

Coast & Country

Fateful detour

While out driving one day, an Auckland couple bought a large coastal property that has changed their lives, writes **Liz Dobson**.

THE BREAKERS, 145B WINTLE RD, MANGAWHAI.

A detour to Mangawhai on a road trip has led to an amazing lifestyle change for Neil and Janeen Rabone.

While taking the Twin Coasts drive six years ago, Janeen suggested they turn off to the popular Northland beach of Mangawhai as Neil had never been to that area.

Lying in the grass was a For Sale sign for a large, hillside section. The land boasted stunning views to Little Barrier and Cape Rodney plus the Mangawhai estuary. It was sited across the road from Picnic Bay and just a few minutes walk to the surf beach that is patrolled during the summer months.

Before they knew it, the former Auckland couple were subdividing their newly acquired property into four large sections and taking on extensive retaining projects, creating a driveway and facilities while dealing with the tight resource consents needed for the area. As the work escalated, Neil took a year off from his quantity surveying job to concentrate on the project.

With the subdivision created, next came the design for the couple's luxury beachside home after they decided to build on the second section on the hill. Working with Auckland architect Jason Bailey, they decided on a concept for all of the houses to be built on the subdivision, with the ability to reconfigure the design slightly for each site.

By May 2005, construction on Neil and Janeen's home was underway with local builder Kevin Woolley and the House Company Rodney. Thanks to fine weather and a great crew, the Rabone's home was finished by October that year and went on to win a gold medal in the



2006 Master Builder House of the Year competition.

Janeen and Neil have such a connection with Kevin that they invited him and his colleagues to their beachfront wedding in December 2006.

The Rabone's home is built from Onduline, a product originating in France. Neil picked the cladding as it is suitable for coastal conditions, is low-maintenance and fits in with the natural colour palette. ColourSteel roofing has been



used for the two-storey home that features a number of decks and extensive use of glass to encompass the amazing views.

"When people step on to the main deck they are amazed at the stunning views," says Janeen. "We can watch surfers, orca whales going past, boats passing through the bar and of course the amazing dunes."

The open plan living space has a wall of glass in the lounge created by trifold doors that open



SIZE: Land 1258sq m, house 160sq m.

PRICE: \$955,000.

INSPECT: Sundays 12-1pm.

ON THE WEB: www.bayleys.nz #311527.

SCHOOL ZONES: Mangawhai Beach School, Otamatea College and Rodney College.

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FEATURES: With stunning coastal views, this luxury beachside retreat has been designed specifically for the location. Boasting extensive use of glass and decks, this stylish award-winning home also has the benefit of a self-contained wing that is currently used as

to bring in the sea views. Bifold doors off the kitchen open to native bush that covers the section.

The kitchen, with its gorgeous granite benchtop, boasts stunning views while the upstairs master suite has windows that open to take in the bush clad hillside opposite.

The en suite is cunningly divided into two spaces so guests can use the facilities if needed.

On the lower floor, a large bunkroom is used for the couple's frequent visitors.

On the other side of a glass gallery lies the self-contained suite that Janeen and Neil had designed to be used either as additional guest accommodation or as a B&B.

The suite has a double bedroom, a glass and tile shower area, and a lounge that opens onto its own deck.

"We have a B&B sign at the end of the driveway and people just wander up," says Janeen.

As the couple still own two sections in the subdivision, they will retain their coastal connection. With a trip to India coming up in the near future, Neil and Janeen are looking forward to a belated honeymoon before deciding if they will build another home on the site.