

INSPIRE

An Auckland Home Show Publication

Autumn 2026

White Is the
New White
Get It Right

Getting the
Best from
Your Interior
Designer

Minimalism vs
Maximalism

Live the Kiwi
Poolside Dream
Next Summer
Starts Now!

INSPIRE

Welcome to the Autumn 2026 edition of Inspire, our seasonal e-magazine created especially for Auckland Home Show subscribers

Summer may be on the run, but if you are dreaming of a swimming pool next January, now is exactly the time to start planning. In this edition we dive into the world of pools, with pages of ideas, inspiration and practical advice to help you understand what is possible, what is involved, and how to begin the journey toward creating your own backyard retreat.

Elsewhere in this issue we explore a range of ideas for improving the way your home looks and functions. From smart kitchen storage solutions and the evolving world of tapware finishes, to insights on working with an interior designer and making the most of thoughtful planning, these stories are designed to spark ideas for projects both large and small.

All of the inspiration inside comes from the experts who know Kiwi homes best, the exhibitors of the Auckland Home Show. Together they bring practical experience, fresh ideas and products designed for the way we live.

So take a moment, settle in with a coffee, and enjoy this latest edition of INSPIRE

The Auckland Home Show Team





Cover Water heating and thoughtful lighting of the Narellan Grandeur pool featured here extend it's life well beyond summer, making Autumn evening swims just as inviting after the sun sets. See feature on following pages for inspiration and start living the dream now!

Pictured here White is still defining modern interiors. Wall painted in Resene Eighth Bison Hide. Design by Annick Larkin. Image by Bryce Carleton. See feature page 20

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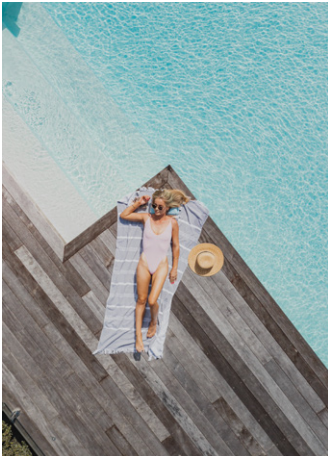
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Living the Kiwi Backyard Dream Next Summer Starts Now!

Living the backyard summer dream. Featured this page Capri fibreglass plunge pool by The PoolHouse. **Opposite page (left to right)** top row Mayfair Pools, The PoolHouse, The PoolHouse Centre row The PoolHouse Tiny Pools, The PoolHouse, Mayfair Pools **Bottom row** all pictured The PoolHouse

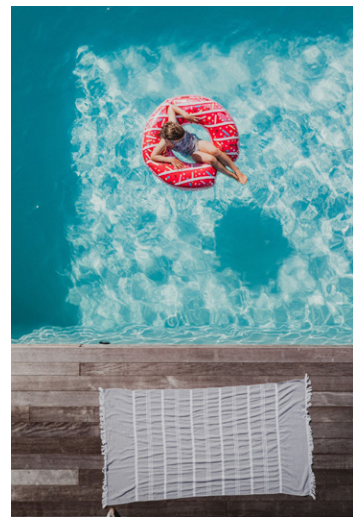
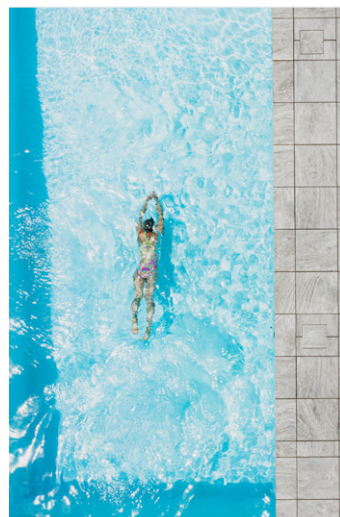


In the heat of summer, at some point, someone always says it: "Next summer we're getting a pool." But it's not just about getting cool, it's about getting the lifestyle, living the ultimate Kiwi backyard summer dream.

Time outside, BBQs with friends, kids having fun together away from screens, morning swims before the day begins,

and evening wind-downs as the heat fades. A place where people naturally gather, where weekends stretch longer, and where ordinary days feel a little more like a holiday.

Don't wait until spring, now is the perfect time to start creating your backyard pool paradise and be living the poolside dream by summer. And we're going to help get you there!



Mayfair

FIBREGLOSS SWIMMING POOLS

Auckland Home Show leading pool specialists Mayfair celebrate 50 years in the business, and for Cascade (below) it's their 53rd!

BUILDING DREAMS ACROSS NEW ZEALAND
77 CUSTOM BUILT

The Kiwi Connection

New Zealand has always had a strong relationship with water. From surf beaches to river swimming holes and boat jetties, jumping in, splashing about, enjoying the water and relaxing – what we call “going swimming” – is ingrained into our sense of Kiwiana and cultural identity. But nothing defines that connection more than our long standing love affair with the backyard pool, and the health, fitness and lifestyle options it offers. For many, owning one is the Kiwi dream.

In the 1970s, they symbolised a certain optimism – a belief that the good life happened at home. That idea hasn't faded. If anything, it feels more relevant now than ever.

The Modern Pool

“A pool isn't just installed – it's integrated into the way you live”

Today pools are smarter, more efficient and more flexible than ever.

Compact plunge pools suit urban sections.

Fibreglass shells streamline installation.

Heating systems extend the season well beyond summer.

Automation reduces maintenance time.

The **1970s dream** has evolved – but the core idea remains the same. Home is better when life happens outdoors.

Picking the Right Pool

The best pool isn't necessarily the biggest. It's the one that fits your home, how you live, and the lifestyle you dream of.

Some families prioritise shallow areas for children and easy supervision. Others imagine long evenings entertaining friends beside the water. For some, a pool offers a place to exercise, cool off and unwind at the end of the day.

