



The brief was straightforward: all the owners wanted of this beautifully simple bach in Mahinepua Bay, a three-and-a-half-hour drive north of Auckland, was a dwelling that preserved the rituals of camping and caravanning. Maureen-Ann and Kelly Farrimond had been staying in their caravan on the 14-acre site for three years before they decided to build. Camping instilled in them an uncomplicated ideal of holidaying and made them determined that any new building on the site would carry on this tradition.

Their designer – and sometime camping companion – Richard Mora honoured this brief by creating a one-room bach, purposely foregoing the expansive trimmings that are de rigueur in so many holiday homes. Mora says the design focuses on utility, allowing the owners to continue the camping lifestyle in a modern structure. His insider knowledge on the workings of the site, the visitor numbers in summer and the interests of his clients certainly helped in the design process. “Richard knew that we had 20 to 30 people coming up here during holidays and that we love cooking and entertaining, but that we’re also very relaxed, because he’s spent some time up here with us. It made it easy to come up with a bach to suit us,” says Maureen-Ann Farrimond.

To kick-start the design process, the Farrimonds presented Mora with clippings of two houses – Mies Van der Rohe’s Farnsworth House and Philip Johnson’s Glass House. The modernist principles of both houses appealed to the owners, who envisioned their bach with the same openness and sophistication. They wanted their beach refuge to be the very antithesis of their villa in Auckland’s Birkenhead Point. “We absolutely did not want another house,” says Kelly Farrimond. “We wanted something easy and uncomplicated, with that bach feeling, but just a new ‘old’ bach.” Accordingly, the bach is roughly four meters by 10 meters, with the roof and floor dimensions similar to that of the Glass House. Three walls are fully glazed with the fourth in cedar, allowing 180-degree views of the startling coastline, surrounding cliffs and farmland.

The Farrimonds gave Mora some specific requirements too, one of which was a facilities wall that could service the campers on the site, “something that friends and family can use when they come up and stay in a tent, and more importantly that they can feel comfortable using without invading our privacy,” says Kelly Farrimond. Hidden behind sliding cedar screens are ingenious in-built kitchen and toilet facilities. The 1.4-meter-wide rear wall unit also houses an ensuite accessible from inside the bach.

OPPOSITE Outside on a good day. The owners deliberately sought a bach that would be the antithesis of their more complicated lives back in the city.

ABOVE LEFT The home’s 40 square-metre interior was kept simple to avoid clutter. The kitchen table and chairs are ‘Series 7’ by Arne Jacobsen for Fritz Hansen from Bromhead Design.

ABOVE RIGHT The rear entrance to the home with a view through to the sea. The cedar screens on either side conceal the small kitchen and bathroom facilities for guests staying on the property.