



Brick Bay

GLASSHOUSE

Text
Andrea Stevens
Photography
Simon Devitt



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The Matakana region is a rural area on the east coast of New Zealand, one hour's drive north of Auckland. Over the past 20 years, a boutique wine industry has established, with most vineyards family owned and operated. Christine and Richard Didsbury purchased a coastal farm in 1986, and changed the use of the land by planting rare and native trees, and grapevines. Brick Bay Wines have focussed on sustainable wine making and are now onto their 11th vintage.

The open space has also enabled the family to extend their art collection, to encompass much larger scale works. A giant koru, or spiral, sculpted in the land by artist Virginia King, 2002, is visible on Google Earth. With an ever-increasing public interest in these works, and the need for cellar door facilities, the idea for a parallel project developed. The 'Glass House', designed by acclaimed New Zealand architect, Noel Lane, provides the vineyard with a tasting room, office, kitchen and amenities, and is gateway and resource centre for the Brick Bay Sculpture Trail.

The Didsburys have a long history of working with Lane. He designed the main dwelling on the site almost 20 years ago and the guesthouse in 2000.

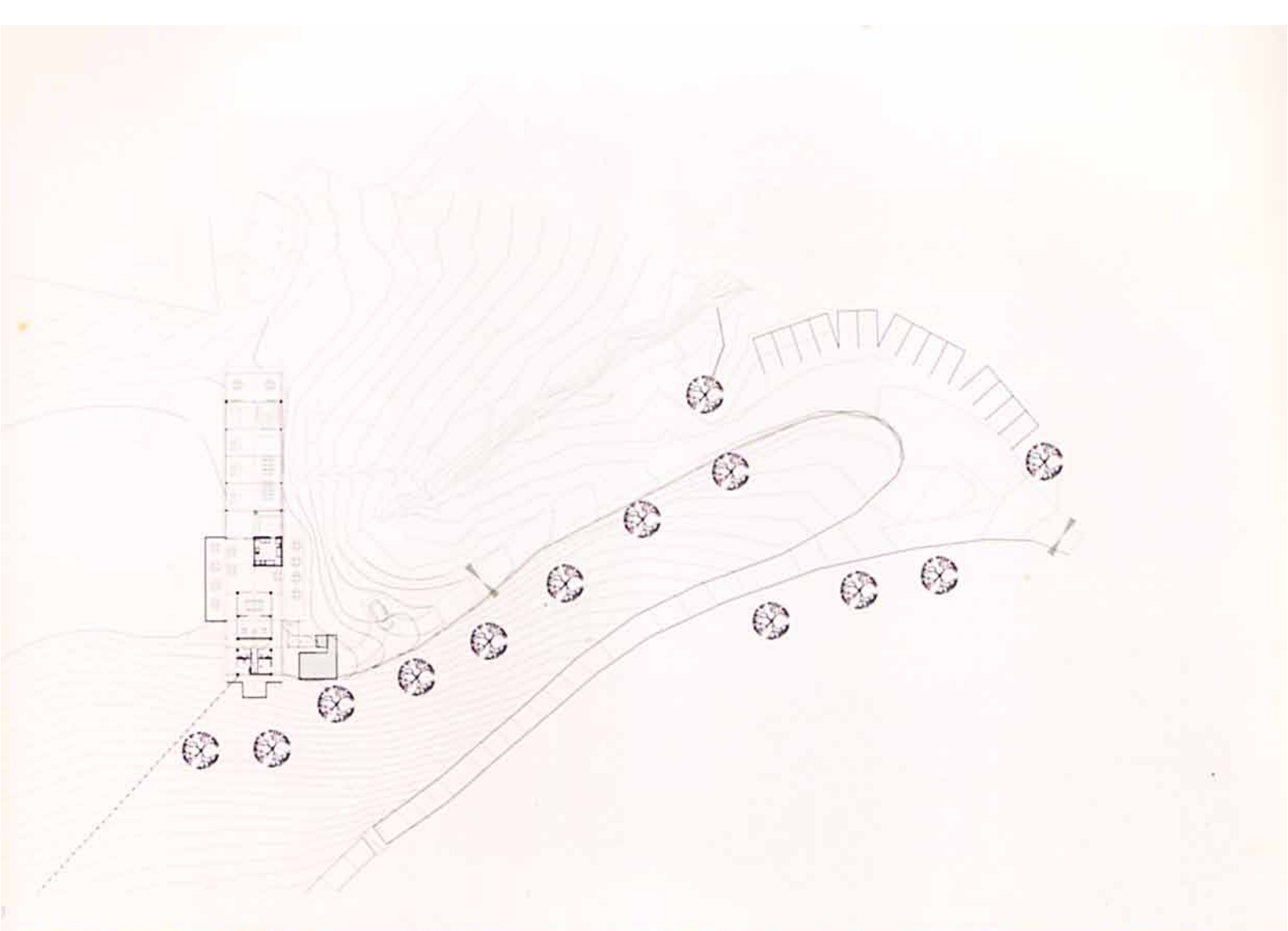
The two houses and the tasting room, are all recipients of New Zealand Institute of Architecture awards.

Lane's work is instinctively grounded in context. He draws on local culture, history and the environment to inform his design decisions and give character and meaning to his buildings. "I aspired to design a site-specific building that captured the atmosphere of the historical and current industries of the area," says Lane. "a building that referred to the area's agricultural roots (slatted timber floors of the nearby shearing shed) and to the glass transparency and necessary shade-coolth of the horticultural hothouse." In the Glass House, Lane has merged an elegant lake pavilion with the utility buildings of Matakana, by bringing design and construction sophistication to a universal building type.

