

# Local identity

*Shapes, colours and materials found in traditional farm buildings were the starting point for the design of this expansive rural home*

Designing a large house involves important issues of form and scale - and a very common mistake is to create a structure that is just one big mass.

That's the advice of architect Michael Wyatt, who designed the expansive rural home shown here.

"Large houses are often out of scale with their surroundings and look too prominent, and they can be uncomfortable places to live in because their living spaces are too large," he says.



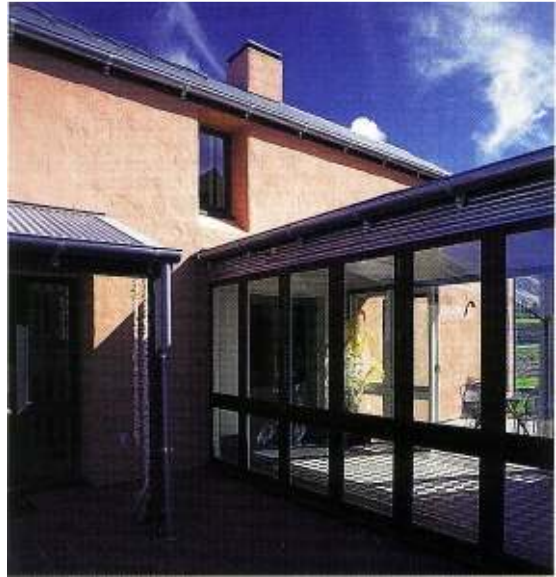
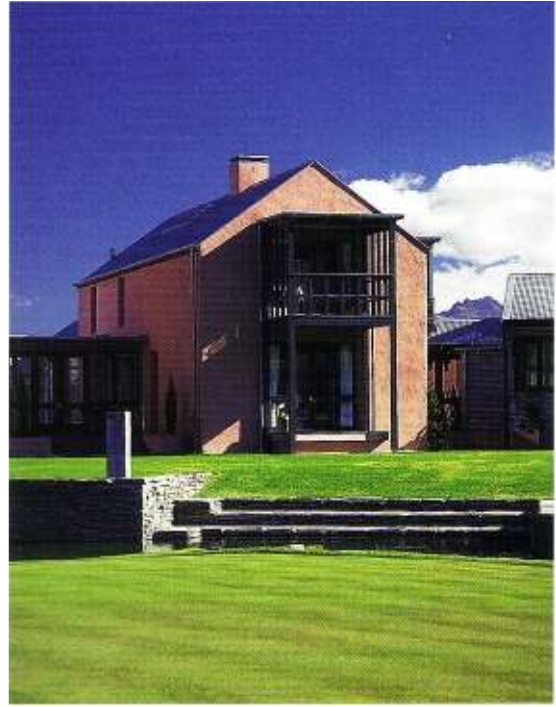
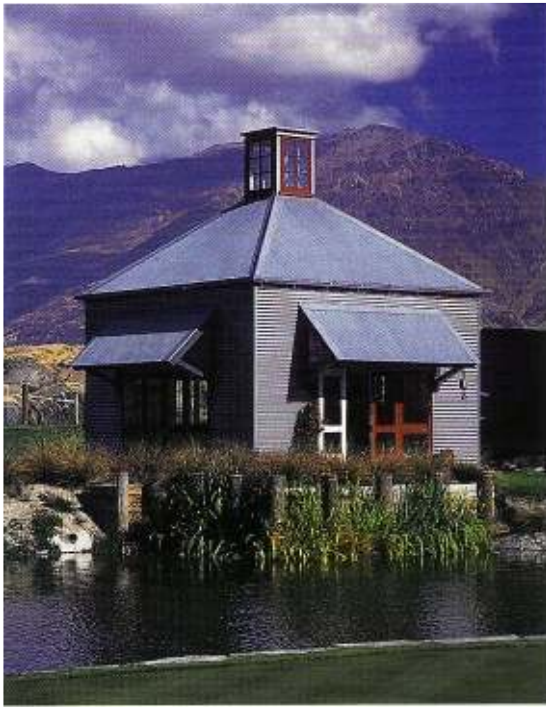
This home avoids all of these drawbacks. By separating it into a series of linked buildings, Wyatt has met the owners' requirement for ample entertaining space as well as living areas that are suitable for daily use.

And while the large scale of the house complements its mountain setting, it is also a good neighbor, he says.

