INSPIRE

An Auckland Home Show Publication Spring 2026



NEW FEATURE
The Kitchen Home (Show) Cooking

Reimagining The Rangehood

Firing Up for the BBQ Season

Changing Life With a Louvre

INSIDE
The Auckland Home Show's Stunning New Garden Showcase



INSPIRE

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

Spring is the best time to be in the garden. The days are getting longer, everything is coming back to life, and there's time to get summer projects under way. Whether you're planning a deck, rethinking your outdoor space or tackling a renovation, this is the season to turn ideas into plans.

In this edition, we focus on making more out of life outdoors, with inspiration for gardens, entertaining and renovations ready to enjoy when summer arrives. We also look at the role of technology in the home and ways it can make everyday living easier.

With this year's Auckland Home Show fresh in our minds, we revisit two of its new features: the Auckland Garden Showcase and The Kitchen. Both gave visitors plenty to see, talk about and take home as ideas for their own spaces.

As always, the stories inside draw on the knowledge and creativity of Auckland Home Show exhibitors, with ideas and advice for Kiwi homes.

So find a sunny spot, settle in with a coffee, and enjoy the Spring edition of INSPIRE.

The Auckland Home Show Team



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Room to Grow



A stunning new feature at the recent Auckland Home Show - the Auckland Garden Showcase brought 2,500 square metres of outdoor ideas to life. From the front gate to the back fence, the Garden Showcase was wall-to-wall inspiration, with fresh ideas for every corner of your outdoor space.

A plunge pool surrounded by native planting. A courtyard made for entertaining. A quiet place to sit beside water. September's Auckland Home Show gave visitors a chance to walk through the possibilities for their own backyards.









The new Auckland Garden Showcase filled 2,500m^2 with 11 landscaped displays and outdoor living zones. Compact gardens sat alongside ambitious entertaining spaces, with English, Asian, South African and Aotearoa influences showing how differently a garden could look and feel.









Seeing everything together made the ideas easier to understand. Visitors could judge the proportions of a deck, see how planting created privacy and explore the relationship between paving, shelter, water and seating.



Designers were on hand for questions, while the Garden Hub offered workshops, plants and practical advice. Mitre 10's outdoor living area added live barbecue masterclasses.









Official Landscape Partner Parrot Landscaping built the designer gardens, working with Official Plant Partners Kings Plant Barn and Awa Nursery, Official Landscape Supply Partner Central Landscape Supplies, and Official Partner Firth.





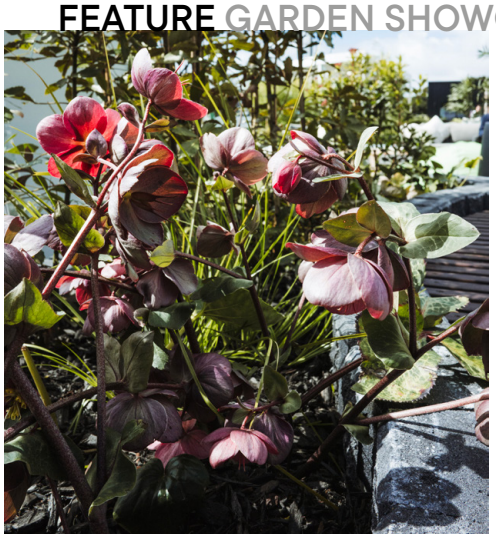




This great new feature is the start of something big for the Auckland Home Show!



FEATURE GARDEN SHOWCASE

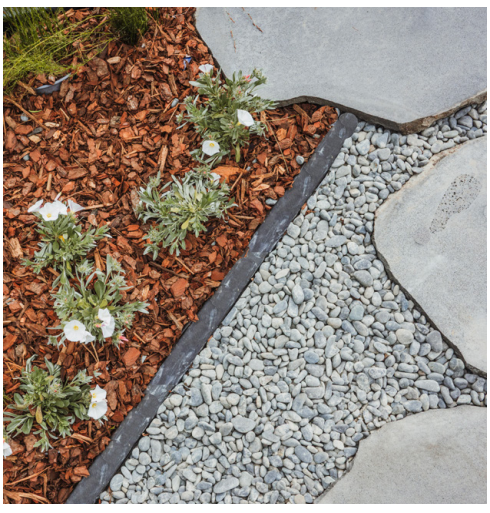


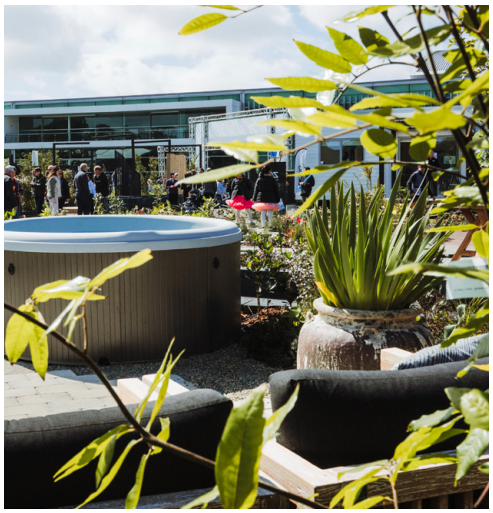























Behind the Scenes



Behind the scenes, David Rhodes and his Parrot Landscaping team had taken on an extraordinary build. We asked him how it came together.

Take it Home

Parrot Landscaping offered four design-and-build packages at the Show, giving visitors a way to bring the garden ideas home.

What made you take on something this big?

The Auckland Home Show team wanted something big in relation to landscaping and inspiration. I like to think big, and it sounded like a great idea. A lot of people said I was a little bit wild and crazy for taking it on, but I knew my team and I would be able to handle it.

What sort of scale are we talking about?