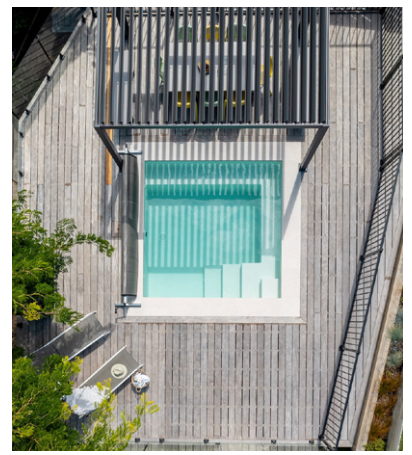
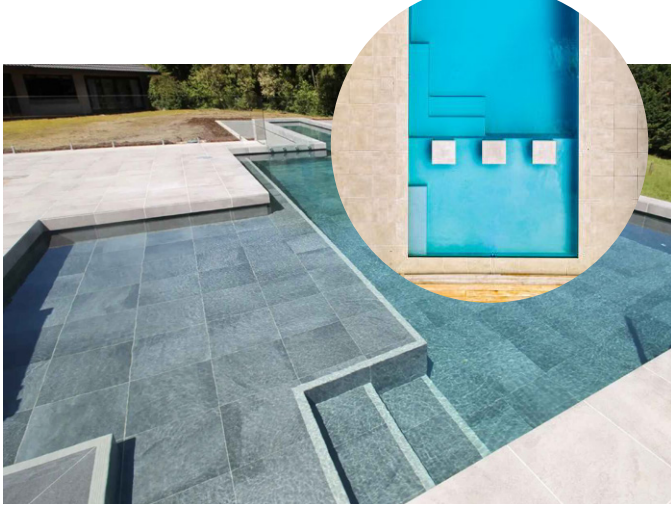
If fitness is the focus, a long, narrow lap pool can turn even a compact section into a daily training ground. These streamlined designs suit urban sites and deliver serious swimming potential without overwhelming the garden.

For entertaining and relaxation, plunge pools have surged in popularity. Smaller in footprint but big on impact, they suit tighter backyards, courtyard settings and architectural homes. Heated, they become year-round retreats, more outdoor lounge than traditional swimming pool.

Fibreglass pools offer sleek, contemporary shapes and streamlined installation, while concrete provides almost unlimited customisation for those wanting fully bespoke curves or architectural integration.

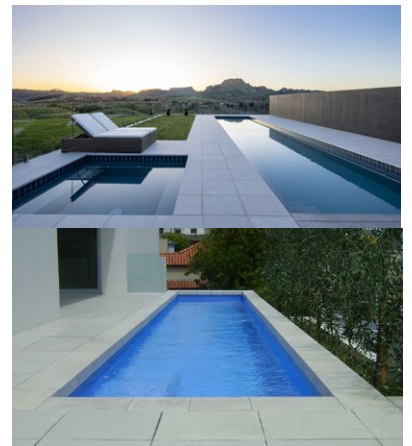
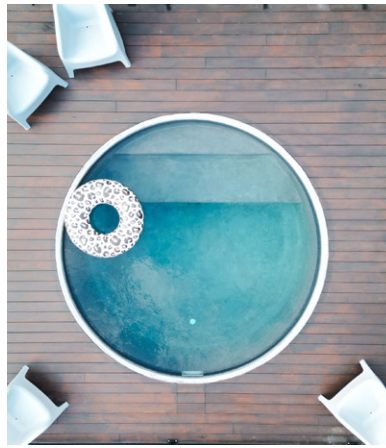
Larger sections open the door to expansive shapes, integrated spa zones or statement designs that anchor landscaping plans. But scale alone doesn't define success. Many of the most beautiful pool environments are modest in size, carefully positioned for sun, shelter and privacy.

A contemporary classic, the compact plunge pool has become a popular urban choice, packing a lot of pool for its punch. Featured here: the 4.4 x 3.6m concrete inspired, eco-friendly fibreglass *Capri* by The PoolHouse.



Prioritising shallow areas for young children above featuring LuxeOutdoors and Mayfair Pools (insert) or a sweet hangout for the older ones left featuring Principle Pools

Plunge pools suited to tighter spaces and budgets, have surged in popularity for their versatility and style. Pictured right (clockwise from top left) rectangle plunge Tiny Pools, Mayfair Pools square plunge, 'The Classic' rectangle and the circular 'Manu' concrete plunge pools by Tiny Pools.



Designing for the whole backyard

Contemporary pools are rarely standalone features. Integrated instead with thoughtful design and landscaping as the centrepiece of a wider outdoor living environment. Decks, paving, planting and outdoor living zones help transform a pool into a cohesive extension of the home.

Above left a larger section can accommodate integrated spa zones or statement designs that anchor landscaping plans like here by Narellan pools. For those more focussed on fitness a streamlined lap pool can offer serious swimming in style **centre** and **right** both Mayfair Pools. **Bottom row** Seamlessly integrated not just as the focus of the backyard but at the centre of your life, featuring **left** Mayfair Pools, **centre** and **right** Narellan Pools.





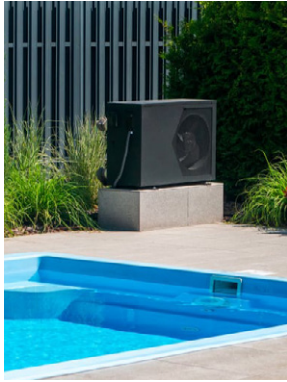
Extending The Swim Season

One of the biggest shifts in recent years is heating. Many homeowners still assume pools are strictly a summer luxury. In reality, modern heat pump technology has changed the equation. Highly efficient electric heat pumps draw warmth from the air and transfer it to the water, delivering consistent temperatures at surprisingly low running costs.

Heating and thoughtful design extend the life of this pool well beyond summer. A high-capacity heat pump keeps the water warm into the cooler months and colour-changing LED lights make evening swims just as inviting after the sun sets. Mayfair Pools Below HPPS Heat Pump, Solar heated pool by Cascade Swimming Pools.

For sunny sites, solar systems provide additional efficiency, while pool covers significantly reduce evaporation and heat loss.

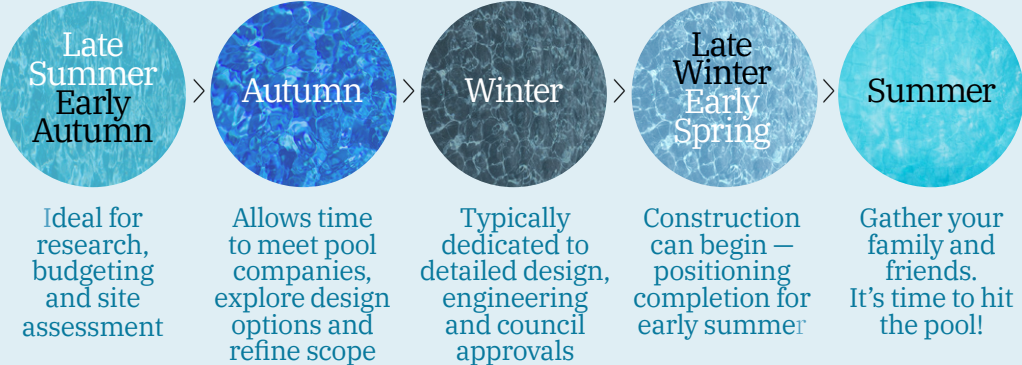
When heating is factored into the design from the outset, installation is seamless and the pool transforms from seasonal indulgence to extended-season amenity. The result? Early spring swims. Autumn evenings outdoors. More value from the same investment.