The colours, shapes and building materials used in the house were all inspired by old farm buildings in



Above: A home that would complement the grand scale of its setting but was also simple and unpretentious: this was the brief given to Queenstown architect Michael Wyatt. The owners also wanted the house to acknowledge the traditional building styles of the Central Otago region of New Zealand. Wyatt's design - a series of simple linked structures - gives the owners ample room for entertaining or quiet living. The linked buildings create the required scale without forming a single, imposing mass. Exterior and interior finishes were inspired by the plaster and corrugated iron materials found in local farm buildings. Extensive landscaping helps the house blend into its surroundings.



the area," says Wyatt. "Even the landscaping was designed to help the house blend easily into its surroundings."

As the house is sited on the crest of a small hill, one of the main considerations for Wyatt, and landscape designer Paddy Baxter of Boffa Miskell in Queenstown, was to comply with a local authority requirement that the house should not look too prominent when viewed from the road.

The owners also wanted the house

to have a minimal visual impact.

Baxter and Wyatt therefore planned the access road to the house to be as unobtrusive as possible. A small hillock was created near the highway to partially screen the home from view.

The home is best described, says the architect, as a series of modules linked by glassed-in passages, which the owners use according to their needs.

At the northern end of the series of buildings is a pyramid-roofed

structure clad in corrugated steel. This module is a 6m' studio for one of the owners, complete with large windows and a skylight. It is linked by a glassed-in passage to the guest wing, the gymnasium and one of the two garages.

Guests are accommodated in a two-storey plastered pavilion sited next to the studio. This wing contains three bedrooms, an ensuite, a guests' living room and a laundry.

The central living space, which is also plaster-finished, can be closed



off from the studio and guest wing if required. This building contains a bedroom, an ensuite bathroom, a large dressing room and a library. The main entrance to the house is also located here.

The southernmost module of the house, reached by another linking passage, contains the kitchen, formal dining room and living room.

Like the studio, this building is sheathed in corrugated steel. Double-glazed windows offer panoramic mountain views.

*Facing page, clockwise from top left:* Simple gable shapes, steeply pitched and eaveless roofs, extensive plaster and corrugated steel finishes suit the informal atmosphere of the Queenstown area, says Wyatt. Plaster finishes were used in the parts of the house that have fewer windows. "Too many windows in a masonry facade makes it look weak, whereas corrugated steel creates a stronger look," says the architect.

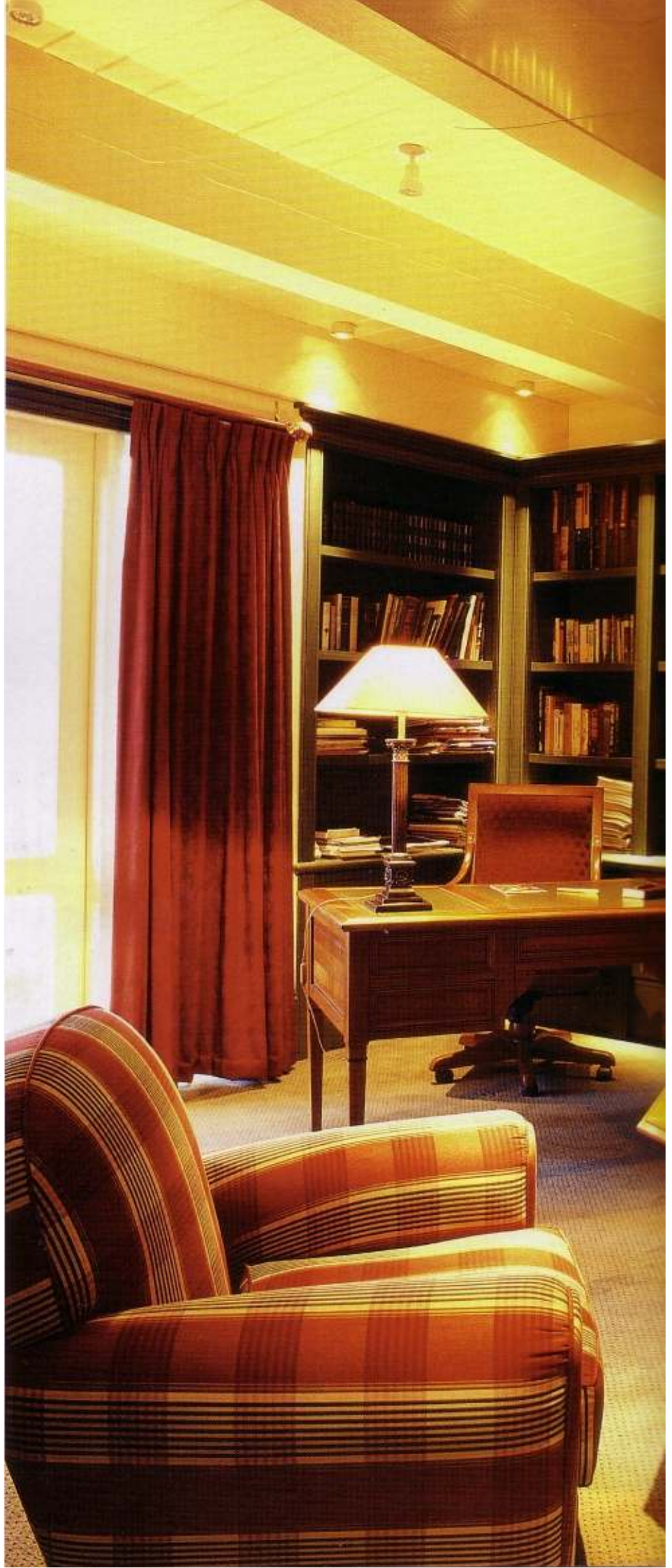
*Left and above:* The access road to the house leads visitors to a farmhouse-style courtyard. Other landscaping work included creating a small lake and a private golf course.

