



A dinghy is provided for catching dinner, left; all mod cons with retro styling, right down to the tea cosy, below; caravan Cath is a 'bubble of gorgeousness' sitting alongside the Te Puna inlet, bottom left.

# Glamour-vanning adds a bit of comfort

by LEIGH BRAMWELL

**S**MOOTHING the edges of roughing it" is how Vanessa Owen, of Kerikeri's Driftwood Estate, describes the philosophy behind the accommodation offered at her family's waterfront property on the Purerua Peninsula.

Without a doubt the most charming option is 'Cath', the retro 1950s caravan nestled on the beach below the huge pohutakawa and puriri trees on the shores of the Te Puna Inlet.

Vanessa and her husband Richard found the caravan, which Vanessa calls "a bubble of gorgeousness" in Christchurch and gave her the longest trip of her life, transporting her first to Auckland and then on to the Bay of Islands.

"Yes, we could have bought a caravan in Northland, but there were lots of caravans available



in Christchurch as people got paid out after the earthquakes, and we wanted one with the ability to be very cool and retro," Vanessa says.

They gutted Cath and put her back together again with full insulation and tongue and groove lining, and fitted her out with all the trappings of

glamour-vanning, such as Wallace Cotton sheets, a great retro sound system and, of course, striped awning and deckchairs.

"Not a nylon sleeping bag in sight," says Vanessa, who is justifiably proud of the fit-out, as well as the way guests here are cared for.



"All they need to do is get in the car and come," she says. "There's freshly ground coffee, ice in the chillybin, a fishing rod with the right hook on it, a dinghy, and a fire laid. Everything is laid on. The average stay is for three days, and our guests are mostly professional people in their mid twenties and thirties."

Vanessa and Richard took note of the glamping and glamour-vanning options they saw in the UK and now have plans to extend their own operation to include more caravans and a permanent safari tent, all on their own stretch of coastline.

Currently they offer a getaway bach with the feeling of an old treehouse or sail loft with aged timber floors and a combination of great art and delightful nautical décor. There's a Kiwiana cottage overlooking the vineyard and the sea. It's only two years old, but oozes character and beachy chic. And located in their own cove beneath the old pohutakawa trees are twin eco cottages, one set up as a kitchen/dining with gas fridge and hob top, and the other a bunkroom with a queen bed and two king single bunks.

"People just love the simple stuff of it," Vanessa says.

## PLANNING A WEDDING IN NORTHLAND?

We want you to enjoy the best of what is on offer in Northland to make your wedding day a perfect one.

From what to wear on your big day, to fantastic venues, sensational menus, music, transport and more!

We even offer tips on budgeting for your big day, and planning your honeymoon.

Northland offers diversity when planning your wedding, from a beach wedding, to a formal venue, to an informal gathering in a garden setting, the options are endless.

Plan your Northland wedding here, and make it a day to remember!

If you prefer a tangible booklet, pop in to the Northern Advocate office at 88

Robert Street, and help yourself to our Weddings in Northland Magazine.

UPDATED 2015  
EDITION  
NOW ONLINE

