

LIFE_{ON} THE EDGE

AN ASTONISHING HOUSE CALLED JAGGED EDGE CLINGS TO A HILLSIDE HIGH ABOVE QUEENSTOWN WITH BREATHTAKING VIEWS AND WORLD-CLASS COMFORTS. JUSTINE TYERMAN GOES WHERE EAGLES DARE.

PHOTOS Patrick



Living, dining, kitchen, entertainment, office and laundry areas occupy the ground floor, an airy, sun-filled space beneath a towering atrium at the “prow” of the house.

From a distance, the house called Jagged Edge appears like a sleek bird straining to be free of the ties tethering it to the cliff. Or an arrow about to launch into space. It's as if the rock face has given birth to an alien child, born of the terrain but raised by the forces of steel and glass.

Defying the constraints of its rocky perch high above Lake Wakatipu, the aptly named Jagged Edge nevertheless blends into the terrain. Side-on, this startling three-bedroom, four-bathroom house is almost transparent.

Despite its apparent lightness on the landscape, Jagged Edge is the product of some serious engineering nous. One of the owners and designers, Wellington-based mechanical engineer Julian McPike, said 8,000 cubic metres of rock were excavated to form the platform for the house, which is anchored to the cliff by 10 steel cables. Massive glass walls jut out from the base at an 18-degree angle, soaring to 9.2m at the peak. Floor-to-roof steel rods and bolts hold the walls in place.

Kitchen, dining, living, entertainment, office and laundry areas occupy the ground floor, an open and airy, sun-filled space beneath a towering atrium at the “prow”.

The superbly equipped black and white kitchen is designed for entertaining, with a 4m-long island, two full-sized dishwashers, a large electric oven, five Miele gas hobs and myriad appliances. For coffee addicts, there's a built-in Miele coffee maker and a stand-alone Nespresso machine. Like most areas of the house, the kitchen bathes in mountain and lake views thanks to the soaring glass walls.

Eye-catching lighting features include a mosaic head from Mexico in the living area and a tall glass kiwi-shaped sculpture designed by New Zealander Peter Stoneham in the stairwell.





The heated infinity spa pool is a good spot from which to enjoy the spectacular lake and mountain views, as is the outdoor breakfast deck.



The bedrooms and bathrooms upstairs on a mezzanine floor are suspended from the ceiling and appear to float in space.

The master bedroom, with its sumptuous slat bed on a raised platform, white Baksana linen, lightest down duvet, possum rug and huge dressing room, is luxurious in the extreme. A red recliner facing the Remarkables has arguably the best view in the house.

The adjoining bathroom is a study in minimalism, with white porcelain tiles throughout. A glass-walled double shower runs the full length of the room and twin basins sit on a wall-hung vanity well stocked with toiletries. The freestanding bath has a stunning view of the mountains through a floor-to-ceiling window.

The other bedrooms, en suites and a reading/sitting area are no less luxurious and all have jaw-dropping mountain and lake views.

To enclose the bedrooms, blinds descend from above, and wall panels perform a synchronised dance sequence, gliding from their recessed hiding place to join forces as a solid wall on the edge of the mezzanine.

Other than the novelty of watching the wall materialise, I could seldom bear to shut out a view that took my breath away.

I was mesmerised by the play of light on the deep, glacier-gouged furrows of the Remarkables – stained orange and gold at sunset – and the historic steamship *Earnslaw*, puffing clouds of smoke as it chugged up Lake Wakatipu far below me.

Over my few days there I attuned myself to the rhythms of sunrise and sunset, times of high drama which demanded my full attention. Jagged Edge was like a stage in an ongoing and highly spectacular theatrical performance in which the mountains, sunrise, sunset, clouds and shadows were the star players.

Gazing up at the sharp point of the glass triangle, the house appeared distinctly ecclesiastical. From the breakfast deck that hung above a sheer drop, the shape was that of an inverted pyramid or prism. The sharp angle of the glass walls was startling from this perspective. I wished I could clamber onto the roof to examine the cables. From a distance, they looked like the talons of a giant peregrine.

The rest of the family viewed me with amusement. They were usually to be found relaxing in the 38C water of the infinity spa pool, limbs hanging languidly over the sides, watching tennis and cricket on the 103” TV or playing tunes on the Sonos sound system.

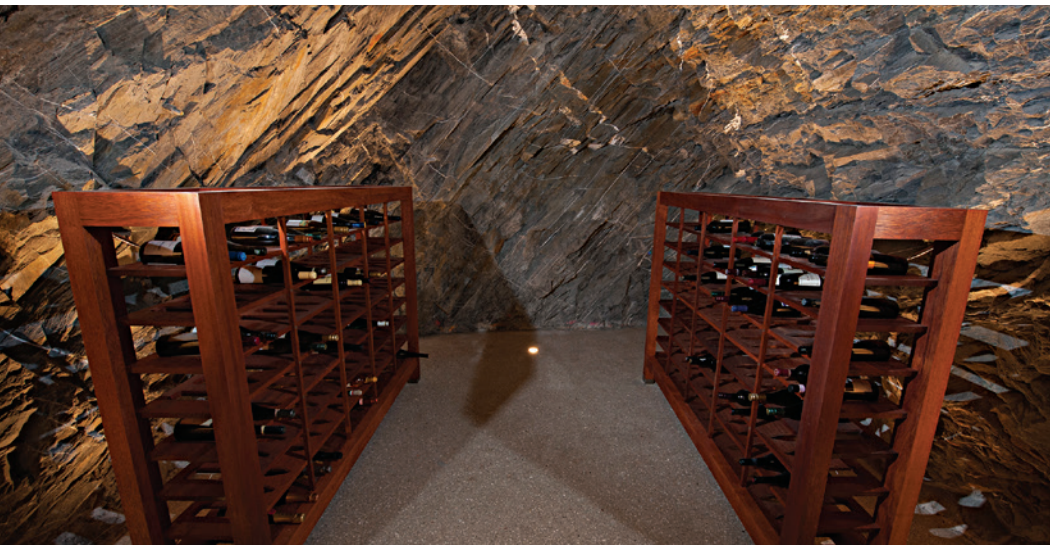


The master bedroom, is luxurious in the extreme. A red recliner facing the Remarkables has arguably the best view in the house. The ensuite bathroom is a study in minimalism.





ABOVE: Winter snow blankets the house and Remarkable mountains.
LEFT: The well-stocked wine cave beneath Jagged Edge.



The grand piano, which could be programmed to play all manner of impressive pieces, was another source of entertainment, while 007 himself would have been quite at home ordering a martini at the long sickle-shaped bar that rose up from the floor, or a bottle of Dom Perignon from the subterranean wine cave tunnelled into the schist behind the house.


At \$10,000 a night, it seems absurd to talk of simplicity, but the house's clean, elegant lines and lack of clutter lend it a quiet serenity. The sheen of the pale hardwood floor, the absence of solid walls, the open spaces flooded with light and

the reflective nature of the surfaces serve to deflect attention out towards the mountains that seem so close they're an ever-present part of life at Jagged Edge.

Apart from the piano and sound system, the sweet song of bellbirds as they flit amid the native plants in the lush gardens is the only sound you will hear.

If guest numbers exceed six, a short stroll away is an equally palatial five-bedroom, six-bathroom

house (\$5,000 a night) with a heated swimming pool, spa pool, sauna, gymnasium, kitchen, an expansive living area with wraparound deck and similar jaw-dropping views.

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