

Container homes coming into vogue

Karen Phelps

The tiny house movement is taking off in the United States and Brenda Kelly, director of IQ Container Homes, believes the trend is starting to filter into the New Zealand market:

"It's something more people are starting to wake up to – maybe we can't afford a big house and do we even need one?" she says.

Brenda admits it's a challenging concept for many Kiwis brought up with the dream of the three-bedroom home on a quarter acre section.

But she says innovative design and smart furniture options mean that a smaller home doesn't necessarily have to feel confining. In fact just the opposite, with less area to clean and maintain, Brenda says smaller homes give people more money in their pockets and more leisure time.

Brenda has long been passionate about design and optimising small spaces.

A born-and-bred Kiwi 'with DIY in the blood' she was just 19 years old when she designed and built a campervan layout with innovative storage solutions and practical furniture applications.

Combined with a background of working at Bunnings in merchandise planning and services Brenda started IQ Container Homes in 2013.

"A home should be an asset not a liability. It should be somewhere safe, comfortable, sustainable and affordable.

"I have designed the layouts on offer and consulted with experts to ensure IQ Container Homes tick all these boxes."

IQ Container Homes uses shipping containers made of non-corrosive corten steel to construct durable, functional homes.

The homes come with insulation, which exceeds building code requirements minimising the need for heating and cooling.

The designs also feature other eco principles such as passive solar and cross ventilation,



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rainwater recycling and solar power as standard. Brenda says that features such as these mean IQ Container Homes offer more affordable running costs. In addition eco-friendly products are used in the construction and fit-out such as low VOC paints, timber sourced from sustainable New Zealand forests, LED lighting and energy efficient appliances.

Standard practical designs and off-site construction minimises waste and the structural integrity of the homes mean they need minimal,

cost effective foundations, says Brenda.

She says that in order to come up with the designs, which include one-, two- and three-bedroom options, she has liaised extensively with council.

She can also source and supply innovative furniture suited to smaller homes, which maximises space, for example dual-purpose furniture such as a desk that converts to a bed.

Brenda has just finished constructing her own container home in Waitakere, Auckland,

which doubles as a display home and is open by appointment.

The home uses a 40-foot plus a 20-foot container giving roughly 45 square metres of space.

She says the home can be used as a two- or three-bedroom by utilising a portable wardrobe that can convert to a room divider:

"If a piece of furniture is not dual purpose, it doesn't make it into my home," she says with a smile.

Combined with clever tricks such as using

mirrors and white paint to give a greater sense of space she says, size does not equal compromise.

IQ Container Homes can deliver product nationwide and is looking to partner with quality builders around the country.

"People are often amazed at how a small space can be transformed into a liveable, modern home with all the creature comforts.

"With house and land prices so high a smaller home helps people to get their life back rather than being a slave to a big mortgage."