

The inhabitants of this abode absolutely love it, and they're equally into how it makes others feel.

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# YOU'RE WELCOME

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**ABOVE LEFT** The exterior of the home is impressive day and night. The couple worked with Barry Sluifers of The Garden Lighting Company to transform the front entrance and backyard “in the most magical way”, for aesthetic reasons and to allow them to play basketball outside after sundown. **ABOVE RIGHT** “If we couldn’t find what we wanted, we got it made — like our tub chairs [designed by Trinity Interior Design and made by Forma],” says Nicola. The items on the mantelpiece here include a tall vase from A&C Homestore and a Globe vase by AYTM from Dawson & Co. The brass candleholder on the Flash Circle coffee table by Tom Dixon from ECC is also from Dawson & Co. **OPPOSITE** The Taylors relax on Henley sofas by Kovacs in one of the spaces created by Amber Armitage. The Bellevue lamp is by Arne Jacobsen from &tradition, the Elle Cube coffee table is from Soren Liv and the rug is from Designer Rugs. The Dandelion chandelier from Vitrine that now hangs overhead once lit a hotel in Prague.

It was a combination of strategy and timing that led Aucklanders Nicola and Josh Taylor to this home fit for their family of five and a regular flow of guests. They’d sold their previous property a few years prior in order to invest everything in their fin-tech company, Tax Traders, and had been renting while growing the company.

Starting a business and forgoing income for 18 months while raising three small children was a journey of faith for the couple, but six years on, with the company in full swing, they were ready to buy again. Functional living spaces, a pool and a sense of drama were among their wants, but ultimately, says Nicola, they wanted a home in which they could “extend manaakitanga [hospitality] to others”.

It didn’t take long before they found a property in Mt Eden that ticked enough of their boxes. The staircase winding up to the entrance of the colonial-style brick house had an air of grandeur that was elegant without being over the top, and inside the two-storey home was ample space for family and visitors.

The 1930s home stands under towering native trees at the base of the mountain. It has a long history and now, thanks to the couple’s well-considered makeover, it’ll be the backdrop to many more years of special stories.

The Taylors got to work before they moved in, painting, hanging curtains, adding a new pantry, replacing the staircase banisters, redecorating the children’s bedrooms and re-fitting the garage. Nicola got the biggest thrill from the kids’ rooms. “We sat back and watched them use their imagination, creativity and personal style to put together their own unique spaces,” she says. “They each chose something really individual, then our clever friend and stylist Amber Armitage helped pull their ideas together, along with overseeing the revamp of the main lounge, and family and dining rooms.”

For the more structural aspects of the makeover that began five months later, Nicola and Josh engaged Nick Sayes and Luke Jackson of Sayes Jackson Architects, who in turn brought Jayne Tolley of Trinity Interior Design on board to join them in >

## THE PROJECT

Financial technology company co-founders Nicola and Josh Taylor renovated this five-bedroom home in Auckland’s Mt Eden for themselves and their children Ari (12), Violet (10) and Elsa (7).







**ABOVE LEFT** Serious entertainers need a seriously chic bar area. This mirror custom-made by Trinity adds drama and makes this distinctively a bar zone. On the Oona sideboard/bar cabinet by Apartamento is a lamp from A&C Homestore, while reflected in the mirror is an artwork by Selena Kitchen and a Torus vase by AYTM from Dawson & Co. **ABOVE RIGHT** “It’s a treat for us to sit together on our green sofas in the quiet of the lounge and have a glass of wine at the end of a big week,” says Nicola. In this scene, cushions made by Kovacs using fabric from James Dunlop Textiles complement another artwork by Selena Kitchen.

mapping out an overhaul of the ground floor to complete the original vision Nicola and Amber had devised together, including a new study/playroom/guest room, bathroom and laundry, and a walk-in-wardrobe and ensuite for the master bedroom. Employing the couple’s life philosophy, affectionately dubbed “surprise and delight”, Josh worked with the architects to design passageways underneath the children’s bedrooms and a hang-out zone in the space between floors for them as well, accessed by trapdoors.

The updated interior reflects the Taylors’ classic yet confident style; they haven’t been afraid to use colour, print, pattern and texture to spread the surprise-and-delight factor throughout the house. The best part may be the dwelling’s ability to host a gathering — but there’s more to it than just having fun.

“For us, being generous with our home is the most important part of owning it,” says Nicola. “If it’s not being used by others for good, then we’ve really missed a trick. We’ve hosted family celebrations, children’s parties, engagement parties, baby showers, work functions, fundraisers for great causes and

Christmas parties for the charities we’re engaged with.”