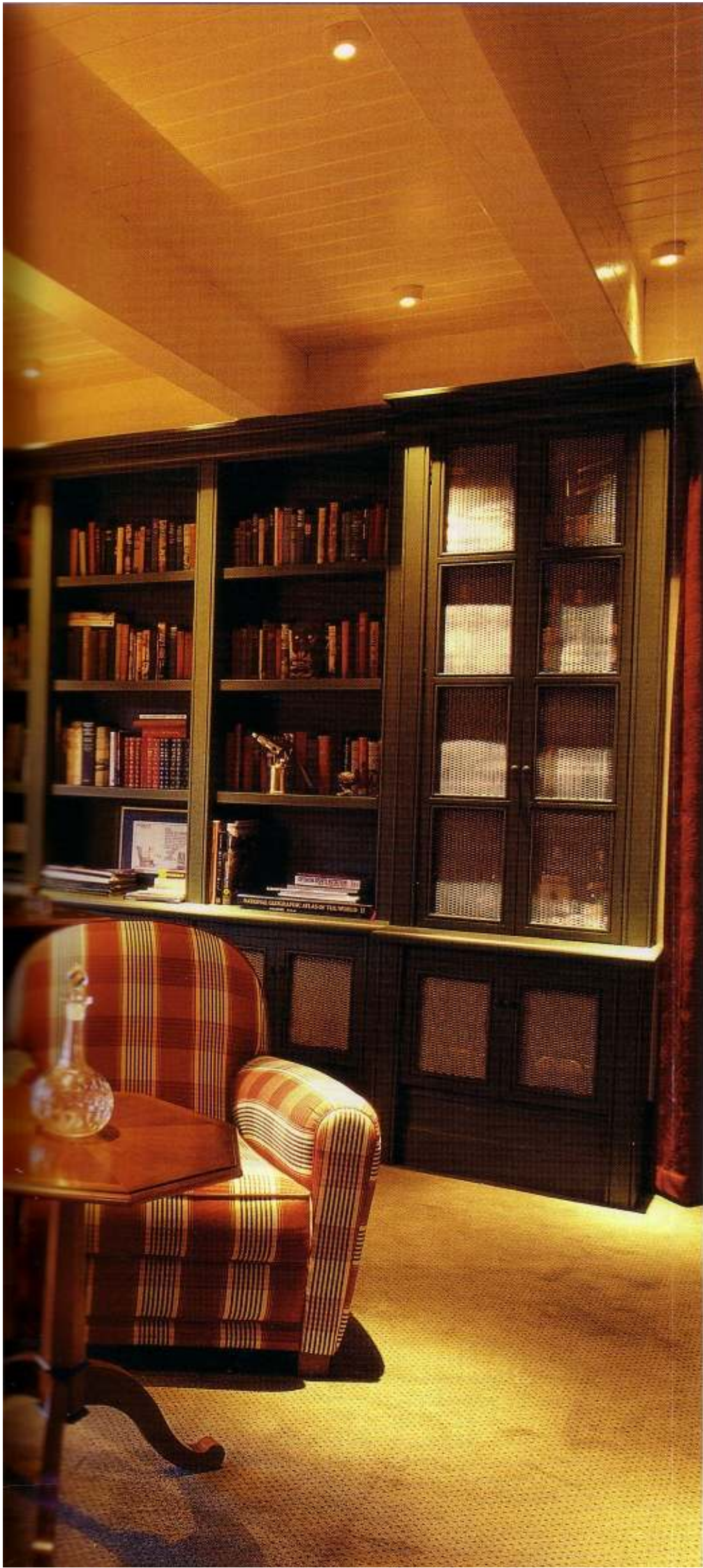


Simple rustic shapes and finishes were one of the starting points for the interior scheme of the house.