We built ten gardens. I don't know the exact number of plants, but somewhere around 6,000 to 6,500, from large specimens to shrubs and ground covers. I believe we had about 15 six-wheeler truckloads, somewhere around 150 to 200 tonnes of items and materials.

How did you get it all built?

We had five days of build time on the ground and a couple of weeks beforehand building in a hall on site. My vision was to put it together like a puzzle, carrying things over with forklifts. The big white pergola for Mel's garden weighed 1.5 tonnes. We needed three forklifts to move it. Coordination and planning were key.

What did visitors' reactions tell you?

People really want more inspiration when it comes to landscaping. There are a lot of visual people out there. They need to see it to imagine it. You could clearly see that New Zealanders love being outdoors, barbecuing and entertaining.

What would you like people to take home?

There are so many different ways to create amazing spaces at your property. The purpose was to show that you can use materials in totally different ways. We used fairly basic materials but crafted them to look customised. You can go quite far with outdoor landscaping and construction using materials available from local suppliers. If people took ideas home to use themselves, good on them. The idea was to give inspiration.



1 STREET APPEAL

A front-entry makeover with design, labour, fencing, paving or decking and lighting, with the potential for an automated gate.

Show price $25,995 Usual package value $32,000.

2 SPA GARDEN

A spa with its concrete base, decking or paving, lighting, electrical work and planting, designed as a complete garden space.

Show price $37,000 Usual package value $47,000.

3 OUTDOOR ENTERTAINING

A motorised 6m × 4m pergola, hardwood decking or a decking-and-paving combination, plus an outdoor kitchen with barbecue and fridge, lighting and electrical work.

Show price $44,995 Usual package value $51,500.

4 POOLSIDE BY CHRISTMAS

A pool with excavation, installation and commissioning, an epoxy interior finish, 20sqm of hardwood decking, compliant pool fencing and gates, electrical work and planting.

Show price $96,995 Usual package value $108,000.

Prices were offered at the Auckland Home Show. Contact Parrot Landscaping to confirm current pricing, site requirements and availability.







Clockwise from top left Kevin Helas cooking up a storm; Darren Jarrett of Ashby Pies; the audience enjoying The Kitchen's live demonstrations; Russell and Jen Clark exploring Ninja appliances; Russell sharing practical tips; and Brad Golchin demonstrating pizza dough.







Home Cooking

The Kitchen made a successful debut at the Auckland Home Show, bringing live cooking, kitchen design and the latest appliances together in one busy space.

THERE WAS PLENTY happening around the bench at The Kitchen. The new feature gave visitors a chance to watch chefs at work, pick up cooking ideas and see a complete kitchen put through its paces.

The fully functioning kaboodle kitchen provided the setting, with contemporary cabinetry, practical storage and room to prepare, cook and serve. Samsung appliances completed the kitchen, including an induction hob, smart oven and connected fridge, giving visitors a closer look at technology they might be considering for home.

The programme covered plenty of culinary ground. Brad Golchin from Pizzata shared his pizza-making expertise, while Darren Jarrett of Ashby Pies cooked from Daz's cookbook. Banu Sidharth of Banu's brought Indian vegetarian and vegan cooking to the bench, and Kevin Helas from The Wholefood Kitchen demonstrated stock made from scratch, hearty vegetable and miso soup, and seafood dumplings.

Russell and Jen Clark of Licensed Renovations also stepped up for their "Clarks vs Ninja" sessions, exploring Ninja appliances with the practical perspective of renovation specialists.

For Kevin, the exchange of ideas extended beyond the stage. A neighbouring dumpling exhibitor helped inspire his combination of frying and steaming, while Samsung's induction hob made controlling the heat straightforward.

"It was fantastic," he says. "The good thing was it was very easy to control."







This page top to bottom Jan Clark demonstrates Ninja; Brad Golchin shares pizza tips; Kevin Helas at the bench.

Catch of the Day

A fishing trip to Waihau Bay helped inspire the seafood dumplings **Kevin Helas** brought to The Kitchen.



KEVIN HELAS wants more people to feel at home in the kitchen. So an invitation to cook on stage at the Auckland Home Show was an easy one to accept.

"I felt very, very honoured to be there," he says. "It was an invitation that came out of the blue."

The founder of The Wholefood Kitchen, Kevin trained in wholefood and macrobiotic cooking in London, completing the Concord Institute's Mastery of Cooking programme in 2016. Now based in Titirangi, he teaches an approach centred on preparing and sharing food, and helping people overcome the obstacles that stop them cooking.

His four demonstrations moved between vegetable stock and miso soup, and Asian-style seafood dumplings. The latter grew out of a week at Waihau Bay with a friend who runs fishing trips and wellbeing retreats. A catch of southern bluefin tuna gave Kevin plenty of opportunity to experiment.

At the show, he worked with trevally and snapper before using yellowfin tuna on Sunday. Freshness guided the choice, with Kevin checking what was coming into his local fish supplier.

"You get that beautiful sort of freshness and lightness," he says of the seafood filling.

Kevin says using fish gives the dumplings a lighter filling than the pork-based versions often found in Asian cooking.

The dumplings were browned in oil, then steamed with water under a closed lid. Dipping sauces offered another opportunity to experiment with flavours and find a balance of heat, sweetness, salt and acidity.

"I love to respectfully dip into different cuisines," Kevin says. "I think that's part of what our food culture is about here in New Zealand."



