



### What is this?

For the most part, staying in a hotel is a universal experience. There may be touches of the location in the artwork or menu items, but there is often not much variation in the design of suites and lobbies.

This is a convention that Alan Blundell, designer and owner of Ohtel in Wellington, set out to break. Using New Zealand materials, textiles and products, he created a hotel design that reflects the country and fits into Wellington's landscape.

"I was working with the hypothesis that when you visit a place, you want to be able to experience its culture. However, this is no backpackers - Ohtel caters to a high calibre of guests," he says.

The exterior was partially influenced by urban design laws, which require new buildings to fit with the existing streetscape. As the site is surrounded by two and three storey villas from the early 1900s, Blundell used a weatherboard texture in the exterior concrete moldings. Cedar soffits add an element of visual warmth.

"The building is landed on a central column. Inside the main entrance, the foyer doubles as a café during the day and transitions into a bar at night. This takes up the front half of the lower floor, while the rear contains a room for guests that need special access. This room can also be used for conferences," says the designer.

Blundell collected iconic New Zealand items, such as Crown Lynn crockery, to stock the café and bar. Perhaps as a reference to New Zealand's clean green image, a live tree is planted in a cavity in the floor.

Mid-century Scandinavian-inspired furniture from New Zealand and Australia is used in both the public spaces and the room suites. Each of the ten suites in Ohtel has a slightly different look, although the layout throughout is fairly consistent, says Blundell.

"The ensuites are divided from the bedrooms by glass screens. A different backlit image of a New Zealand landscape is printed on a prominent wall in each bathroom, visible from the bed. Each room has a writing desk that dates from the 1950s or 60s."

Ensuites are the focal point of each room. The large expanses of glass reveal oversized baths and showers.

Despite the age of the furnishings, Ohtel caters to its guests' modern lifestyles, with broadband internet provided in each suite. For entertainment, LCD televisions with iTunes interfaces are pre-programmed with a range of podcasts, music, films and images. Tivoli subwoofers are mounted in the headboard.

"Behind each bed is a unit containing the kitchenette on one side and a wardrobe and safe on the other side. In the centre is a nook for the telephone and entertainment remote control," says Blundell.

All products, such as shampoos, coffee and wine, are sourced locally, as is the carpet and bedding.

To improve the hotel's carbon footprint, solar panels are installed for water heating. Other environmental features include double glazing and operable windows.

## **Credit List**

**Location** : Ohtel, Wellington

**[Designer](#)** : RAB Design

**[Interior designer](#)** : Eleanor Steel, ES Design

**Construction company** : P+A Construction

**[Civil engineer](#)** : Dunning Thornton

**[Mechanical engineer](#)** : Michael Stretton

**[Fire consultant](#)** : Spencer Holmes

**[Cladding](#)** : Pre-cast concrete

**[Roofing](#)** : De Boer torch-down from Equus

**[Window and door joinery](#)** : APL from Westview

**[Hardware](#)** : Ingersoll Rand & CISA from Sopers

**Window coverings** : Custom-made drapes from ES Design

**[Flooring](#)** : Floor Store

**[Wall coverings](#)** : Dulux paints and Elitis wallpaper

**[Ceiling](#)** : Gib

**Paints and polyurethanes** : Dulux and Cabots

**[Lighting](#)** : Aesthetics Lighting

**[Heating and cooling](#)** : Daikin from Abode air-conditioning

**[Furniture](#)** : Refurbished mid-century originals

**Kitchenware** : Brightworks Stainless

**[Bathroomware](#)** : Duravit from Metrix

**[Signage](#)** : Speedy Signs, Image Lab, Harbour City Signs

**Graphic design** : OJO Creative

[Lifts](#) : Associated Lifts

**Soft furnishings** : Native Agent

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