



PREVIOUS PAGE: The height and majesty of a grand piano is one of the tools Tricia uses to achieve balance and harmony in her living area. She is also very keen on playing it.

THIS PAGE: The artwork by Auckland artist Daniel Blanshard makes a strong graphic statement on one side of the room.

Tricia imported the large glass and stone coffee table from Florence. Natural fabrics such as cotton, canvas and linen are integral to any room designed by McKay Interiors and add a soft durability to furniture, such as the chair above.

Her name has become synonymous with interiors she refers to as “plantation style with a Pacific emphasis”, a laid-back, sophisticated fusion of French, Polynesian and Eastern design that works particularly well in New Zealand, especially in Auckland where her business is based.

“New Zealand’s design heritage lies in the Pacific and Near East,” she says.

“About 90 per cent of the homes I get asked to do are on the water and they suit open-plan living which is what New Zealand is all about. It suits us climatically, especially in the North Island.

“We like opening up the doors and welcoming the sunshine and the surroundings in.”

Typically, her interiors pair wood with carved stone and wicker furniture with potted plants. She prefers the natural textures of linens, cottons, silk and wool. Curtains and shutters frame windows and sisal and jute rugs are often placed on the smooth, hard surfaces of wood, marble or stone floors.

“Design should fit into the environment and make at least an acknowledgement to the traditions of its location,” she says. “It’s great to use influences from a preferred style seen while travelling but in the north of New Zealand particularly it seems a bit out of kilter with our lifestyles, let alone our modern architecture, to have a strictly formal English interior with closed rooms

and excessive window treatments as seen in heritage homes here. The styles of the Mediterranean countries with their emphasis on indoor/outdoor eating and living work better.

“I would also far rather have a few well-designed pieces of furniture than lots of bits and pieces,” she says.

“It has to be comfortable and it has to be relaxed.”

The former flight attendant found the design school she wanted to study at while she was still working for the airline. She studied interior design at the prestigious New York School of Interior Design and is a big advocate of adhering to basic design principles. ▷