A Clear Path from Dream to Reality



A pool is a significant investment, but the journey from concept to completion is clear when approached step by step.



Starting early removes pressure. Decisions are thoughtful rather than rushed. Builders are available. Materials are ordered without seasonal bottlenecks.

The Dream Team Assembling the right team of specialists to build your pool can be daunting, but most leading Kiwi pool companies have their own crew of trusted experts to install their pools, ready and eager to bring your dream to life. From initial design consultation to final installation, project-managing every step tailored to your needs. All you have to worry about is your bathing suit.



Building your backyard dream pool is less about the concrete hole in the ground or fibreglass shell full of water, than what you create around it - from simple but stylish decking or pavers to full pool paradise oasis - and how you style it that will mostly influence your total budget. As pictured here, decking, fencing and entertainment zones are big ones to consider, even for a smaller space.

Top left Mayfair Pools swim-to bar and **right** cabana style. **Centre** Tiny Pools, say no more **Bottom left** Narellan Pools simple and elegant **right** Mayfair Pools freeform



Budget Check

Pool costs vary depending on size, materials, access and surrounding landscaping,

In New Zealand, smaller fibreglass plunge pools can begin from around \$45,000-\$60,000 installed, while mid-sized fibreglass pools typically range between \$70,000 and \$100,000. Larger or custom concrete designs often exceed \$120,000, particularly where complex engineering or landscaping is involved.

Beyond the shell itself, decking, fencing, heating, lighting and landscaping all impact total investment relative to the complexity and scope of the plan. Heating systems may add \$5,000-\$15,000 depending on specification. Covers, filtration upgrades and automation enhance long-term efficiency and value.

What matters most is not cutting corners on structure, filtration or safety compliance. Investing in these fundamentals protects long-term performance and peace of mind.

The difference between “we should have” and “we’re so glad we did” is poolside next summer or still wishing. Start the conversation now and make it a reality!

Next Summer Starts Now!!



Project: Plunge Pool >40K

Winner 2024 SPASA Small Pool up to \$40,000 Mayfair Pools Taupo and Rotorua

Size: 3m x 3m plunge pool
Pool Features:
Grigio Veneto Terrazzo Pavers from Horizon Int
Frameless glass panel
Fully automated Naked Freshwater chlorination system
Oasis heat pump - Austral
LED multi-lights



Winner 2025 SPASA Fibreglass Pool over \$120,000 (Gold) and Fibreglass Pool of the Year Mayfair Pools Northland - Ultra Custom Pools

Size: 15m lap lane, 1.5m w
Pool features:
5-sided infinity edge
Cantilevered lap lane
Hayward Omnilogic Dead Sea mineral pool sanitation
Return jets on the pool floor instead of walls

Project: Infinity + Lap Pool 120K>



Project: Lap Pool >80K

Winner 2024 SPASA Fibreglass Pool up to \$80,000 (Silver) Mayfair Pools Canterbury & West Coast

Size: 9 x 2.3m Depth 1.2m
Pool features:
NKD and pH Perfect filtration system and FT55 Filter by Austral
7GP7-1 Heat Pump Hot Water Heat Pumps
LED lights
Thermal blanket

INTERIORS & DESIGN

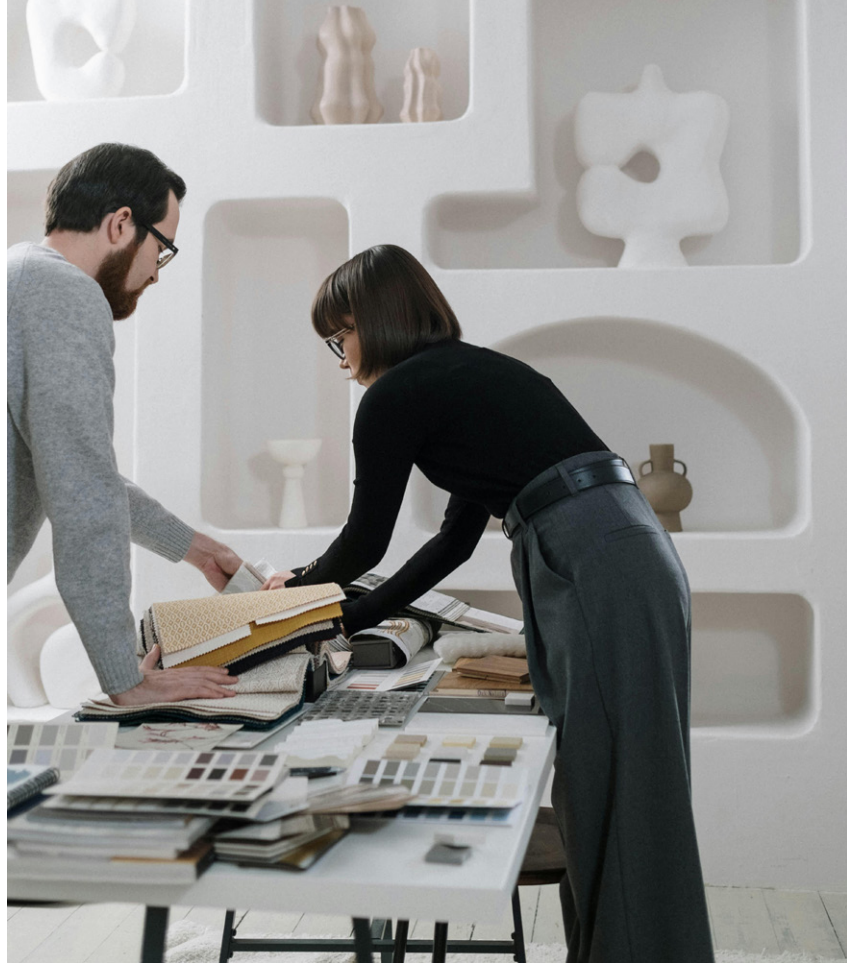
This vintage wooden ladder is more than a practical painting tool. Use it as a striking prop once the work is finished, leaned casually against the gallery-white wall it helped paint, styled with plants or favourite objects — the patina of the aged timber creating a simple but confident design statement.



Inviting an interior designer into your home is an exciting step. It's not about handing over control — it's about working alongside a professional who can translate ideas into spaces that function beautifully and feel considered.