Above Kevin Helas demonstrating making fresh tuna dumplings at the Auckland Home Show's new feature The Kitchen.
Pictured here ~~Catching southern bluefin~~ tuna.
thewholefoodkitchen.substack.com

Asian-Style Fresh Tuna Dumplings

Recipe by Kevin Helas
The Wholefood Kitchen









Ingredients

Fresh yellowfin tuna or market fish, minced
Red onion, finely diced
Rice wine vinegar, about 1–2 tablespoons for the onion
Coriander, finely chopped
Toasted sesame oil, a splash
Sea salt
Round dumpling wrappers
Canola oil spray, for cooking
Boiling water, for steaming
Optional: soy sauce or tamari; chives or spring onions instead of coriander

Method

Place the chopped red onion in a large bowl. Sprinkle with sea salt, then press with another bowl with something heavy on top. After 10–15 minutes, "rinse" with a decent splash of rice wine vinegar, about 1–2 tablespoons.

Add the chopped coriander, minced tuna or market fish, and a splash of toasted sesame oil. Add any optional ingredients. The aim is to ensure adequate seasoning without overpowering the tuna.

Place a single dumpling wrapper inside your mould, add a teaspoon of filling in the centre and press closed into a half-moon shape. Complete the required batch, then prepare to cook or freeze for later use.

Spray a cast-iron skillet with canola oil and sauté 4–6 dumplings until light brown on both sides. Add a small amount of boiling water, cover with a lid, ideally glass, and cook until the water has evaporated. Add more water if necessary until the dumplings are cooked through.

Kevin's tip

Serve extra filling as an Asian-style salsa or ceviche, or add a squeeze of lime and serve with corn chips.

Preparation guide: Kevin says that once everything is ready, around 50 dumplings can be assembled in 30 minutes. Allow an additional 10–15 minutes to press the onion, plus time to prepare the ingredients and cook the dumplings.

Nam Pla Dipping Sauce

Preparation
Up to 10 minutes

Ingredients

1 tablespoon soy sauce or tamari
½ tablespoon fish sauce
2 tablespoons coconut sugar
Lime juice, to taste; zest optional
Dried or fresh chilli, finely chopped, to taste, optional
1 clove garlic, crushed, optional
Rice wine vinegar, a splash to taste, optional
Boiling water, as needed to dilute or adjust flavours

Method

Mix the soy sauce or tamari, fish sauce, coconut sugar and lime juice in a large metal or glass bowl. Add chilli and garlic if desired. Whisk to combine.

Add a splash of rice wine vinegar with the other ingredients or at the end, to taste. The lime provides the main acidity; the vinegar is an optional flavour adjustment.

Taste and adjust the balance. Increase the volume of sauce if required by multiplying the quantities. Dilute or adjust the flavours by adding boiling water.

A Room With A View Freestanding poolside pergola with retractable louvres and drop-down blinds

Making Room Outdoors

Destination poolside Freestanding pergola with retractable louvres and side blinds from Living Culture. **Below** sheltered outdoor dining with louvres, privacy screens and LED lighting from Living Culture **Bottom left** Compact deck pergola framing a relaxed seating area, from Louvre Lounge. **Bottom right** Aluminium pergola with clear roofing from GC Living.

The Kiwi deck has come a long way. What was once little more than a barbecue, an outdoor table and perhaps an umbrella has evolved into something much closer to another room. Roofs open and close, blinds drop at the touch of a button, lighting and heating are built in, and glass walls can turn a summer space into somewhere usable through much of the year.



Spoilt For Choice Freestanding, attached, louvred or static roof, there's options for transforming any deck into a room





Right top and bottom Open and closed Alluminix louvres above a Westmere outdoor kitchen by Love Kitchens. Photos Jamie Cobel
Below Furnished outdoor room with glass sliding panels and overhead louvres, from Living Culture.

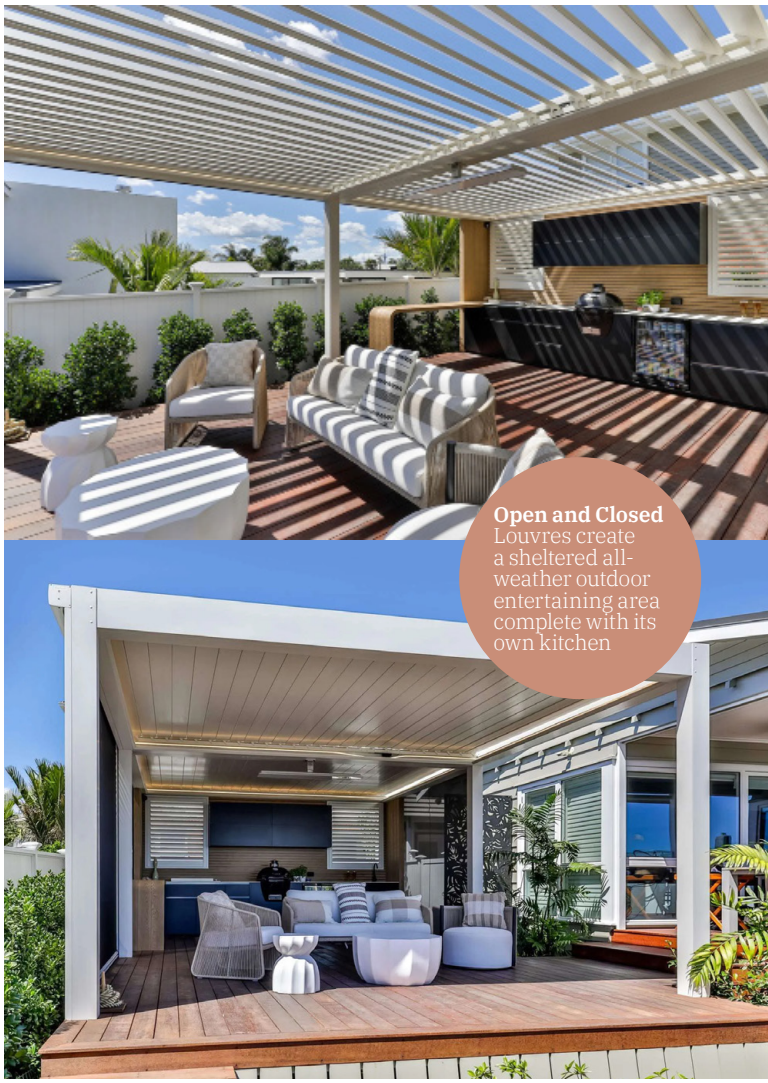
THE BIGGEST CHANGE IS CHOICE. Outdoor living no longer depends on the weather to co-operate, Homeowners can now design their outdoor area to work around changing conditions instead, creating anything from a simple covered deck to a fully enclosed outdoor room that feels like a natural extension of the house.

