patterson and his team on the restoration of Annandale's original homestead and a shepherd's cottage. Given the firm's

These pages: Owner Mark Palmer says Seascape is “intimate and romantic and about the water and the view”.



This page: The home is not much more than “a bed and a fire and a view, and a cave to contain them”.



# HOME.

*HOME New Zealand* is the country's leading home design magazine. Every issue showcases amazing homes by New Zealand's best architects.

strength in contemporary design, it made sense to commission them to create Seascape as well. Before developing a plan, Patterson chose a site, thinking a building at the beach's eastern end would have views of the cove as well as the length of the beach itself. The dwelling's intricate geometry is governed by the desire to make the most of these two key views: part of it is oriented towards the cove, and the other part pivots towards the beach.

Palmer's evocative brief contained no programmatic requirements, so Patterson and his team were free to dream. "Our first diagrams consisted of a bed and a fire and a view, and a cave to contain them," Patterson says. This simple list of elements is essentially what they have built: the structure is really just a studio, albeit a very glamorous and romantic one.

The building is partly dug into the hill and has a turf roof. The bed sits on a platform two steps above a couch and a fireplace whose triangulated surround marks the intersection of the building's two geometries. This space melds with a small kitchen, which in turn opens onto a sheltered deck with an outdoor fireplace. The cave-like bathroom – where a wall featuring stone from the farm's own quarry is illuminated by overhead

skylights and a sliver of ocean view – opens onto a terrace with a hot tub. "For a small building it gives the amount of spatial interest that a big house would give," Patterson says. "You get to enjoy the whole bay all the time." Outside, an extensive revegetation programme initiated by Palmer is starting to pay off, with pohutukawa and many other trees rising among the grasses.

The building's concrete structure has brutal tendencies, but has been thoughtfully softened inside with the addition of macrocarpa acoustic panels on the ceiling, the rich, warm texture of the stone walls and, of course, the golden grasses waving in the breeze outside. The building's angular futurism and secretive locale give it a whiff of unreality, as if you've found yourself in a lair designed for a sophisticated mystery man in a James Bond film. But its liberation from the humdrum requirements of regular homes – garages, extra bedrooms, storage – means the building also has a wonderful sort of freedom, a place at the edge of the world where convention (and pretty much everything else) no longer feels as if it matters.

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