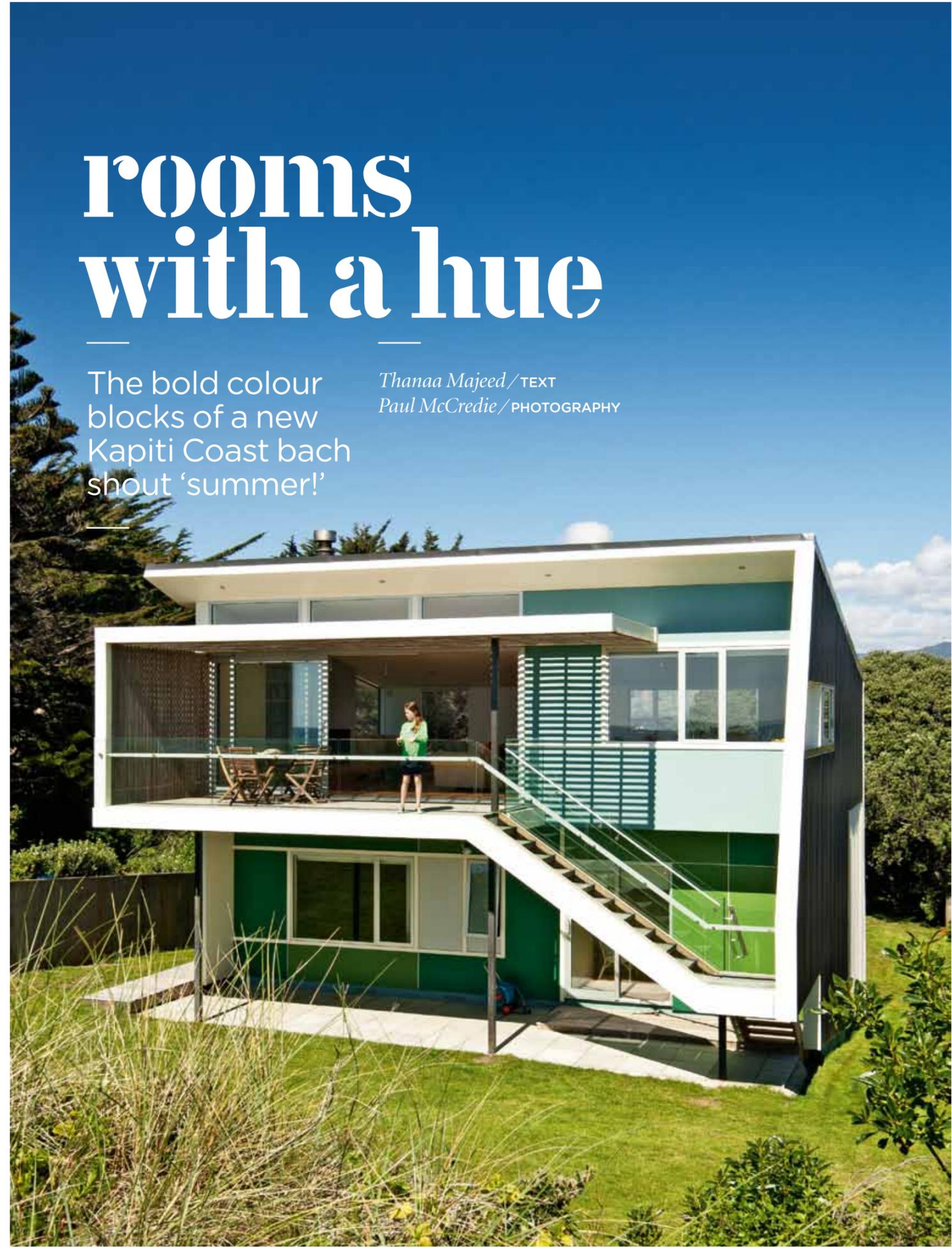


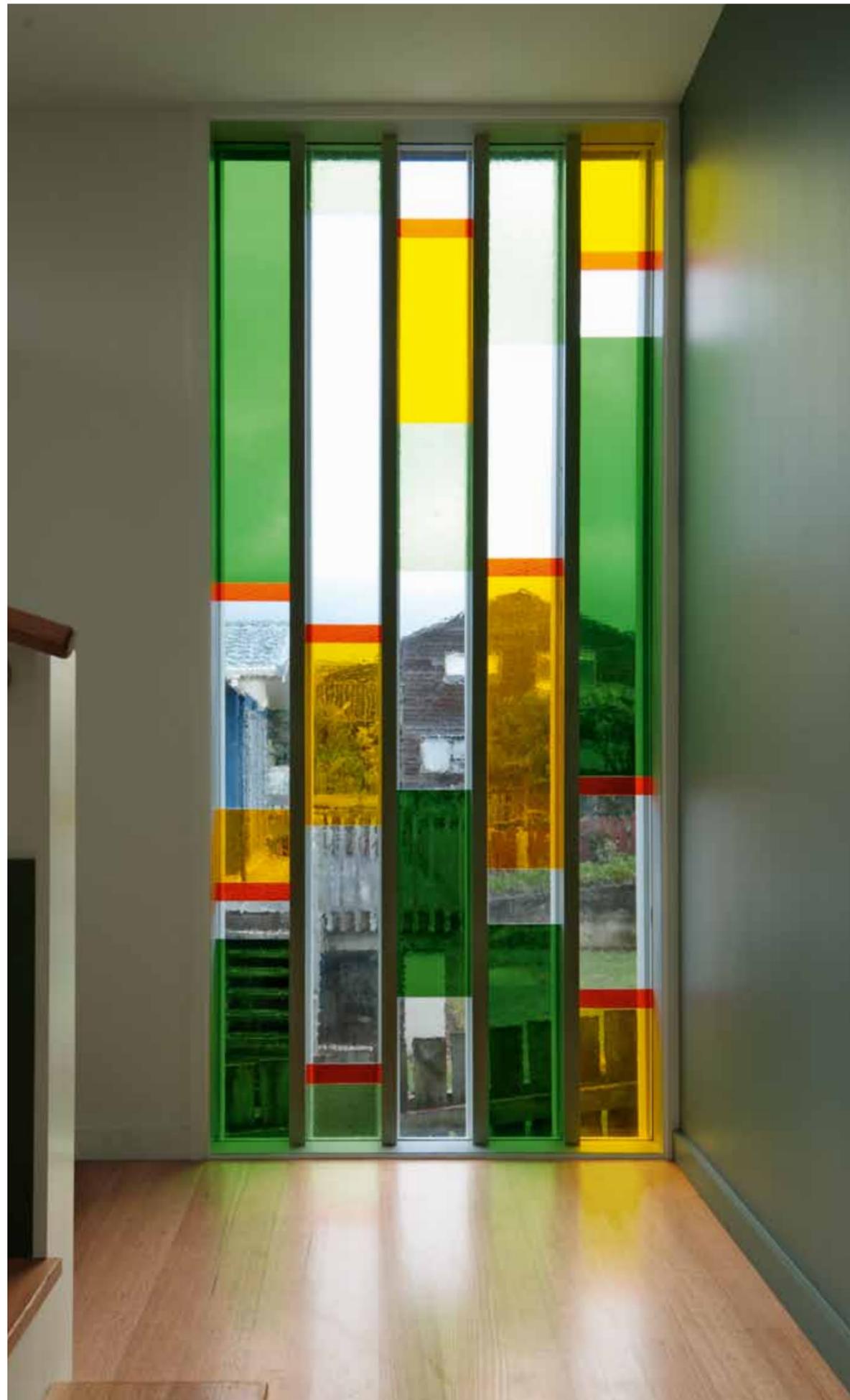


rooms with a hue

The bold colour
blocks of a new
Kapiti Coast bach
shout 'summer!'

Thanaa Majeed / TEXT
Paul McCredie / PHOTOGRAPHY





The striking stained-glass panel that greets visitors as they enter continues the bold use of colour on the bach's exterior.



The bach's colour scheme has drawn much comment from other residents. Owners Mike and Sarah are happy to have provoked their interest.