Louvre Manoeuvres

Opening louvre roofs have become one of the defining features of contemporary outdoor living. Instead of choosing between sunshine and shelter, adjustable aluminium blades rotate to control both.

Open them on a warm day and the space feels much like an uncovered deck. Tilt them to reduce harsh afternoon sun, or close them completely when the weather turns. Integrated guttering carries rainwater away, while motorised systems mean the roof can be adjusted without leaving the table.

For homes where indoor and outdoor areas already connect through large sliders or bifold doors, the louvre roof can effectively extend the living zone beyond the original walls. The appeal is flexibility.



Open and Closed Louvres create a sheltered all-weather outdoor entertaining area complete with its own kitchen



Choosing Sides A natural extension of the home's living area with sliding glass panels and louvred screens

Not Everything Needs to Move

Permanent pergolas and canopies remain a practical option for homeowners who simply want dependable shelter without the complexity of a moving system. Modern versions are a long way from the heavy patio roofs of the past. Slim aluminium framing, translucent roofing and clean architectural lines allow them to provide protection without making the adjoining interior feel dark.

For exposed decks, barbecue areas and outdoor dining spaces, a fixed roof can also be reassuringly simple. There are fewer moving parts and the space is always ready when the rain arrives.

Retractable fabric and roof systems sit somewhere between the two approaches. They can disappear when sunshine is wanted, then extend across the space to provide shade or protection when conditions change.

Closing the Sides

Wind is often what determines whether an outdoor area is genuinely comfortable, which explains the growing range of screens, blinds and glazing systems designed to enclose the sides of pergolas and patios.

Outdoor blinds can drop from overhead framing to provide shelter or shade while still keeping the space visually connected with the garden. More substantial sliding or folding glass panels create an even stronger barrier from wind and rain and can make the area feel remarkably close to an interior room.

That ability to adapt to the changing seasons is one of the outdoor room's biggest attractions.



Inside Outside New furnishings designed specifically for outdoor use bring inside comfort to outdoor setups

Comfort Comes Outside

Once a space is protected from the weather, the next step is making it comfortable.

Integrated LED lighting means the outdoor room no longer disappears after sunset. Infrared and radiant heaters provide targeted warmth without requiring the entire area to be enclosed. Ceiling fans can improve airflow through summer, while outdoor kitchens, televisions and sound systems are increasingly being planned into the structure from the beginning.

Furniture is changing too. Sofas, dining settings, rugs and occasional tables designed specifically for outdoor use mean these spaces can now be furnished much more like the living room inside.



Designing Another Room

Perhaps the biggest shift is that outdoor structures are increasingly being considered as part of the architecture of the house rather than something added to the deck afterwards.

Rooflines can align with existing windows and doors. Aluminium framing can complement joinery. Screens can provide privacy from neighbouring properties, while planting softens boundaries and creates the feeling of a genuine garden room.

Freestanding structures add another possibility. Instead of extending directly from the house, a pavilion or gazebo can create a destination elsewhere in the garden, perhaps beside a pool, overlooking a view or providing a separate entertaining area away from the main living space.



Entertaining Zone Freestanding structures create outdoor destinations away from the main living space.

There is no single formula. A compact canopy may be all a small courtyard needs, while a larger home might combine an opening roof, glass walls, heating, lighting and an outdoor kitchen.

With the right combination of shelter, comfort and design, an outdoor room can become one of the most useful spaces in the home.



Pictured top to bottom Poolside pergola with clear sides and integrated lighting, from Decking Direct. **Custom louvre roof** by Alluminix blends seamlessly with the architecture of the house. **Freestanding pergola** with adjustable side blinds by GC Living. **Retractable roof** for poolside alfresco dining, from Living Culture.

Hangin' with the Homies

A humanoid robot named AUTo attended the Auckland Home Show this year, as a guest of PBTech. It spent a few hours meeting visitors and catching up with it's robot "friends" among the household technology on display.

DRESSED IN an orange AUT t-shirt and matching trainers, the first ever humanoid robot to visit the Auckland Home Show, joined AUT Vice-Chancellor Professor Damon Salesa, for a look around.

AUT's Unitree G1 EDU robots support teaching and research. The university has had them for just over a year, and much of their progress comes from the software powering them.

They are still some way from fiddly jobs such as turning food on a barbecue. But while robotic vacuum cleaners, pool cleaners and lawnmowers have specific jobs, humanoid robots are being developed to take on a wider range of tasks.

Their shape has a practical purpose: they can move through spaces designed for people.

Salesa says communication between robots and connected appliances could also make them more useful around the house. A fridge, robot cleaner and humanoid helper could exchange instructions, although keeping those connections secure will be essential.

"The technology is moving very fast, particularly the AI that's powering it," Salesa says. "What these robots can do has changed enormously in just a year. Where we'll be in another year is hard to say, but we'll certainly have more to show you."





Tapware Turn-ons

Fresh Ideas for the Bathroom

A beautiful tap can change the mood of a bathroom. Warm brass brings character to pale stone and timber, bronze adds depth, and a carefully chosen handle makes an everyday fitting feel special. New offerings from NERO and Aquatica bring plenty of inspiration for anyone planning a renovation or looking for a few worthwhile updates.