Design Smarter

Getting the Best From Your Interior Designer



Come Prepared

- Reflect on how each space needs to function daily
- Identify your priorities and practical constraints
- Bring inspiration images that reflect mood and direction

Be Clear on Parameters

- Share realistic budget expectations from the outset
- Understand that timelines and lead times shape decisions
- Allow your designer to guide specification choices

Trust the Process

- Respond to concepts and samples in a timely way
- Stay open to new ideas and perspectives
- Trust that thoughtful design is considered — not rushed

Great interiors don't happen by chance. They are shaped through conversation, story-telling and informed collaboration. The more prepared you are at the outset, the stronger the design outcome will be.

Before that first consultation, take time to reflect on how you live. How do you move through the house? Where do you gather, work, relax? What frustrates you? Designers are trained to read light, proportion and spatial flow — but understanding your routines, priorities and constraints allows them to design with precision.

Come with inspiration, but not rigid solutions. A collection of images is incredibly useful. It reveals patterns in colour, material and mood. You may not know the terminology, but you'll know what resonates. A designer's role is to interpret those cues, refine them, and ensure they work cohesively within your home's architecture and budget.

Be transparent about budget. Designers are good at

balancing aesthetics, performance, longevity and cost. Clear parameters avoid reworking concepts later.

Understand, too, that good design is layered. It considers spatial planning, lighting, joinery, finishes, furnishings and often coordination with builders or trades. Timelines, lead times and procurement all matter. When clients engage in the process — responding promptly, making decisions when needed, and respecting professional advice — projects stay on track.

And then allow room for discovery. Good designers listen closely — not just to what you say you want, but to the stories behind how you live. The meals you love to cook, the way you gather, the small rituals of everyday life. Through conversation, curiosity and often a little laughter, those clues begin to shape a design that feels unmistakably yours.

Collaboration, grounded in trust and clarity, turns a renovation into a well-designed home.

Blum AVENTOS HS Lift System Upward-opening lift hardware keeps wall cabinets clear and accessible.

The Ins & Outs of Kitchen Storage

Difficult Spaces Turned Into Beautiful Places

A beautiful kitchen may be defined by its finishes - but it's storage that determines how well it actually lives. From towering overhead cabinetry to deep corners and narrow pantry gaps, new engineered systems are transforming the most difficult parts of the kitchen into some of the most satisfying.

Below left to right ENKO Vibo Angolo Lamina - Corner pull-out. Häfele Utensio Base Pull-Out - Tiered trays glide fully out, keeping cookware easy to reach. Häfele Utensio Single Tray Pull-Out - Compact full-extension pull-out ideal for narrow cabinetry.

High Storage Made Human

Full-height cabinetry creates architectural presence and maximises vertical space, particularly in homes with generous stud heights. Yet without the right mechanism, upper shelves quickly become impractical. Modern pull-down shelving systems allow entire racks to glide smoothly down to bench height before returning overhead in one controlled motion, while lift-up door mechanisms open upward and remain securely in place, eliminating the obstruction of traditional hinged doors. Rather than reserving top cupboards for rarely used serving platters, these systems make high storage genuinely usable for everyday items. In family kitchens and homes designed for long-term accessibility, that shift is significant. High storage is no longer about height - it's about reach.



The Corner Reconsidered

Corner cupboards were once synonymous with compromise. Deep, dark and awkward to access, they often became clutter zones. Today's engineered corner systems swing, pivot or slide fully outward, bringing contents into clear view. Independent trays move in sequence, allowing cookware, small appliances and pantry goods to be accessed without unloading half the cabinet. What was once wasted space now performs as efficiently as any straight run of cabinetry. The improvement is not only practical - it's ergonomic, reducing bending, stretching and frustration. Corners are no longer tolerated; they are designed.



Häfele Utensio Corner System Pivoting trays swing outward, turning corner cabinetry into accessible storage

Base Cabinets That Glide

Deep base cupboards remain essential in any working kitchen, but without structure they quickly become chaotic. Full-extension drawer systems allow even heavily loaded trays to glide completely clear of the cabinet cavity, while tiered internal layouts create vertical layering so pots, pans and appliances are visible at once rather than stacked and hidden behind one another. Soft-close runners and precision engineering ensure smooth movement regardless of weight. The experience feels effortless - a small daily luxury that quickly becomes indispensable. This is storage that comes to you.



Blum SPACE TOWER Pantry Concept Layered pull-out pantry system with ergonomic multi-side access.

The Tall Pantry Elevated

The tall pantry has become a defining feature of contemporary kitchen design, yet traditional fixed shelving rarely makes full use of its depth. Pull-out pantry systems transform vertical cabinetry into layered access points, with slimline trays mounted on both the door and internal frames so items remain visible from either side. Dry goods, jars and bottles are displayed rather than buried at the back, while modular frameworks allow shelves and baskets to evolve as households change. A well-planned pantry does more than increase capacity - it creates order.

Storage as Foundation Not Afterthought

The most successful kitchens treat storage as part of the original design conversation, not a final add-on. How people cook, shop, store appliances and move through the space all shape the internal architecture of the room. Appliance garages, integrated waste systems, adjustable dividers and layered pull-outs are no longer specialist features but fundamental planning tools. While surface finishes may shift with trends, intelligent storage has longevity. It improves daily routines, reduces visual clutter and protects cabinetry from overloading - the quiet infrastructure that allows a kitchen to function beautifully every day.



Minimal, textural, tidy All the good storage in this kitchen by Rarebirds Interiors is perfectly hidden until needed.

Minimalism vs Maximalism

As trends cycle faster than ever, one design debate refuses to fade: minimalism or maximalism? The truth is neither is going anywhere. Both aesthetics have endured for decades because they reflect something deeper than fashion - they reflect personality. The key isn't choosing what's trending, but recognising how you naturally like to live and shaping your interiors accordingly.



Minimalism

Minimalism values clarity. Clean lines, restrained colour palettes and carefully chosen furniture create rooms that feel calm and intentional. Space is part of the design. Rather than filling every corner, minimal interiors allow light, proportion and texture to take centre stage.

Quality matters more than quantity. A sculptural chair, a beautifully made sofa or a single artwork can define an entire room. Materials such as timber, stone, linen and wool add warmth so simplicity never feels stark.

Minimalism works best when it feels considered, not empty. Editing is essential - but so is comfort.



The Middle

Many homes sit comfortably between the two. A neutral architectural backdrop is softened with expressive furnishings, patterns and textures, offset by bold art or sculpture.

This balanced approach is the most liveable. It allows for personal expression without being overwhelmed and restrained. Understanding your interior preferences can guide decisions around storage and colour. Design awareness creates interiors that are harmonious rather than conflicted.