"I believe that architecture and interior design are inseparable elements," says Wyatt, who worked closely with the owners. Most of the loose furnishings were sourced from Cavit & Co in Auckland.

The finishes and furnishings throughout the house are deliberately simple and straightforward. The pitched ceilings and walls, many lined with tongue-and-groove

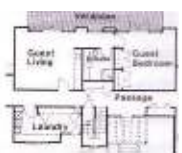




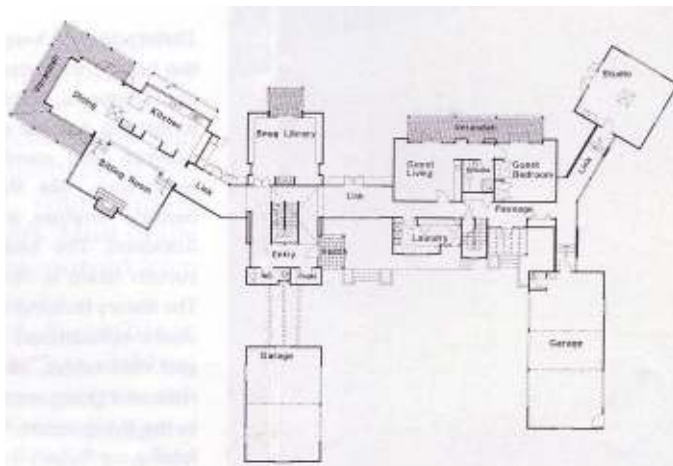
*These pages:* In keeping with the rustic style of the house, the interior scheme is simple and unpretentious. Richly patterned and textured furnishing fabrics create an atmosphere of warmth and comfort. Much of the loose furnishings, like the Rochambeau bed and bedside furniture, is Grange, from Cavit & Co, Auckland. The bed linen is Frette and the curtain fabric is Fleur d'Automne by Grange. The library features a Directoire style desk, club chairs upholstered in checked wool damask and side tables, all from Grange. Accents of rose and green create a welcoming ambience in the living room. The curtain and upholstery fabrics are Rubelli linen.



First floor bedroom



First floor - guest



timber panels common in older homes in the area, are painted in Dulux Seed Pearl.

Rose-coloured accents echo the colours of the exterior plaster - which was in turn inspired by the maroon-coloured paint traditionally used on local farm buildings.

Black and green accents, taken from the ceramic tile floors, also help to give the large house a feeling of unity. Richly-coloured fabrics, and simple but elegant Grange furniture provide the final touch.



**Above and top right:** The kitchen, formal dining room and living room are located at the southern end of the house. Double-glazed windows provide panoramic views of the mountain setting. The green, black and white Renditions ceramic floor tiles in the kitchen and bathing passages form the basis for some of the colour accents in the decorative scheme. Stainless steel cabinets, drawers and benchtops give the kitchen a crisp and efficient appearance.

**Above right:** The formal dining room at the southern end of the house features a Rochambeau dining suite by Grange. The curtain fabric is also Grange.

**Architect:** Michael Wyatt (Michael Wyatt Architect, Queenstown, New Zealand) **Builders:** Paul O'Connor, Peter and Paul Rogers **Structural engineer:** Buchanan & Fletcher **Interior design:** Owner and architect. Loose furnishings and drapes supplied by Cavit & Co **Landscape design:** Paddy Baxter (Boffa Miskell, Queenstown) **Planting scheme:** Peter Johnson, Dunedin **Lighting design:** Jane Purdue Design, Queenstown **Construction:** Coloured plaster and natural Galfan corrugated steel on timber frame **Rook** Natural Galfan corrugated steel supplied and installed by Calder Stewart

**Wooden window and door joinery:** Decor Joinery, Invercargill **Floor tiles:** Renditions ceramic tiles, Sydney **Other flooring:** Feltex Hotshot carpet; Antron XL **Paints:** Kiem exterior plaster 486 H5395; exterior trim: Dulux Tuscany 04C39 and Black Swan 50Y606/007; interior paint: Dulux Seed Pearl with Granite Green trim **Underfloor heating:** Florad **Kitchen manufacturers:** Decor Joinery & Mercer Stainless **Trendsfax:** For more information on these products and services, fax +64 9 373 2173

**Photography by Euan Sarginson and Doc Ross**