NERO Mecca tapware in the new Tumbled Antique Brass finish.

Design Tip

View your tapware finish alongside tile, timber and cabinetry samples.

Trendwatch

Antique brass and bronze bring warmer tones to the bathroom.

Why it Works

Thoughtful fittings make everyday routines easier while completing the look.

THE LATEST BATHROOM ideas go beyond appearances. Adjustable shower fittings, thoughtfully placed support rails and coordinated accessories are making these rooms more comfortable and useful, too.

The trick is to think about the room as a whole. Choose finishes together, consider how each fitting will be used and make space for the small details that help a bathroom work well every day.

Warm Metals

NERO's Tumbled Antique Brass brings a softly aged character to its Mecca and Serenity collections. The warm, textured finish is an appealing partner for natural timber, creamy stone and understated tiles. Rome Bronze offers a deeper metallic tone, adding definition without the sharp contrast of black. The additions take Mecca to nine finishes, giving homeowners more scope to find a metal that suits their room. Carry the chosen tone through selected fittings to create a considered look.

Support with Style

NERO's Mecca Care collection brings grab rails, shower components and seating into a coordinated bathroom scheme. Its Make Your Own modular rail system uses brackets, connectors and matching shower sliders to configure layouts around corners, baths and shower screens. Available in 25mm and 32mm diameters, it allows support to be planned around the space and the people using it, with finishes that feel at home alongside the other fittings.

A Better Angle

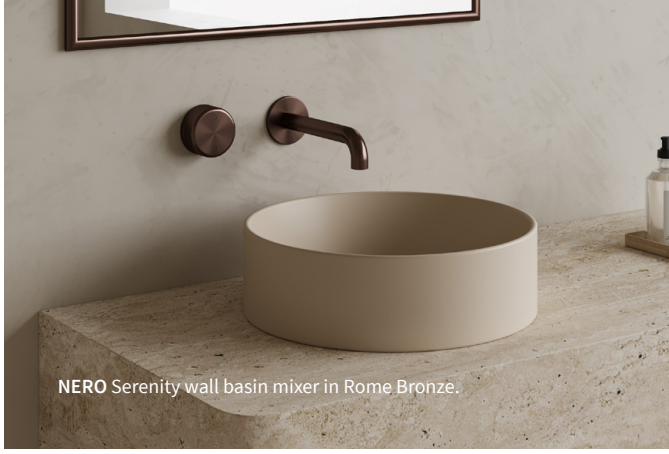
Aquatica's angled swivel elbow for shower heads is a small fitting with a useful job: adjusting the shower-head angle. It can also be used with the hand shower on a freestanding bath filler. Available in chrome, polished gold, brushed gold, brushed nickel, matte black and gunmetal, it offers a practical adjustment that can coordinate with the existing fittings.

Bath and Shower

Planning a summer renovation? Aquatica's bath spouts with diverters are scheduled for mid-December 2026. Mia2 and Saluto shower mixer bath diverters, suitable for all pressures, are due in January 2027. Discuss the controls and layout with your plumber early, so the chosen fittings suit both your water supply and the way you want to use the bath and shower.

Finishing Touches

Aquatica's Mia accessories, due mid-December 2026, include robe hooks, towel bars, towel rails and toilet roll holders in brushed gold, black, brushed nickel, chrome and gunmetal. Coordinating soap dispensers are due at the same time, with coloured toilet buttons scheduled for October. Choosing these details alongside the tapware helps complete the room, right down to the smallest fitting.



NERO Serenity wall basin mixer in Rome Bronze.



NERO Mecca Care modular grab rails.



Aquatica angled swivel elbow for shower heads.



Aquatica Mia2 shower mixer with bath diverter, due January 2027.



Aquatica new MiniMia range of tapware.

Fire Up Summer

BBQ season is almost here. A few simple tricks can make outdoor cooking easier, tastier and a lot more enjoyable.

Low and slow, pictured right Modern pellet grills such as the Traeger Woodridge make smoking, roasting and longer cooks easier to manage, with digital temperature control taking much of the guesswork out of the process. Available from Mitre 10.



LONGER EVENINGS are on the way, and with them comes one of the great Kiwi summer rituals: moving dinner outside.

But outdoor cooking has changed. The barbecue is no longer just a hotplate for sausages and steak. Gas grills can roast with the lid down, pellet grills make low-and-slow cooking easier, and pizza ovens have turned the backyard into a surprisingly capable outdoor kitchen.

Start With a Clean Slate

Before the first serious cook-up, give the barbecue a proper once-over. Clear old grease from the tray, brush the grills, check burners are lighting evenly and make sure hoses and connections are in good condition.

Then get the basics together: long-handled tongs, a grill brush, heatproof gloves and, perhaps most useful of all, a meat thermometer.

Learn to Use Zones

One of the easiest ways to improve barbecue cooking is to stop treating the entire grill as one temperature.

Create a hotter direct-cooking area for searing steaks, chops and vegetables, and a gentler side for food that needs more time. On a gas barbecue this may simply mean running one or two burners higher and leaving another low or off.

And use the lid. Closed, a barbecue becomes much more like an outdoor oven, making it ideal for larger cuts, whole chickens and slower cooking.



Heat First, Food Second

Give the barbecue time to come properly up to temperature. Hot grills help create better browning and reduce sticking.

Pizza ovens need the same patience. It is not just the air that needs to be hot; the cooking surface needs time to store enough heat to crisp the base. Let the oven stabilise before the first pizza goes in and give the stone time to recover between pizzas.

Cook to Temperature, Not the Clock

Wind, outside temperature and the thickness of the food can all change cooking time.

A thermometer removes much of the guesswork. Modern pellet grills and smart barbecues increasingly use built-in or connected probes, so you can monitor internal temperature without repeatedly lifting the lid.