Not that far from Wellington but far enough, a young boy spent his summers at Waikanae, enjoying the sandy Kapiti Coast beach from the family's bach or hunting from their cabin in the hills behind. The family bach was sold, but the youngster carried a lingering connection to the area with him into adulthood. A few years ago, he and his wife purchased a section across the road from the old family bach, a place with views of the sea and the family's old hunting ground of Kapanui Hill.

Among year-round and summer residents, and with a small clutch of cafés and bars just down the road, it was the perfect site: a beachfront plot sporting a tiny shed-like bach and an outhouse. After a summer there, the owners, Mike and Sarah, realised they needed something a little bigger and more comfortable for them and their three young children.

It was almost two years before they settled on Gerald Parsonson of Wellington's Parsonson Architects to design their new bach. They had seen photographs of Gerald's own Paraparaumu bach (the winner of our 2001 Home Of The Year award), and were convinced he understood how to get the most out of the Kapiti Coast. "We knew it was a site that needed someone special," Sarah explains. "It needed someone clever to get the views."

Faced with a long, narrow section and tricky contours, Gerald decided to lift the bach's ground floor

slightly above the earth, and place the living areas on top to clear the dune-line and capture the sea views. Beyond that, the brief was fairly open. What has resulted is a jaunty form with a bright colour palette that references the cheerful 1950s fibrolite baches of the area, as well as one of Gerald's favourite vehicles. "I grew up in a family of Citroën lovers, and for me there's a little bit of the old D-Series spirit in the way the back of the house feels," he explains.

The only major variation from the honourable fibrolite tradition greets you just past the front door – a striking stained-glass panel of yellow, green and orange to celebrate the joy of summer sunlight through the window and cement the sense of departure from weekday drudgery. "He has such a great eye for all the little details that you don't know to think of," says Sarah. Those details include a tap for sandy feet right next to a door that opens directly into a double shower to catch the rest of the sand that has inevitably burrowed into everyone's togs. Upstairs, the kitchen bench elbows smoothly around to a seating area that provides a link between those cooking and those lounging comfortably in the sun waiting to be fed (you can see more of the kitchen in our design special on p.129).

The home's distinctive colour and profile attracted plenty of attention from the start. "There were a lot of onlookers!" says Mike. "In the final stages everyone

Ruby, Mike and Archie in the bach's backyard. The home's bold colour palette includes Colorsteel 'Iron Sand' panels on the southern elevation, along with the Resene shades 'Quarter Spanish White', 'Surrender', 'Dell', 'Parsonson's Kaitoke Green' (a custom shade), 'Juniper' and 'Green Meets Blue'.

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was slowing down and having a look, and because the design is so different people feel free to have an opinion about it, which is great!" And although most who stare are full of praise, the house is remarkable in that the bold design also frees the tongues of those who aren't as taken by it. On one visit to a local shop, the cashier

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asked Sarah where her family had moved to. When she realised which home it was, the cashier immediately abandoned all tact and cried, "Not the green and blue one? I hate that!"

A house that provokes isn't necessarily a bad thing, and what most people seem able to agree on is that the house is very clearly a bach, not just a second home by the sea. It suits both short weekend visits and longer stints in the summer, maintaining a frank and gleeful sense of occasion which always serves to remind its occupants that they're on holiday.

At the bach, Mike and Sarah's children Scarlett (5), Archie (7) and Ruby (10) spend their time surfing, boogie boarding and helping their dad fish, although fishing is a more complex affair compared to the days of Mike's youth, as it now involves a motorised plastic shark and a long set line. Neighbours gather and pitch in with the initial frenzy of getting the "Kontiki Predator" out past the surf, and then settle in with a few beers in the sunshine as the kids enjoy a game of cricket or rugby on the beach. Thankfully, the robot shark paid dividends on its first excursion, hauling in an eight-kilo snapper and making for a proud walk down to the local store to get it weighed – the very same store where Sarah met with the all-too-honest appraisal of their bach. While the bach might provoke lively discussion, on this occasion the achievement of this catch wasn't debatable. 🐟



ABOVE Scarlett, Ruby, Archie and Tama the dog in the home's living area, with its fireplace and built-in furniture.

RIGHT Ruby and Tama on the steps that connect the living area and the lawn leading to the beach.

