

Eating elephants on the Matakana Coast

Rod Cooper likes solving the puzzles that new buildings present. “I wonder, jeez, how am I going to do this. But, it’s like eating an elephant – it’s just one mouthful at a time. And, at the end, you get to see a beautiful building.”

You’ve seen the work of Rod Cooper Construction because his buildings include the Matakana Cinemas, Matakana toilets, Matakana Country Park and Koru House (Junction March 2016).

Rod has lived in the area for 35 years. “When I arrived here, you could buy a beach-front section at Omaha for \$25,000 and clients were building simple cottages. Since then, it has progressively developed to architecturally-designed homes worth millions of dollars.”

He’s eager to acknowledge the excellent subcontractors available in this area who have raised their skill levels to match the modern technical builds. Rod also has a lot of admiration for people who have the courage to invest in big projects, entrepreneurs like John Baker and Richard Didsbury, and creative home owners like Lindsay Scott and Brian McPhun.

These days, Rod prefers to do one job at a time. “On a big project, weeks can go by without being able to get onto the tools, but I still love to do that as much as possible.”

Steve Haycock, of Steve Haycock Construction, agrees that the local area has all the skilled contractors needed for these big, expensive, technical builds. His work on the Lawrie House, featured on Grand Designs NZ, involved all local subbies. “That job was really challenging and they came up with goods.”

Steve is full time on project management with three large, prolonged and technical builds on the go. He works hard to make sure that everyone enjoys the job as much as possible, and that includes the client and architect.

“Omaha has been like a trial ground for architects. They’ve been pulling out all the stops to make interesting houses there. It’s been a boon for us to get the opportunity to work on these things.”

Steve has an eye on the future as he builds the skill base of his team. “I’ve got a lot of really good young guys coming through. It’s good for the future.”