Traeger's current Woodridge pellet grills use digital temperature control and meat probes, while Weber also offers smart barbecue technology that can alert the cook when food is ready to turn or serve.

Let meat rest before cutting into it. Use those few minutes to finish salads or warm bread.



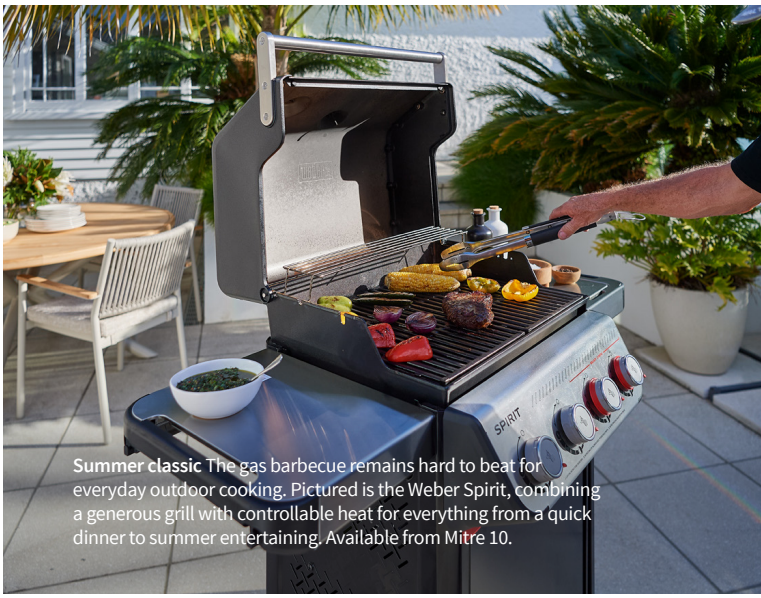
Think Beyond Steak

Some of the best barbecue food never sees a steak knife.

Corn, capsicum, courgettes, onions, asparagus and halved stone fruit all respond beautifully to high heat. Cast-iron pans and griddles open up breakfasts, seafood and smaller ingredients that would otherwise disappear through the grill.

Pellet grills widen the possibilities again. Their ability to hold a steady lower temperature makes brisket, ribs, pulled pork and slow-cooked roasts much more approachable, while still allowing hotter grilling and baking.

Pizza ovens are also becoming more versatile. Gozney's latest outdoor ovens are designed for more than pizza, with controllable high heat and models capable of cooking breads, vegetables and complete meals as well.



Summer classic The gas barbecue remains hard to beat for everyday outdoor cooking. Pictured is the Weber Spirit, combining a generous grill with controllable heat for everything from a quick dinner to summer entertaining. Available from Mitre 10.

Set Yourself Up to Cook

A little preparation outside saves endless trips back through the kitchen.

Give yourself clear bench space, good lighting and somewhere safe for hot trays and tools. Take ingredients outside on one tray and have a clean second tray ready for cooked food. Keep sauces, seasoning and serving plates within reach before you start.

If the barbecue lives outside permanently, use a good cover and clean it while it is still slightly warm. The next cook will be much easier.

Pizza night High-temperature outdoor ovens such as this Gozney bring pizza-making outside, while also opening up options for breads, vegetables and other high-heat cooking. Available from Mitre 10.



Cook Outside More Often

Perhaps the best trick is simply to stop saving the barbecue for special occasions.

Modern gas barbecues heat quickly enough for a midweek dinner, pellet grills can handle much of the temperature control, and pizza ovens turn a simple meal into something everyone can get involved with.

Summer outdoor cooking does not have to mean a crowd and an afternoon standing over the grill.

Sometimes the best barbecue is simply dinner, cooked outside.

Worth The Wait

A hotplate is great for a quick round of sausages, but a smoker offers a different kind of backyard cooking. For tender ribs, brisket, pulled pork or a whole chicken with smoky flavour, cooking slowly inside an enclosed chamber gives you options that a flat cooking surface struggles to match.

The difference is how heat reaches the food. A hotplate cooks through direct contact with hot metal, making it useful for searing and frying. With its lid closed, a smoker surrounds food with heat, much like an outdoor oven. At lower temperatures, longer cooking gives the connective tissue in tougher cuts time to soften. Seasoning, smoke and the gradual drying of the surface help create the dark, flavourful crust barbecue cooks call bark.

Pictured in action (below) at the Auckland Home Show's Mitre 10 outdoor living area, the Oklahoma Joe's Bronco Drum Smoker & Grill has racks of ribs suspended inside its cooking chamber. Hanging meat uses the drum's depth, leaving room for heat and smoke to circulate. Adjustable airflow helps control the charcoal fire, while the temperature gauge lets the cook keep an eye on conditions without repeatedly lifting the lid.

It's cooking that rewards curiosity. Different smoking woods bring different flavours, while rubs, glazes and sauces offer plenty of scope to experiment. Larger cuts also suit feeding a crowd, with the preparation and much of the cooking happening well before everyone sits down to eat.

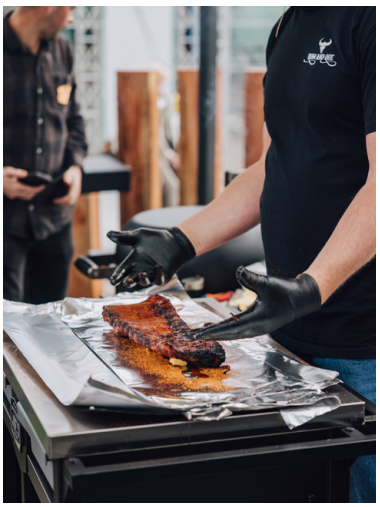
The Bronco can also be configured as a charcoal grill for hotter, faster cooking. That versatility matters if you want one barbecue to cover both a leisurely weekend cook and steaks over the coals.

