

# Escape New Zealand



The Jagged Edge's sharp triangular form with two walls embedded in the schist base rock defies the concept of a house and challenges every rule of plumb.  
PHOTOS: SUPPLIED



The bathrooms are a study in minimalism with their pure white high-gloss porcelain wall and floor tiles.



Outdoor dining is something to be savoured with the panoramic views on offer.



Dining, living, family, and entertainment functions occupy the front two-thirds of the ground floor, a sun-filled, airy, open space with views of the mountains.

## Light on the landscape

**Justine Tyerman** samples the spectacular Jagged Edge near Queenstown, one of New Zealand's most expensive and exclusive private holiday accommodation venues.

I'm lying on my back . . . again . . . in the luxuriant soft grass, marvelling at the surreal shape of the edifice in which we are living. The rest of the family are calling to me from the infinity spa pool above where they are drinking ice-cold rosé and beer, laughing, and bonding, reconnecting after a year apart.

I've been up since before dawn, padding barefoot around the lush lawns, gazing outwards, reclaiming my mountains and my lake after too long an absence, and inwards at the jewel-like structure of the extraordinary Jagged Edge, a prism of light with life within.

It's proud and a touch arrogant, boldly claiming its right to exist in such a grand landscape where the mountains are gods.

The sharp triangular form with two walls embedded in the schist base rock from which it was born defies the concept of a house and challenges every rule of plumb. The glass walls jut out from the base at an 18-degree angle rising to a lofty 9.2 metres. The three bedrooms, ensuite bathrooms, and upstairs sitting room are suspended above the ground floor living and kitchen area on a mezzanine platform at the rear of the house, creating a soaring floor-to-ceiling atrium at the apex of the triangle.

Side-on, the structure is so light and transparent, it is almost invisible. You can see clean through it, which allows it to blend into the surrounding forest and rocks.

From a distance, all you can see is the dart-like tip of the triangle.

Despite its lightness on the landscape, the Jagged Edge is the product of some serious engineering expertise. More than 8000 cubic metres of rock were excavated to form the platform for the house which is built into the schist cliff, and secured from above by 10 steel bars connected to anchors drilled 20m into the rock. Floor-to-ceiling steel rods and heavy duty triangular bolts hold the glass wall panels in place.

I'm impatient to join the others in the 38-degree warmth of the huge spa pool (at 5m by 6m, it is more a swimming pool than a spa), sling my arms languidly over the infinity edge and gaze at the Lady of the Lake, TSS Earnslaw as she cruises Lake Wakatipu. We are so high up on the slopes of Ben Lomond, the graceful 104-year-old steamer looks like a toy. She puffs out plumes of black smoke and sounds her hooter as she pulls away from the wharf at Walter Peak Station, having dropped off another load of excited tourists.

But I'm also anxious to catch the dazzling, fractured gold and apricot reflections of the sunset in the glass panels towering above me. The Jagged Edge walls are a giant mirror where the mountains, sunrise, sunset, cloud formations, and shadows are projected, dissected, duplicated, refracted. It's like living inside an ever-changing art-work or a sculpture with multiple personalities.

At the same time, I want to put

my camera away and drink in the actual sunset as it happens rather than indulge my obsession for recording its reflection. It makes my pulse race. I'm afraid I'll miss the best shot, and afraid I'll miss the fun ... and what's left of the rosé ... in the pool.

Sunrise over the iconic Remarkables is equally spectacular but not as conflicting for me because everyone else is still floating on their "clouds", as our daughters describe the sumptuous beds in their bedrooms on the mezzanine floor. The fine Baksana bedwear and softest down duvets and pillows are obviously having a soporific effect on them. My photos of the sunrise behind the mountain range I climbed at their age are all they see. They miss out on the glory of the new-born day but their hectic lives in London and Sydney merit a few undisturbed sleep-ins.

When we first arrived at the Jagged Edge (one of Luxe Houses' many exclusive private holiday rental properties around the world [www.luxe-houses.com](http://www.luxe-houses.com)), we wondered how such sleep-ins would be possible, given that we were living in a glass pavilion.

However, Julian McPike, one of the owners and creators of this masterpiece, preceded to perform magic and produce blinds and walls out of thin air. He is responsible for radical changes to the original design to create a more practical, workable living space.

