

Photos: MARK HARRIS

Ingleswood villa a gracious retreat

Character and comfort are beautifully blended in this refined Becklands Pl property, discovers Catherine Groenestein.

DAILY NEWS
Your Property Weekly
Feature Home

A magical combination of old-world charm and modern comfort makes this home a stunner.

Tucked away down a private, tree-lined right-of-way on the outskirts of Inglewood, this gracious lady is like a true old-time Hollywood star – gorgeous in her old age due to having great bones and a lifetime of good care.

With wooden lace around her verandahs, huge double-hung windows looking out into a lovely garden, and lovely native timber throughout the interior, the house showcases the best of the villa style.

It was built around 1896 for Dr Valintine, who was Taranaki's medical superintendent at the time. The best heart rinu was used for the house, which sits on solid stone piles, and it has been meticulously maintained since. The home's current owners, Alan and

Louise, have lived here for 23 years. Over time, they've added modern comforts, such as double-glazing (fitted into the original double-hung windows) and gas-fired central heating and Infinity hot-water heating. As well, they had the old lady re-roofed a few years ago and all the lead paint was removed and the house repainted in traditional colours.

It's been a marvellous family home, and is also wonderful for entertaining, says Alan. They have made a few changes inside to improve the flow of the rooms, but maintained the original character and spaciousness of the home.

A generously-proportioned kitchen with a walk-in pantry is the hub of the house, a range where the cook can be in chatting range with family in four other spaces, although generally Louise finds her guests

leaning on the conveniently-placed servery if she's in the kitchen, she says.

The open-plan layout means there is always a sunny spot to sit at all times of the day. Morning coffee is served at the table in the east-facing breakfast nook, or on warm days, on the little deck just outside the door.

Across the kitchen, afternoon sun pours in the west-facing windows into the area where the current owners have their computer desk, but it could easily house a family dining table.

There's also a large and practical laundry room with two tubs, a row of coat hooks, a freezer and also a second toilet and, as a bonus, a view into the garden.

The owners have a family-sized dining table in the first of two lounges, beside the kitchen, as there's easily space for it and the comfy couches which face the log burner.

This complements the gas-fired central heating which keeps the entire home cosy. The living spaces are fully carpeted, apart from in the larger of the two lounges.

Here, heart rinu floorboards, deemed too lovely to cover again when the couple were replacing the carpet, add a warm glow to the room.

An open fireplace has been restored in here and is a lovely place to pull up chairs

around and enjoy a glass of red while watching the flames, says Louise.

There are three very generously sized bedrooms, each with built-in wardrobes.

The bathroom is also enormous. The original bathroom was too small, says Alan, so they converted the smallest bedroom into a family-sized replacement.

As with the rest of the house, there is plenty of lovely timber to admire whilst relaxing in the original cast iron bath, which is long enough for even a tall person to have a proper soak.

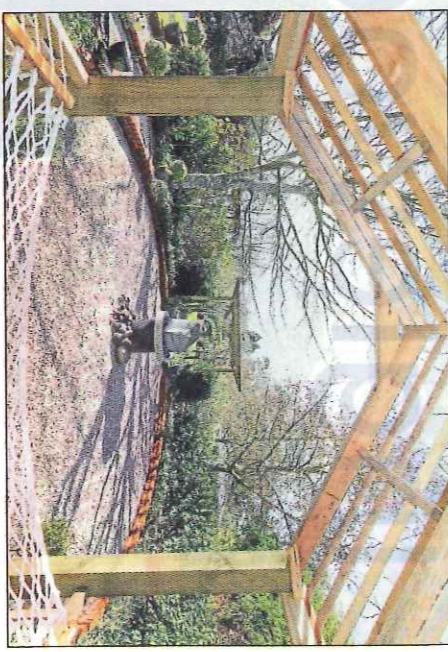
At the end of the passage is an office area where the former bathroom was located. It could easily become a fourth bedroom with the addition of a door, says Alan.

The other half of this home's charm is the garden. It really is a gardener's paradise – but one created by canny gardeners with busy lives. It's undemanding despite its size.

There was never a grand plan with either the house or the garden, says Louise, but they planted the trees and laid out the garden with privacy and shelter in mind.

Around the house itself, there are a few garden beds with flowers – roses, irises and a lavender-filled corner near the breakfast deck – but trees and shrubs provide the

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colour and interest everywhere else, and they don't require weeding.

Generous mulch and good layout and plant selection really have created a garden that can be maintained by a (very) part-time gardener, says Louise.

The couple have spent considerable time overseas in the past few years, and while it was rented out they simply had a gardener come in and maintain the lawns and gardens.

Many of the trees were planted with birds in mind. During our visit, tui chortle in the kowhai and a kereru whooshes noisily between two of the eight or nine magnolia trees currently decked out in their spring best.

The magnolias will be followed by cherries, rhododendrons, clematis – the list goes on. Each season brings its own colour and interest to the garden, says Louise.

A row of standard Spirit of Hope roses will soon be a mass of bright red along the verandah, with bluebells and alyssum at their feet, just one of many lovely scenes here.

A large lawn beside the house has space enough for cricket, and there's a chequerboard under a clematis-draped pergola for playing draughts. On one side is a shady bush walk, created originally when two sons each wanted their own garden, which eventually merged into this little patch of native bush.

Fruit trees are also a feature.

What is probably the largest pear tree in the region, draped artistically in epiphytes like a forest giant, provides a sheltered dell in a corner for hosts and other shade lovers, as well as old-style pears in season.

QUICK LOOK

WHERE: 9 Becklands Pl, Inglewood.

HOW BIG: 5571 sqm in land; 216sqm in home, plus separate garaging and sheds.

HOW MUCH: Offers invited, closing 4pm, October 17, unless sold prior.

WHAT YOU GET: A gracious and spacious home that combines character features and practical modern comforts, set in a gorgeous garden that provides year-round colour and interest. Being tucked away down a private right-of-way, this home offers total privacy and peace, yet is a 10-minute walk from Inglewood's shopping centre and 12 minutes by car to central New Plymouth.

MARKETED BY: Donna Black and Angie Cook at McDonald Real Estate – 06 757 3083 or Donna on 0275 496 123; Anjie on 027 555 4736.

ON THE WEB: eiclo.co.nz – ref NP00167.

SEE IT: Open home tomorrow, September 22, at 2.30pm.