Interior designer Emma Woodhams of Sample Workshop believes great interiors begin with understanding how people truly live. Known for her practical, collaborative approach, she helps homeowners balance beauty with function, guiding clients toward homes that feel personal, purposeful and lived-in. Who better to address this design dilemma for us.

What if a couple is one of each?

Emma's tip is: create a calm foundation, then build a "feature zone" for expression. Clean-lined walls and furniture keep the minimalist happy, while a bookshelf wall, wallpaper backing or curated display area provides a purposeful space for colour, texture and collected pieces. The result feels intentional rather than conflicted — a home that balances clarity with personality.



Maximalism

Maximalism celebrates personality. Colour, pattern and layered objects tell a story about who lives there. Vintage finds may sit beside contemporary pieces. Art may cover walls. Textiles add depth and richness.

The success of maximalism lies in cohesion. Repeating colours or materials throughout a space prevents visual overload. Even bold interiors rely on structure - a consistent base tone, a grounding rug or balanced furniture. Maximalism isn't clutter. It is curated abundance.



the Ground

comfortably between the structural base paired with... Clean-lined sofas... cushions. Calm walls... sculptural lighting.

ch often feels the personality without... without austerity. distinct - whether you... or layering - helps... furniture scale, designing with that... interiors that feel cohesive

Beyond Chrome

The New Golden Era Of Tapware

For decades, chrome dominated kitchens and bathrooms. It was practical, reflective and easy to match. Today, tapware has become a defining design feature in its own right. A growing palette of metals — from brushed brass to matte black and warm gunmetal — allows homeowners to shape the mood of a space through finish alone.

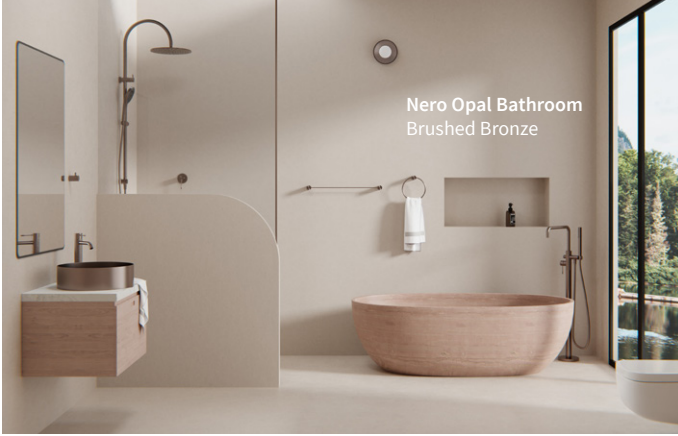
These finishes are not a passing novelty. They reflect a broader shift toward layered, textural interiors where hardware is chosen with the same care as cabinetry and stone.

Design Tip
Repeat your metal finish in at least two places

Trendwatch
Brushed brass continues to dominate in the bathroom

Why it Works
Layered metals add depth without overwhelming a space.

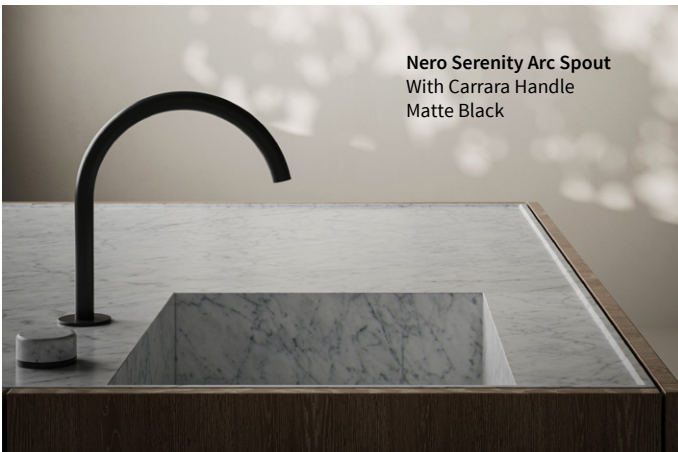
Mitre 10 Interior Living
Country Bathroom making
a Warm Metal statement
with old gold finish tapware



Nero Opal Bathroom
Brushed Bronze



Nero Mecca wall basin
Brushed Gold



Nero Serenity Arc Spout
With Carrara Handle
Matte Black

Brushed

Brushed finishes offer a softer way to introduce metal. Instead of reflecting light, they diffuse it, creating a subtle, refined look. They're also practical, showing fewer fingerprints and water marks. For those wanting warmth or contrast without a bold statement, brushed metals provide balance and longevity.

Choosing What's Right

The best finish depends on the broader material palette in your home. Consider cabinetry colour, benchtop tone and lighting warmth. A cool-toned kitchen may suit nickel or chrome, while warmer schemes often favour brass or bronze.

Longevity matters. Opt for quality finishes with durable coatings, particularly in high-use areas. And remember – cohesion is key. Consistency across tapware, handles and accessories creates a polished, resolved look.

Warm Metals

Brushed brass, champagne and aged gold finishes bring warmth and softness to kitchens and bathrooms. Unlike the high-shine gold of past decades, today's brass tones are muted and refined. They pair beautifully with natural timber, creamy stone and textured tiles.

Warm metals are especially popular in bathrooms, where they introduce a subtle sense of luxury without feeling ostentatious. The key is balance – repeat the tone in handles, lighting or mirrors so the finish feels intentional rather than isolated.

Dark Statements

Matte black and gunmetal remain strong contenders. These finishes provide contrast, particularly in lighter spaces. Black tapware works well in contemporary homes, adding definition against white or pale cabinetry.

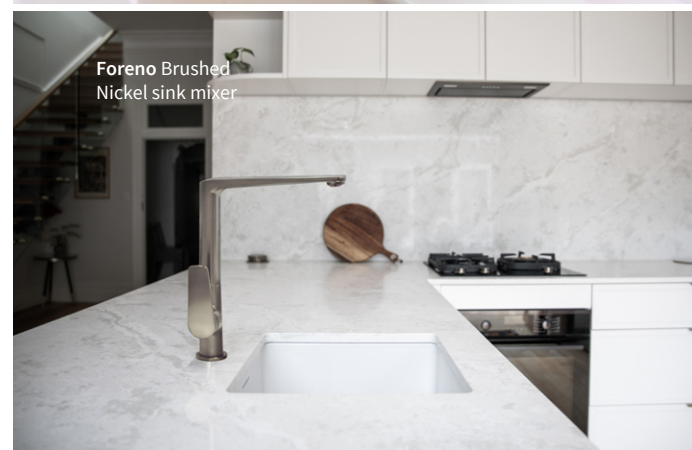
Gunmetal offers a softer alternative – deeper than chrome but less stark than black. It suits industrial, modern and even classic interiors when paired thoughtfully.