At the touch of a button, panels

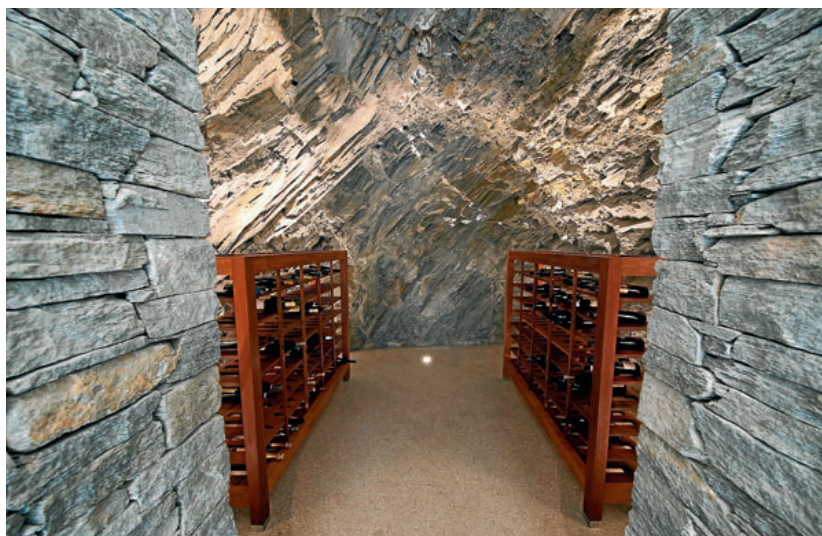


The impressive 3.7-metre long sickle-shaped bar, camouflaged as a piece of pale timber flooring, rises slowly out of the floor, complete with lights and stools.



The wine cave is a cool place in more ways than just the temperature, a constant 13C. Tunnelled into the bedrock behind the house, it is accessed from the living area through a tall, heavy, opaque glass door.

An eye-catching colourful glass and mosaic head lit from within, bought at the Día de los Muertos, or the Day of the Dead festival, in Mexico.



emerged from their hiding places and began floating across the mezzanine floor, joining forces to form a solid partition, transforming the bright airy bedrooms into cosy boudoirs. Electric blinds descended from somewhere in the ceiling to cover the glass walls at night.

This was the first in a series of wondrous demonstrations of the

Jagged Edge's myriad technological features, the most impressive of which is the 3.7m-long sickle-shaped bar, which also appeared by magic from beneath the floor.

Camouflaged as a piece of pale timber flooring, the bar rises slowly out of the floor, complete with lights and stools – another clever engineering feat designed

by Julian who by this stage, we discover is a mechanical engineer and problem solver with a flair for the unusual. He advised us to stand well clear when operating the recess function as it stops for nothing.

While the others were happy to merely soak in the decadent infinity spa, I was fascinated by the mechanism and construction behind it. The pool is stainless steel and was manufactured in two pieces, and welded together on-site. When not in use, a solid cover slides across the pool from beneath the decking. When activated by a key pad at the door, the water level lowers automatically by 170mm so that the cover is recessed below the edge of the pool and safe from wind gusts. The temperature can be controlled remotely from anywhere in the world. Julian obligingly turned it down precisely 2C as requested while we were there during the height of the summer.

The pool is accessed through a steel-framed portal with 39mm glass panels, the most expensive glass in the house. It's childproof, of course, with safety glass barriers and gate.

There's also a story behind internet access at the house. Located on a mountainside 10 minutes from Queenstown, the signal was unreliable until Julian negotiated a deal with a friend several kilometres away across the lake at Jack's Point. The Jagged Edge's internet signal is bounced off the friend's roof – he gets free internet access in return.

An ultra-hi-tech but easy-to-operate house-management system controls all functions by way of iPads and touch panels beside the doors. A master switch at the front door turns on all the lights when you arrive and turns them all off as you leave, saving time and energy. The front entrance door is operated by a touch pad, but the back door and pool door are manually operated. To save even more energy, smart technology allows the house to be switched to unoccupied mode when empty.

The Jagged Edge wine cave is a cool place in more ways than just the temperature, a constant 13 degrees Celsius. Tunnelled into the bedrock behind the house, I loved

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