A theme consistent in Lane's work is expression and separation of structure, skin and function. The glass, roof, exposed steel frame and timber floor, are uniform throughout the building. Within this framework, public and private spaces coexist and are articulated to create contrast. The roof shelters colourful, detached boxes that intrigue. They are private rooms – kitchen, office, and bathroom – yet their citrus colours and detail

- 01 View of the Glass House from The Glass House Lake
- 02 Casual entry past the prominent acrylic boxes
- 03 Site Plan
- 04 Tasting Room





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attract attention. Clad in translucent acrylic sheet, they glow like lanterns at night. Their simple gabled form recalls the utility shed, and as abstractions they reference modern sculpture. Lane has taken these 'back-of-house' functions as an architectural opportunity, rather than as something to hide. His precise articulation of each part, gives the Glass House expressive clarity and strength.

In a North East-facing valley, the vineyard and trail centre on two small lakes. Fields, farm sheds, bush and swamp, create a backdrop with a natural rawness – an interesting contrast to the typically more manicured grounds of Hawkes Bay or Central Otago vineyards. The Glass House straddles a dam, with half of its timber pile foundations buried in the lakebed. A spillway is located beneath, and a bridge is effectively formed over the flow of water. On a wet day, the lake water cascades down the rocky embankment. 'Rain on the lake, the sound of water rushing underneath the building, and the wind, make downpours very dramatic,' describes Christine Didsbury.

Entry is casual – ramps and decks lead past the acrylic boxes, to a lakeside, seating platform from which the main space is accessed. The tasting room fills the full height and width of the northern half of the building. Thermal and acoustic cloth overhead, reduces heat gain, diffuses light and deadens noise reverberation. Sliding panels and roof vents, allow multiple cross ventilation scenarios for a passively controlled building. With glass to all sides and shade cloth overhead, the environment and views are so tangible, that the space feels more outdoors than indoors. Yet, despite all the glass, the room has warmth, created by the timber floor, upholstered furniture, and David Trubridge lights. It is a beautiful room, quiet and serene, perfect for the appreciation of wine, sculpture and the landscape.







The trail takes the visitor into the heart of the valley, through farm, bush and swamp

The tasting room opens onto a northern verandah and a series of courtyards, the start of the two-kilometre sculpture trail. The trail takes the visitor into the heart of the valley, through farm, bush and swamp, to view work by up to 40 established and emerging New Zealand artists – names like Fatu Feu'u, Gretchen Albrecht, Terry Stringer, Seung Yul Oh, Dane Mitchell and Gregor Kregar. With rapid plant growth, the works quickly become embedded in the landscape. Similar in concept to the Goodwood Sculpture Park in the UK, the trail was conceived as an outdoor gallery and is complementary to artist's dealer galleries. A trust has been formed to provide seed funding for works. The opportunity to have large-scale works made, and displayed long-term, is having a material impact on the work of the artists.

Grounded by physical and cultural context, a 'sense of place' or terroir is embodied in the building and sculpture as it is in the wine. The Didsburys hold dear this belief, which is a key reason they and Lane have such a long-standing history of making buildings together. In producing New World wines, they are acutely aware of the freedom they have for finding a new and modern expression of their business in this part of the South Pacific.

The Brick Bay Glass House was a recipient of a National Award in Architecture from the New Zealand Institute of Architects.

Andrea Stevens is an Auckland-based architect and freelance writer on architecture and design.

Architect Noel Lane Architects
 Design Architect Noel Lane
 Project Architect Tom Rowe
 Builder Rob Dunn
 Structural Engineer Peter Boardman (structure design)
 Services Engineer APG Thompson (Tony Thompson)
 Acoustic Consultants Marshal Day
 Fire Engineers Holmes Fire and Safety (Tim Porter)
 Planning Consultant Lisa Capes
 Landscaping Isthmus Group (Garth Falkner)
 Geotechnical Engineers Hutchinson Consultants
 Electrical Rob Murray
 Glass Metropolitan Glass
 Windows and Doors Gulf Windows and Doors (George Blore)

Noel Lane Architects
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Furniture
 Brick Bay Sculpture Trail, furniture from Simon James Design. 'L5' coffee tables, 'Miss M' 3 seater sofa, 'Miss M' single, 'Miss M' Ottoman all by Simon James. 'Kina' Pendant Lights by David Trubridge.
 David Trubridge
 (64 6) 850 0204, davidtrubridge.com
 Simon James Design
 (64 9) 377 5556, simonjamesdesign.com

Lighting
 General lighting throughout from Targetti. Sea-egg lights by David Trubridge.
 David Trubridge
 (64 6) 850 0204, davidtrubridge.com
 Targetti
 (64 9) 525 8142, targetti.co.nz

Finishes
 SP blinds from Priel Segev. Satinice acrylic from PSP on the exterior. Windows and doors from Rennall. Paint from Resene.
 Priel Segev
 (64 9) 379 6727, sblind.co.nz
 PSP
 (64 9) 475 2800, psp.co.nz
 Rennall
 (64 9) 425 0660, rennalldoors.co.nz
 Resene
 (64 4) 577 0500, resene.co.nz

Flooring
 Timber flooring 'Tasmanian White Oak' from Rosenfeld Kidson & Co.
 Rosenfeld Kidson & Co
 (64 9) 573 0503, rk@thetimbersource.co.nz

Fixtures & Fittings
 Bathroom fixtures from metrix. Steelwork by MS Engineering. Glass louvers from Breezway.
 Breezway
breezway.com.au
 Metrix
 (64 9) 444 5656, metrix.co.nz
 MS Engineering
 (64 9) 4257118, mse@mxnet.co.nz



06 Seating on the verandah
 07 Sculptures exhibited on the trail. Foreground, Ails Groot, 'Duke'. Background, Richard Wainwright, 'Conversation Piece'
 08 Seating area in The Glass House

