

Hawk's eye view

It may have taken years, but this soaring Central Otago home on its elevated site was worth the wait

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ABOVE Resident dog Monty, a 13-year-old labradoodle, pads over the European oak floors in the open-plan living space at Gini Falloon and Dazza Sherwin's Central Otago home; the two walnut Crono armchairs are from Studio Italia and bought by Gini before the foundations were poured, while the Delta sofa is by David Shaw.

THIS PAGE The sun-drenched nook near the kitchen is a perfect place to look out at the view from the Era armchairs bought at Studio Italia; the rug is from Artisan and the vase is by New Zealand glass artist Lynden Over.



THIS PAGE A Living Flame gas fire adds cosiness to the lounge area; a TV is hidden behind the Metalier panels above the fireplace, while a Ravello floor lamp from ECC and the polished Emperor marble coffee table with leather ottomans from Designers' Collection complete the look.



A robust schist wall surrounding the front door of Gini Falloon and Dazza Sherwin's home means not much is given away when visitors arrive. Step inside, though, and it becomes obvious why the couple spent nearly four years making their dream home a reality on this elevated site south of Wānaka.

Set at the base of Criffel Range, the views from every room are uninterrupted, reaching from Mt Maude to the Cardrona Valley. Hawks glide by on the breeze at eye level. The weather rolls in across the lake in the distance and the mountains are ever-present.

Gini, who is taking a break from her profession as a legal secretary, and helicopter pilot Dazza happened across the land through a simple act of neighbourliness. They were living next door to the rented home originally on the land when Gini came over one day to feed the neighbour's cat and was amazed by the view. Dazza took a punt and contacted the owners, who no longer lived in the area, and the couple bought the property within weeks.

Now with their dream land secured, the couple turned to the task of creating the perfect house.

"We decided we were going to do it once and do it right," says Gini. "It was really advantageous having lived next door because we knew about the sun, the wind and what direction it came from, and what didn't work for us."

After months of trying to get the project rolling, Gini happened upon Wānaka-bred architect Regan Johnston of Christchurch-based Johnston Architects.

"In those two years previous we had done a lot of prep work. We measured the island in the old place and decided it wasn't quite wide enough or long enough. I counted how many cookbooks I had – I have a cookbook fetish so I knew I needed shelving space for at least that many more," Gini says.

While they had plenty of ideas about the spaces they wanted, the couple gave Regan free rein with the design.

"It was such a big flat site we didn't know what to do," says Gini. "That was the biggest thing: putting our trust in an architect and letting them come up with something without too many stipulations. Just asking, what would you do? And we couldn't believe it when we saw what he came up with. The only thing we changed was the direction the garage faced."

Gini and Dazza feel daily appreciation for

BELOW Gini relaxes in the spacious kitchen, which features an island topped in Taj Mahal quartzite from Brazil supplied by Italian Stone in Auckland; the American white oak ceiling slopes upwards to emphasize the vastness of the view.





ABOVE A warm, natural palette with gold highlights is created in the dining and lounge space; Knot pendants by Brokis from ECC hang above the bespoke American oak dining table from Designers' Collection and Ventura dining chairs from Studio Italia.



ABOVE LEFT A full galley laundry room has a travertine splashback, a Blanco sink in Coffee, a Fisher & Paykel front loader washing machine and dryer, and one of Gini's own paintings; the stool is from Janet Brown in Wānaka.

ABOVE RIGHT Tucked behind the kitchen, the scullery has an integrated dishwasher, Blanco sink and a Buddy kitchen mixer with pull-out spray.

the details and thoughtfulness inherent in the design. "Using an architect, there are little surprises they have thought of that you don't notice on the plans, like the line of sight from the living room through the louvred roof on the loggia. When it's open, you get this lovely view of the Criffel Range behind us."

The loggia is central to the home's interior plan, giving a sheltered outdoor area as well as flexibility in the living spaces. Gini recently moved a long outdoor table into it and hosted 12 friends for dinner. With the fire going and the wine flowing, the party was a great success.

