



The great escape: Neville Thompson and Susan Egan quit the city for their Himatangi Beach bach whenever they can. Photos: CAMERON BURNELL/FAIRFAX NZ

Back to the Kiwi good life

Life at Susan Egan's bach in Himatangi harks back to the classic Kiwi lifestyle.

WE ALWAYS had a dream to have our own bach. When my partner, Neville, discovered this one at Himatangi Beach, it was just what we had in mind. It was our vision.

It was built in the 1950s and was a bit ramshackle but it had good bones.

It had been something like a fishing shack and was a bit unloved when we bought it four years ago. It had a crumbling chimney and skody old carpets but the floor underneath was rimu from an old meatworks in Feilding and was in immaculate condition.

We have kept the feel of the era it was built in. We kept the old fireplace and decorated it with 1950s memorabilia.

We decorated with the bits and bobs scored at the secondhand shops in and around Foxton – most of which is from the 1950s.



Hung up: Hats are at the ready in the bach hallway.

We also had a leadlight window made with pictures of the two mountains you can see from the dunes – Mt Taranaki and Mt Ruapehu.

We turned the garage into another sleeping area and now we can sleep a dozen of us with a few tents scattered around the property.

We come here every fortnight for a long weekend. It's only one hour and 45 minutes from

Wellington. It's a complete break from the urban and suburban environment.

It's a wrench to leave at the end of a weekend.

The weather up here is always better than in Wellington. We have our own little micro climate.

Of any dwelling we have owned, we have the biggest emotional connection to this little place.

It's a hark back to the



See through: Stained-glass windows reveal the two mountains Susan and Neville can see from the beach.

traditional Kiwi lifestyle. There's no television, we just read, talk, eat and swim. It's a more basic way of life when we're up here. It's a bit of a flashback to our childhoods.

It's nestled in the village, which is hunkered in behind the sand dunes. It's a tight community.

There's a lot going on here, especially in the summer.

There are dune buggies, horses, lots of families having a great time on the beautiful Himatangi Beach.

I chart the year in my diary – whitebait season, fishing competitions, the big storms that hit us pretty hard.

We have every Christmas here with extended family. It's the place we want to be.

AS TOLD TO BESS MANSON



Sitting in style: The bach has been decorated 1950s-style.