Subtle Neutrals

Brushed nickel and stainless finishes continue to appeal for their versatility. They feel timeless, understated and forgiving in busy family homes. For those hesitant to move too far from chrome, these softer silvers provide a gentle transition.



Aquatica CC BASMAP
Black Textured Handle



Foreno Brushed
Nickel sink mixer

Emma Woodhams Sample Workshop

Emma Woodhams, the creative force behind Sample Workshop is one of our Auckland Home Show experts. We asked Emma for an insight about what's happening in her world right now.



Supporting local artisans Interior designer Emma Woodhams in her studio.

We're living in a culture of immediacy, where 'ready now' feels essential. When furnishing our homes, it's easier than ever to click buy now and have an entire room delivered within weeks. But instead of defaulting to fast, mass-produced imports, why aren't we looking closer to home, perhaps even to the makers and artisans in our own backyard?

We hear constantly that the economy is under pressure. Yet one of the quiet contributors to that strain is our reliance on large global corporations that can undercut local designers and manufacturers on price. What we don't see when we choose the cheaper option is the ecosystem behind a locally made piece. New Zealand wool that could have been used in sofa padding. Timber milled and crafted by skilled hands. Metalwork shaped by artisans who have spent decades refining their trade. The end user sees only the hefty quote or finished product, but behind it lies a network of makers and craftspeople whose livelihoods depend on thoughtful consumer choices.

More concerning is what we risk losing. Generations of New Zealand artisans have passed down their knowledge, refining techniques tailored to our specific materials and environment. As we have become more reliant on volume-driven and automated production, we are seeing those skills begin to disappear. When demand declines, so too does the incentive for younger generations to carry on the craft. Supporting local production isn't just about economics; it's about preserving knowledge and craftsmanship.

At the same time, we at Sample Workshop are seeing that consumer behaviour has shifted toward instant gratification. Many homeowners now buy an entire room in a single transaction, resulting in interiors that feel straight out of a showroom. This leaves little space to evolve, to collect with meaning, or to reflect the people living within them. Slowly sourcing, saving for key pieces, and layering over time create homes that feel personal rather than ctrl-C and ctrl-P.

Price is, of course, a significant factor. Not everyone can purchase a full home of custom furniture. But buying quality often means buying once. A well-made sofa can be reupholstered. A solid timber table can be restored and passed down. Thoughtfully crafted pieces are designed with longevity in mind, both structurally and aesthetically. In contrast, cheaper alternatives often need to be replaced within a few years, ultimately costing more financially and environmentally.

Designing with intention doesn't require replacing everything at once. It may mean choosing a locally produced wallpaper, purchasing custom bedside tables, or saving over time for a sofa made in New Zealand, designed specifically for New Zealand homes and lifestyles. These key investment pieces can then be balanced with vintage finds, repurposed furniture, or second-hand pieces that add character and individuality.

If we slow down, plan carefully, and prioritise craftsmanship where we can, we don't just furnish a house, we build a home. One that reflects our landscape, supports our communities, and carries stories worth keeping.



Pictured top *Kākāpō*, a collaboration between NZ Artist, Mel Armstrong (Designer Collective) and Aspiring Walls. Printed on a linen texture, this wallpaper mural design celebrates “The unique beauty of New Zealand’s native wildlife, featuring the adorable kākāpō nestled amongst lush ferns and native plants, this design brings a touch of the Kiwi wilderness into your home. Below *Hey Poppit - Kiriana*, wallpaper mural by Aspiring Walls



Everyone wants the ‘look’ for less.
More bang for their buck. But at what cost?



PANTONE®
11-4201
Cloud Dancer



White Is Right

When Pantone named its airy white hue Cloud Dancer as 2026 colour of the year, critics called it “safe” and “boring”. Yet white continues to dominate New Zealand homes for one simple reason: it works — and remains the foundation of contemporary interior design. Why white is the new white, and still the most powerful colour in our homes.

When “Boring” Became Brilliant

Colour trend announcements often spark debate, and this year’s off-white selection was no exception. Designers, however, see white not as a lack of colour but as a canvas, a light reflector and a mood-setter. Far from plain, white in its many subtle tones creates light, calm and versatility. White isn’t a single shade — it’s a spectrum.

The power of white in modern homes

In contemporary interiors, white is not an absence of style but its foundation. White walls amplify natural light, helping spaces feel brighter and more open. They provide a backdrop that allows materials — timber, stone, metal and textiles — to take centre stage, while creating continuity between rooms. Also the perfect gallery feel for showcasing works of art.

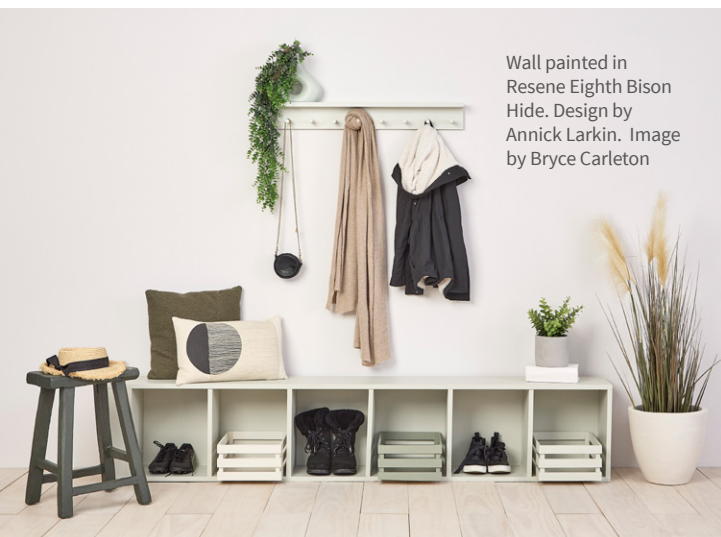
Resene colour consultant Meryl Southey says soft whites create a soothing backdrop and a blank canvas for layering colour and texture. Designers favour white because it evolves easily. Furniture and art can change while the foundation remains timeless.

Not all whites are created equal

Choosing the right white means selecting a tone that complements your space.

Warm hues soften rooms and pair beautifully with natural materials. Cooler whites enhance modern finishes and crisp architectural lines. Lighting plays a critical role. Natural light reveals undertones, while artificial lighting can shift how a colour appears after dark, creating the mood of a room.