The kids have also developed a knack for entertaining. “They see manaakitanga all around them and are active participants,” says Nicola. “Violet can put together a platter without any involvement from me, Elsa can set up a great bar with glasses in tidy rows, and Ari will instinctively find a playlist, put on the music and light the candles. And they know that the most important thing is to welcome people, connect with them, and consider how we can make them feel at home. We don’t want people to feel impressed or intimidated when they visit — we want them to feel loved, cared for and inspired to do things their own way.”

There’s no television here, so board games, swimming and family basketball competitions are typical activities. Dinner time is sacred; the kids set the table every night and everyone debriefs on their day and shares a few laughs. The Taylors have definitely created what they set out to: a home large enough for sharing the love while maintaining a sense of intimacy for their tight crew. 🍷

**STUDY/PLAYROOM/GUEST ROOM** Much of the furniture in this multi-use space (not to mention the personalised sign by Radical Neon, far left) was custom-designed specifically for it. Ottomans designed by Trinity and made by Forma allow the kids to move around the room and the modules of the matching sofa connect together to form a queen-size bed for guests, complete with a custom-made foam topper to ensure a comfortable sleep.







**STUDY/PLAYROOM/GUEST ROOM** The double desk (and chairs) designed by Trinity and made by CABworkshop has a pull-out drawer that neatly houses the printer. String shelves display treasures including a bowl (top shelf, left) and sculptures (middle and bottom shelves) by Kristina Dam Studio from Capricho.



**ABOVE LEFT** The dining room walls are painted in Resene Shadowy Blue, a suitable pairing for the dark Global table and Maki chairs from St Clements. **ABOVE RIGHT** Sliding doors connect the multi-use room to this additional bathroom and the laundry pictured below. The Turn O2 light by Douglas & Bec and tapware by Paini from Metrix seen here are repeated in the ensuite overleaf, while the mirror is by Powersurge, and the Alice Blue tiles and Nero basin are from Artedomus; the latter sits on a vanity made by Trinity using Sleek Concrete by Caesarstone. **BELOW** Highlights in the laundry include the Boston Brilliance tiles from Artedomus, shelf and rail by Powersurge for drip-drying washing, and Viscount White stone from Granite Benchtop Co (also repeated in the ensuite overleaf).



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**ABOVE LEFT** Nicola and Josh aimed to create a luxe hotel feel in their bedroom, which Nicola describes as “serene with a slightly moody feel. The idea for the florals [Dark Floral II Black saturated wallpaper by Ellie Cashman] had been in my mind for 10 years, so it was a delight to see it come to life.” An IC T1 High table lamp by Flos from ECC illuminates the headboard made by Trinity from Bespoke Dahlia fabric by Catherine Martin for Mokum, and the linen cushions and duvet cover by Seneca. **ABOVE RIGHT** “Our brief to Luke and Nick was fairly detailed when it came to the wardrobe, right down to the length of my longest dresses and the height of my highest boots,” says Nicola of this black-glassed beauty. “They approached the wardrobe in the same way as the overall renovation — with creativity, innovative thinking and a beautiful design aesthetic.”



**ENSUITE** For this room, Nicola sought small, dark, glistening tiles, Boston Nero Nocturne from Artedomus, that would help create a space that provides a break from the busyness of life. Mirrors custom-made by Powersurge and S2 basins from Stonebaths lighten the tone.





**VIOLET'S ROOM** Each child had wonderful ideas for their own sleep space. "I loved spending time with Ari and Violet leafing through wallpaper books to find the starting point for their rooms, and choosing paint colours with Elsa," says Nicola. Violet settled on Ananas wallpaper by Mind the Gap, a headboard by Miss Lolo, Kombu green bedding by Kip & Co and a throw from Soren Liv. The Segment side table and Moon lamp are by Citta.



**ABOVE LEFT** This wall in Resene Green House in Violet's room complements her wallpaper, and provides a backdrop for shelving by Tomado and a daybed sourced second-hand on Trade Me. **ABOVE RIGHT** A Timberland mural from Rebel Walls and rope hammock and ladder made by Josh and Ari make Ari's room a real visual adventure. A trapdoor leads down to the secret kids' hang-out space. **BELOW** The roof in Elsa's room is painted in Resene Clementine. Her matching blinds and bedding were made by Bolt of Cloth. On the Arnold Circus stool by Martino Gamper is a lamp from A&C Homestore.



THERE'S NO TELEVISION HERE, SO BOARD GAMES, SWIMMING AND FAMILY BASKETBALL COMPETITIONS ARE TYPICAL ACTIVITIES.