

The Motueka-Golden Bay News - March 2005 Castle home on world map

Neudorf has been put on the map thanks to an English Film Company.

Pioneer Productions has chosen Kevin and Glenys Johnston's clay brick home to feature in a television series, Extreme Homes of the World.

Mr Johnston said the home was one of 12 from throughout New Zealand chosen for the 26-part television series which will be aired on American cable television in 26 countries later this year.

Mr Johnston said the couple were honoured to have their "dream home" chosen for the series.

"They chose us from our website. That's pretty special. It's fantastic that we can share our home."

The Johnstons bought their gorse covered Neudorf property in 1990 and embarked on a journey to build a home.

After clearing the land they uncovered large amounts of clay. Faced with having to pay for the removal of the clay, the couple decided instead to use it to build their home.

From there, the dream of a castle began. What followed was months of intensive work to make 10,000 clay bricks and then to use them to build the first storey of the house. Building consent conditions meant only the ground level could be built from clay bricks.

Mr Johnston said while clay brick homes were not unusual, the house still stood out because of its castle-type features, including turrets and a surrounding brick wall.

"It is like a fairy-tale house."

The two-storey home includes a function room, restaurant and accommodation. The couple host weddings, conferences and themed dinner parties.

The house was completed in 1995, although it looks like it could have been built 100 years ago.

Recently the couple added a turret to the home and business to make way for a larger function centre and built a separate two-storey turret honeymoon suite. The additions have been made from a modified brick recipe using clay, sawdust and concrete, which is stronger and lighter than the original clay brick.

Mr Johnston said another turret was also planned for the back of the house to add further room for expansion.