

Natural Beauty

A picturesque natural pool is the perfect accompaniment to a native bush setting north of Nelson.

Words **Soraya Nicholas** Photography **Lisa Ball**

The main house and bed & breakfast is surrounded by an abundance of native bush. The new landscape and natural pool is a secluded retreat for Hans, Fiona and their guests, where they can relax in the water, look at the view, or simply enjoy the native bird life.

WITH A BUSY BED AND BREAKFAST TO run in Kaiteriteri, Fiona Thornton and Hans Brutscher were ready to create a sun-drenched paradise to relax in. While their guests had sunny patios to enjoy, the main house did not boast the same luxury. Instead of a tranquil retreat to step out into, their back yard was very modest, with Fiona's mother describing it as "a scrappy piece of garden." Despite the plainness of the original garden it was always rather magical, due to the expanse of native bush surrounding it. This was inspiration for the new landscape, drawing on the native theme, and encouraging bird and insect life.

While Fiona was initially hesitant about renovating their garden to include a natural pool, having previously been drawn to more contemporary, blue swimming pools, she changed her mind during a trip to Europe. She spoke to others with natural pools, and saw them for herself, and she is so pleased with what has been created. Hans, along with partner Alex Traut, own Natural Pools NZ, so he was already passionate about what they could create. "It's such a joy," says Fiona, talking about their pool and new landscape. "I just love being in the water, and what we've created is like our own little micro-climate."

Swallows regularly swoop low over the water, and dragonflies meander past, and the native plants are balanced by water lilies and other flowering specimens to add an infusion of colour. Because the pool is as much a home for water plants as it is a recreational area, it is very eco friendly. There is a creek running into the pool, which makes use of recirculated water, and there are no nasty chemicals deployed to keep the water clean. Instead, a curved sieve skimmer removes impurities and there is a Biotop plant filter to provide clear, natural conditions.



Before

Among the many specimens planted, there are banana palms close to the house, flaxes, kowhais, assorted natives and water plants throughout the pool.

With a stunning, private natural environment now literally on his back doorstep, Hans now uses their pool as a showpiece for the company. And neither Hans nor Fiona could be prouder, relishing every relaxing moment they spend in their newly renovated exterior surroundings, often in the company of their guests. ■ Soraya Nicholas

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