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Whitewash whimsy

An old timber-lined bathroom in a seaside house is given a light and lovely beach-inspired redesign



Many Kiwis have faced the dilemma of what to do with the heavy wooden interiors found in older design-and-build homes. This was the case when the owners of this 20-year-old house planned a refurbishment of the orange-tinged varnished walls and small bathrooms. Their inspiration for the aesthetics came from the house's location; on the coast with superb sea views.

The owners liked the horizontal planked interior walls, just not the colour. After much research by designer Celia Visser, a solution was found that enabled the walls to be given a whitewash effect without the enormous effort of completely stripping the original varnish and starting anew. Such a coastal-style, casual treatment with echoes of Cape Cod-style interiors perfectly suits the house's location and purpose.

The bathroom's size was an issue, so Celia's plan involved adding about 1.5 metres to the end, complete with new skylight, to accommodate a roomy walk-in shower. Celia chose a restful palette of pale sea-inspired colours for this room. While many would shy away from specifying a second timber against such a dominant and striking wall treatment, the use of whitewashed cross-cut pine for the vanity is the perfect complement. Kept off the floor to add a sense of roominess, the long and elegant vanity is topped with a deep-profile Satamia marble as well as Catalano basins and chunky taps from Plumbline.

A large mirror is tucked neatly under the ceiling bulkhead and is flanked by full-length panel lights on either side. Underneath the mirror is a splashback of glass tiles in translucent sea tones. A clever wall-hung modular unit both here and in the shower — the Linebeta from Interio — allows for various items to be used, such as soap dishes and dispensers as well as hanging space for facecloths and handtowels.

Large tiles from Spazio Casa, which echo the colours of sand, drift across the floor and into the shower. A partition shower wall of whitewashed timber was chosen in preference to glass, which Celia feels would have made the room look too urban. A pebbled shower base by Island Stone extends the beach feel and gives a good foot massage — the perfect piece of pampering in such a delightful space after a hard day at the beach.

Who, what, where

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UNDERSTANDING THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A SPACIOUS AND A COZY BATHROOM IS THE KEY TO TRANSFORMING YOUR BATHROOM INTO THE IDEAL SPACE FOR YOUR WHITOWASH EFFECT.