“White is never just white,” says Southey. “Undertones can shift a space from warm and relaxed to crisp and contemporary. “Testing colours in different lighting conditions before committing is essential.



Wall painted in Resene Eighth Bison Hide. Design by Annick Larkin. Image by Bryce Carleton

Opposite Luxe Diamonds & Pearls Resene Half Blanc on the walls and Resene Eighth Blanc on the floor make the space feel both warm and elegant. Design by Melle Van Sambeek; Image by Bryce Carleton

Creating atmosphere with tone

The right white shapes how a room feels. Warm whites bring softness. Cooler whites create a fresh edge. Layering whites across walls, ceilings and trims adds subtle depth without introducing competing colours. Off-whites can also reduce glare and create a more comfortable and relaxed environment compared to stark pure white.

Why white remains timeless

Trends change, but white endures. Its versatility allows interiors to refresh easily through furnishings and accessories. It enhances resale appeal by offering a neutral palette buyers can imagine as their own.

Most importantly, white reflects light, expands space and creates a sense of calm – qualities increasingly valued in modern homes.

Choosing the right white

Consider your room's orientation, materials and desired atmosphere.

Test sample pots on multiple walls and observe them throughout the day. Living with samples for a few days helps reveal undertones and ensures the colour performs as expected.

Resene's range of whites and neutrals suits everything from crisp contemporary interiors to warm, relaxed living spaces.



Resene whites to explore

- Resene Alabaster** Clean and versatile
- Resene White Pointer** Warm and timber-friendly
- Resene Black White** Soft greyed white
- Resene Eighth Thorndon Cream** Soft and timeless
- Resene Sea Fog** Subtle off-white softness
- Resene Half Bianca** Creamy without heaviness
- Resene Quarter Rice Cake** Warm neutral

White isn't the absence of colour – it's the foundation of design

Cloud Dancer sparked debate, but its popularity highlights a simple truth: white remains the most versatile and enduring choice in interior design. In all its subtle variations, white brings light, calm and flexibility to our homes – proving that sometimes the quietest colour makes the strongest statement.



Top Arched wall painted in Resene SpaceCote Low Sheen Kinship, back wall in Sea Fog and floor finished in Resene Colorwood Breathe Easy. Design by Amber Armitage. Image by Wendy Fenwick
Above Walls painted in Resene Quarter Sea Fog, trim painted in Half Dusted Blue, door in Double Sea Fog. Design: Kate Alexander;
Below Wall painted in Resene Half Spanish White and shelf in Resene Poured Milk. Design: Kate Alexander. This image and one above by Bryce Carleton



Living Boundaries

The Quiet Power of Hedging in the Home Garden

A well-shaped hedge does more than edge a garden. It creates rooms, frames views and softens boundaries without the need for fencing. In New Zealand homes — from compact urban sections to generous rural landscapes — hedging remains one of the most versatile and enduring design tools.



Why Hedging Works

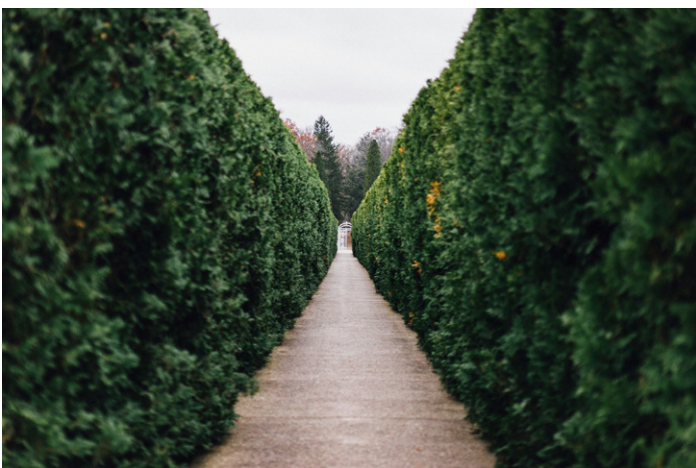
Evergreen structure provides calm through every season. It anchors planting schemes, shelters outdoor living areas and brings cohesion to gardens of every scale.

Hedges shape space. They divide a lawn from a patio, define a pathway or enclose a courtyard without interrupting flow. Unlike hard boundaries, they grow denser with time, becoming more effective and more attractive each year. In smaller gardens, low clipped hedges introduce structure without crowding the space. In larger settings, taller varieties provide privacy and wind protection while maintaining a natural feel.

The Story of Box

Box hedging (*Buxus sempervirens*) has shaped formal gardens for centuries. Popularised in European Renaissance landscapes, it became synonymous with symmetry and precise design. Its dense foliage and tolerance for clipping made it ideal for crisp borders and geometric layouts.

That tradition travelled to early colonial gardens in New Zealand, where clipped hedges signalled care and permanence. Today, box remains a favourite for edging paths and defining beds, although gardeners increasingly consider alternatives suited to local conditions.





Choosing the Right Hedge

The best hedge depends on site, soil and desired height.

- Buxus (Box)** Ideal for low borders and formal definition.
- Griselinia littoralis** Fast-growing and excellent for privacy.
- Pittosporum** Hardy and well suited to taller screens.
- Camellia sasanqua** Dense coverage, seasonal flowering.
- Corokia** A resilient native with soft silver tones.

Selecting the right species from the outset reduces maintenance and ensures strong, even growth.

Garden Tip
Trim lightly and regularly for dense growth.

Trendwatch
Clean green lines are replacing hard edges in modern gardens

Why it works
Living boundaries mature beautifully over time.

Designing With Structure

Hedges need not feel rigid or overly formal. They can curve along pathways, step down a slope or frame modern decks with simple green lines.

Pair clipped hedging with softer textures — ornamental grasses or flowering perennials — to create balance. The contrast between strong structure and relaxed planting adds depth without clutter.