The generous quartzite-topped kitchen island connects the living space with the dining area. Behind the kitchen, a scullery is an easy working space for Gini, who loves to cook. This is shouldered by a little bar area, something Gini has always wanted.

With five adult children between them, Gini and Dazza wanted a generous guest wing that was separate from the couple's day-to-day living spaces; this now extends south-west. The couple's wing is on the north-eastern side of the house and includes a double office, a bedroom with his-and-hers walk-in wardrobes and a bathroom with a shower that can be opened to the outdoors.

The shower was a particular request in the brief by Dazza who wanted to be able to take in the spectacular views while showering. Both use the garden entry into the bathroom when they have been busy working outdoors.

When it came to materials, the couple asked for low-maintenance solutions. The cladding is made up of Alucobond panels punctuated by large windows. The rear of the house, which backs into the hillside, is clad in local stone from Poolburn and Cluden quarries. This anchors the house while the roof line flexes towards the lighter, glazed northern face.

Bespoke Interior Design helped Gini to achieve a cohesive look indoors. Warm, natural colours and textures provide a subtle backdrop for the views. "Inside is a really earthy palette because that's your colour," Gini says, indicating the expansive alpine vista beyond the windows, "and it's ever-changing."



THIS PAGE The kitchen was designed to be an entertainer's space as much as a working area, with a Fisher & Paykel double wall oven, bar stools from Designers' Collection and the expansive Taj Mahal quartzite island bench.



ABOVE The loggia can be opened to the living space and features a louvre roof system by Louvretec, and a DCS barbecue with a stainless steel bench; the outdoor rug, Tribu modular sofa and Elko outdoor coffee tables by Jati & Kebon are all from McKenzie & Willis, while the artwork on the hallway wall is by JS Parker.



TOP The loggia provides the opportunity to enjoy the fresh mountain air in all weathers. **ABOVE LEFT** The star of Gini and Dazza's bathroom is the travertine-clad shower which opens to the outdoors for views and easy access after gardening duty. **ABOVE RIGHT** Behind the bedhead wall in the main bedroom, built-in cabinetry provides storage for handbags and scarves, as well as a seated dressing table area.

THIS PAGE All of the bedrooms, including the master, have views of the Central Otago landscape the house sits within, taking in the Mātukituki Valley, Mt Aspiring and Avalanche Glacier; the carpet is Inscape in Starlight by Bremworth and the built-in blackout blinds are by Luxaflex.



Q&A

with Gini Falloon &
Dazza Sherwin

BEST SEAT IN THE HOUSE:

The Era armchairs – a great coffee spot to take in the view and watch the hawks and occasional New Zealand falcon soar by at eye level. *(Gini)*

FAVOURITE ROOM: The study – it's warm and cosy and a great space to work in. It has plenty of storage for all my aviation files and when I'm on the phone it's great sitting back and watching the view. *(Dazza)*

FAVOURITE OUTDOOR SPOT:

My shed. *(Dazza)*

The raised garden beds and potting shed that Dazza made out of recycled materials from the old house. I love growing our own vegetables and listening to the native birds while working in the garden. *(Gini)*

THE HOUSE IS ECO-

FRIENDLY BECAUSE: We collect rainwater for the garden, there are 36 solar panels on the shed roof and we have high-performance glazing and insulation, automated blinds and LED lighting. *(Gini)*

I LOVE THIS PART OF NEW

ZEALAND BECAUSE: I am drawn to the mountains and feel at home here. There is so much tramping, biking and skiing still to do. *(Gini)*

I love flying in the mountains.

(Dazza)

ONE THING YOU MUST DO

WHEN YOU VISIT: The new Lake Dunstan Trail. We are spoiled for choice in the area but this track is absolutely awesome. I recently mountain biked it and the scenery was spectacular. *(Gini)*



ABOVE Dazza's shed has 36 solar panels on its roof which supply the house with electricity; the pool is stepped down from the house so as not to block the view.