A smoker does ask more of its owner: time to get the fire established, attention to temperature and patience while dinner cooks. A hotplate still earns its keep for onions, eggs and quick meals. But if you enjoy outdoor cooking, a smoker could be a rewarding choice, with a much bigger menu than the usual burgers and bangers.









Texas-Style Smoked Pork Ribs

Ready to give the sausages a break and fire up the smoker? Bring a taste of Texas to your backyard with these slow-smoked ribs, packed with smoky flavour and well worth getting your fingers messy for.



A peppery crust, gentle wood smoke and tender meat are the aim here. Keep the seasoning simple and serve sauce on the side.

Serves 4
Preparation 20 minutes
Cooking approx 5–6 hours
Resting 20–30 minutes

Ingredients

2 racks pork spare ribs, preferably St Louis cut
2 tablespoons American yellow mustard
2 tablespoons coarsely ground black pepper
1 tablespoon fine sea salt
2 teaspoons garlic powder
Apple cider vinegar and water, mixed in equal quantities, for spritzing
Barbecue sauce, optional, to serve
Oak or pecan smoking wood suitable for your smoker

Method

Heat the smoker to 120–130°C. Add smoking wood according to the manufacturer's instructions. Aim for a clean, steady fire with light smoke.

Trim any loose pieces and excess fat from the ribs. Remove the thin membrane from the bone side if it is still attached. Pat dry.

Spread a thin layer of mustard over both sides. Mix the pepper, salt and garlic powder, then sprinkle evenly over the ribs.

Place the ribs on the cooking grate, bone side down, with indirect heat. Close the lid and smoke for about 3 hours. After the first 90 minutes, check occasionally and lightly spritz any patches that look dry. Avoid soaking the surface or opening the smoker too often.

Once the ribs have developed a deep reddish-brown crust that does not rub off easily, wrap each rack tightly in foil with 2 tablespoons of the vinegar-and-water mixture. Return to the smoker for another 1½–2 hours, checking for tenderness towards the end.

Carefully unwrap, watching for hot steam. Return the ribs to the grate for 20–30 minutes to firm the crust.

They are ready when a skewer slides easily into the meat between the bones and the rack bends readily when lifted with tongs. The meat should be tender but still hold together for slicing.

Rest for 20–30 minutes, loosely covered, then slice between the bones. Serve with pickles, slaw and barbecue sauce on the side.

Cooking times vary with the thickness of the racks and the smoker. Let tenderness guide the finish rather than the clock.



The Re-imagined Rangehood

After years of looking much the same, kitchen extraction is becoming quieter, smarter and considerably better looking. A new generation of ventilation is giving homeowners far more choice in how extraction looks, where it sits and how much they notice it is there.



FOR DECADES, the rangehood was one of those kitchen appliances that did its job without attracting much attention. The choices were familiar: a stainless-steel canopy on the wall, an undermount unit hidden in cabinetry, or a larger hood over an island.

Kitchen design changed around it, but the rangehood itself often remained remarkably similar. That is finally changing. Designers are finding inventive ways to either make them disappear or turn them into a feature.

From Appliance to Feature

Schweigen's Design range shows how far the traditional rangehood has moved beyond the rectangular stainless-steel canopy, with cylindrical forms, curves, fluting and finishes including black, white, gold, copper and softer contemporary colours. Some models look closer to pendant lighting or furniture than conventional ventilation.

In open-plan homes, where the kitchen is part of the living space, an appliance above the cooktop needs to work visually as well as functionally.

Above Taking rangehood design to the next level, the Schweigen Helios sculptural island model is hand painted in gold and is powered by a brushless motor for near silent air extraction.
Left Eco Silence Drive™ integrated rangehood by Bosch combines super-powerful extraction with super-silent operation and is super-smart too - adjusts extraction power automatically, matching your cooktop settings.

Or Make It Disappear

Other rangehoods are becoming almost invisible.

Bosch's Integrated Design Rangehood folds into overhead cabinetry, with a slim glass panel that extends when needed. Fisher & Paykel offers insert models that sit flush within cabinetry, preserving the clean lines of contemporary kitchens.

Schweigen's ceiling cassette options leave the space above an island visually open while drawing steam and cooking vapours upwards.

Fisher & Paykel's modular downdraft extractors sit alongside compatible cooktops within the benchtop. For island kitchens, that means uninterrupted sightlines, with no canopy hanging between the cook and the rest of the room.

Closer to the Cooking

FOTILE takes another approach with side-draft rangehoods, bringing extraction closer to the cooking surface helping capture smoke and grease quickly during high-heat cooking. Their angled profile also creates more usable space above the cooking area.

Better extraction is not just about motor power. Where air is captured, the hood's shape and how efficiently fumes are directed towards the fan matter too.

Turning Down the Volume

Noise remains a frustration with rangehoods, particularly in open-plan homes.

Schweigen's Isodrive system places the motor externally, reducing mechanical noise in the room. Fisher & Paykel also offers external-motor models designed for near-silent operation in the kitchen.



Wall mounted Schweigen Aura.



Fotile's MaxFold rangehood folds away into cabinetry.



Samsung Bespoke rangehood power ventilation.

Samsung's Bespoke rangehood uses a brushless BLDC motor designed to reduce friction and noise while providing powerful extraction.

For anyone who has switched off a rangehood because it drowned out conversation, quieter ventilation is a welcome improvement.

Getting Smarter

Rangehoods are also joining the connected kitchen.

Bosch's Smart Hood Automatic technology can activate compatible rangehoods and adjust extraction according to cooktop settings. Fisher & Paykel offers automatic adjustment between selected cooktops and rangehoods, plus SmartHQ notifications when filters need cleaning.

Samsung's SmartThings connection allows users to monitor and control ventilation and lighting from a phone and connect with compatible kitchen appliances.