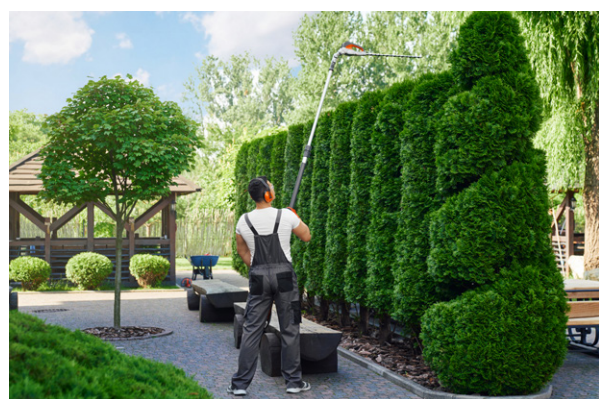
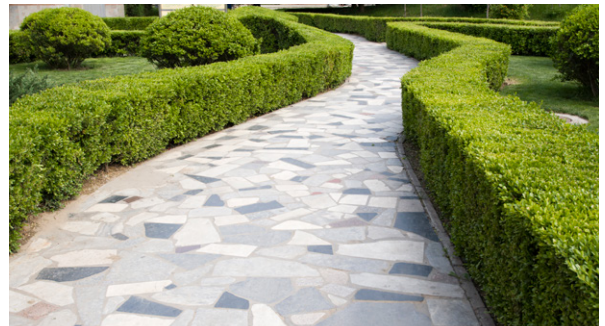
Whether traditional box borders or relaxed native screens, hedges provide cohesion. They are a long-term investment in structure that quietly improves with age.

Keeping Hedges Healthy

Consistency is key. Light, regular trimming encourages density. Shape slightly narrower at the top than the base so sunlight reaches lower foliage and prevents thinning.

Feed in spring with a balanced fertiliser and mulch around the base to retain moisture and suppress weeds. During extended dry periods, deep watering supports strong root systems.

Sharp tools make a difference. Clean cuts reduce stress and promote tidy regrowth.



EXPERT INSIGHT

Don't Beat Around The Budget

Why we find it so hard to talk about money — and why that's the smartest conversation you'll have.

By **Russell Clark**
Licensed Renovations



Russell Clark, founder of Licensed Renovations, is one of the Auckland Home Show's trusted renovation experts. With decades of hands-on experience, he helps homeowners align big ideas with realistic budgets — before stress sets in.



Let's start with this

Builders can build anything.

You want a second-storey extension? Sure.

A designer kitchen with marble benches? No problem.

A seamless indoor-outdoor entertaining zone? We're in.

The real question isn't "Can we build it?" It's this: "Does your money match your dream?"

And that's the part many homeowners avoid.

The conversation nobody wants to have

Kiwis are funny about money. We don't like saying what we earn. We don't like asking what things cost. When it comes to renovations, we sometimes hope the numbers will quietly sort themselves out.

They don't.

I've walked into homes where the architectural plans are finished, engineers have been paid, council fees lodged — and only then does the owner discover the build is hundreds of thousands over budget.

That's not a building problem.

That's a conversation problem

Start with the dream— but bring the numbers

Of course you need a vision. Renovations are emotional. It's your home and your future.

But once you've got the Pinterest board and the big ideas, the next step isn't "draw it bigger."

It's: "Here's roughly what we're comfortable spending."

That doesn't mean revealing your bank balance. It means giving your builder and architect a realistic ballpark so the design can sit inside it.

If your budget is \$200,000, remember to remove:

- GST
- Professional fees
- Council costs

Your actual build budget may be closer to \$150,000.

That's not bad news. That's clarity. And clarity saves redesigns, delays and stress.

The cheapest quote isn't always cheaper

Another trap is chasing the lowest number.

Most builders buy from the same suppliers. Gib is gib. Timber is timber. Insulation is insulation.

Where quotes vary is in labour, detail and scope.

If one price is dramatically lower, ask:

- Have they allowed enough time?
- Have they included everything on the plan?
- Have they thought through the renovation detail?

I've seen projects where someone underpriced just to win the job — and couldn't finish it properly. That's when real headaches begin.

You don't want a bargain. You want a realistic, well-thought-through build.

Russell's Reality Check

Before locking in plans, ask yourself:

- What is our genuine total budget — with GST and fees
- Are we renovating for long-term living or resale?
- Have we involved a builder early?
- Do we understand what's fixed cost and what's flexible?
- Are we being completely honest about what we can afford?

Money clarity early equals renovation sanity later.

Why builders ask about budget

Some homeowners feel uncomfortable when I ask about budget. They assume I'm trying to take every dollar. It's the opposite.

If I know your comfort zone is \$100,000, I can help you spend it wisely. Without that conversation, we risk designing something you'll later have to scale back — and that's far more painful.

I've had clients say their hard budget was \$70,000. We worked hard trimming the project to make it fit. Later they admitted they could stretch to \$100,000 all along.

That's \$30,000 worth of unnecessary stress.

Just tell us. We can handle it.

Renovations are emotional but they're also maths

Power points cost what they cost. Scaffolding costs what it costs. Materials are largely fixed.

The real variable is time and detail — and that's where experience matters.

A good builder doesn't just follow drawings. They think ahead, ask questions and protect quality. That's the value you're paying for.

Talking about money doesn't kill the dream. It protects it.

Clarity at the beginning saves stress at the end

A Special Hot Cross Bun Cocktail Recipe For Easter

Our friends over at Liquorland have created this simple and fun Hot Cross Bun inspired cocktail for us to share with you for Easter, along with a funky step-by-step guide to get you inspired too!

Made with their recently released limited-edition cream liquor inspired by the nostalgic flavours of a freshly baked hot cross bun, Remarkable Cream Easter Nog – Hot Cross Bun is a spicy little number with a hit of clove, layered with brandy-soaked currants and sultanas, then folded through buttery cream for a smooth, indulgent finish. Yum!

Combined with a shot of fresh espresso and extra spice, you'll be hopping about like the Easter Bunny after this special Easter treat.

Go the whole Nog!

1: Pour 80ml of Easter Nog into a cocktail shaker with 2 Ice cubes



2: Add a small pinch of nutmeg or allspice – optional add a shot of fresh espresso





3: Shake well



4: Pour into a glass
and use cocktail stencil -
dusted with cinnamon to garnish





EASTER EGG HUNT

WELCOME TO YOUR EASTER TREASURE HUNT. THIS SIMPLE ACTIVITY TURNS YOUR HOME INTO AN ADVENTURE. IT WORKS FOR TODDLERS, PRIMARY SCHOOL KIDS, AND OLDER CHILDREN. SIMPLY DOWNLOAD AND CHOOSE THE AGE GROUP THAT FITS BEST.

WHAT YOU NEED

- THIS DOWNLOADABLE PRINTABLE PACK
- A SMALL TREASURE, CHOCOLATE, BOOKS OR TOYS
- STICKY TAPE OR BLU TACK
- A PEN

CLICK HERE TO DOWNLOAD YOUR PRINTABLE EASTER EGG HUNT PACK SAFELY FROM OUR WEBSITE NOW! HAVE FUN AND HAPPY EASTER FROM INSPIRE!

THE GOAL IS SIMPLE. CREATE EXCITEMENT. BUILD ANTICIPATION. MAKE MEMORIES.