Touch controls, dimmable LEDs, timers and automatic fan settings are replacing the familiar row of mechanical buttons.

After years as one of the least exciting kitchen appliances, the humble rangehood is finally getting some attention.

Get Smart

From the front door to the oven, lawn and even the spa, the smartphone is becoming the main control panel running your life.





In The Kitchen

SAMSUNG'S connected bespoke ovens and refrigerators use SmartThings to monitor cooking and control functions. Some models let you see inside without opening the door. SmartThings also brings other compatible appliances and devices into the same platform.

FISHER & PAYKEL'S connected appliances provide status information and notifications through SmartHQ, helping you keep track of everyday jobs.

A SMART HOME once meant complicated wiring and expensive control panels. Today, much of the technology tackles everyday jobs through the phone already in your pocket. You can start with one useful device and build from there.

AT THE FRONT DOOR, YALE'S Unity Slim Smart Lock offers app control and temporary visitor access, with remote functions available through a compatible hub. A TP-LINK Tapo video doorbell lets you see and speak to visitors when you are away.

LOMI 3's benchtop food recycler even gives food scraps the smart treatment. Start or stop cycles and manage settings from your phone.





Comfort on Demand

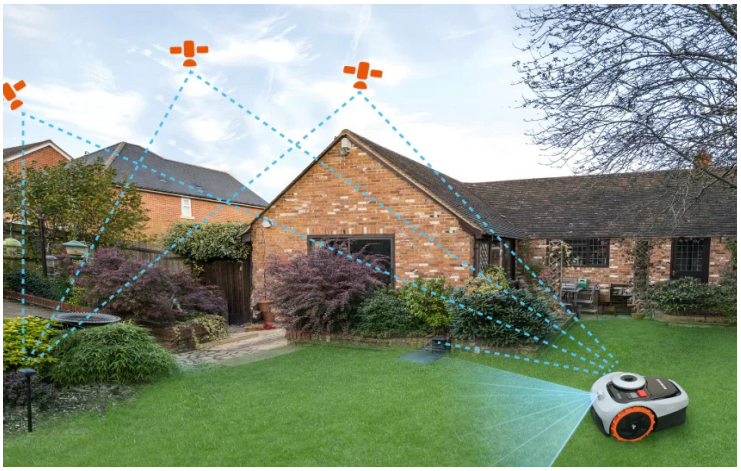
MITSUBISHI ELECTRIC heat pumps, through Black Diamond Technologies, offer Wi-Fi options for adjusting temperatures, modes and schedules, so the house can be warming before you arrive

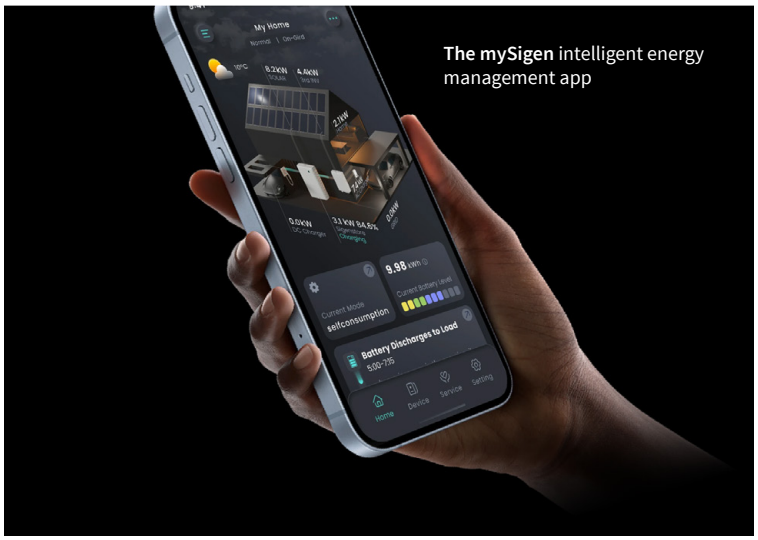
DVS HOME VENTILATION brings digital control to compatible ventilation systems, helping homeowners manage settings and schedules.

Let the House do the Work

DREAME NEW ZEALAND'S robot vacuums map rooms, clean selected areas and follow app-based schedules.

OUTSIDE, THE SEGWAY Navimow robotic mower, available from PB Tech, uses virtual boundaries and programmable mowing areas instead of a traditional perimeter wire.





Bringing it All Together

THE NEXT STEP is coordinating devices across the house. Automation Associates, Switched Homes and Wave Integration design systems that combine lighting, heating, blinds, security and entertainment through a shared interface.

Compatibility matters, particularly when adding to an existing setup. Before buying, check which functions are available on the model you are considering and whether it needs a separate hub, accessory or subscription.

Smarter Energy & Outdoor Living

LIGHTFORCE SOLAR's SigenStor system brings solar generation, household consumption and battery storage together in the mySigen app. Seeing those figures together helps homeowners understand how they generate and use electricity.

SPA WORLD's Vortex spas with SpaNet SmartLink offer remote control of temperature, filtration, jets and lighting. ALPINE SPAS' Apollo ice bath with AlpineChill provides app-based temperature control and scheduling, while HOT SPRING SPAS offers connected options for compatible systems.

Heating the spa or cooling the ice bath can begin before you even step outside, all ready to enjoy.





Now That's Smart!

THE VALUE IS in choosing technology that earns its place: a warm room when you arrive, a freshly mown lawn or an easier way to let someone in.

Whatever the situation, yes, there definitely is an app for that!

THANK YOU FOR A GREAT SHOW

A big thank you to all our exhibitors and visitors who helped make the 2026 Auckland Home Show such a success. We loved bringing together so many great ideas, products and experts to inspire your next home project.

We look forward to seeing you again!

SAVE THE DATE
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