

The Nelson Mail - March 2005 Mud 'castle' to feature on TV

A Neudorf couple's fairy-tale dream home has gained attention from an English film company.

Pioneer Productions spent yesterday filming Kevin and Glenys Johnston's mud brick home in Neudorf. The house was one of 12 of New Zealand's unusual homes which will feature in a 26- part television series called Extreme Homes of the World.

The castle-like home features clay bricks made from clay extracted from the property.

The Johnston's bought their Neudorf property in 1990 with no idea of what kind of house they would build. After clearing the gorse-covered land they discovered huge amounts of clay which either had to be disposed of or used.

From that the couple's dream to build a mud castle emerged and they spent the next five years making the 10,000 bricks needed for the house.

Building it was like taking a step back in time, Mr Johnston said.

"From looking at it, it looks like it was built 100 years ago. That was what we wanted."

The two-storey home includes a function room, restaurant and accommodation.

Since the home was completed in 1995, the couple have made a further 10,000 bricks with a clay, concrete and sawdust mix, to build two turrets.

The new brick was designed by Kevin's father Clive and was stronger and lighter than the original clay bricks, Mr Johnston said.

Mr Johnston said while mud brick houses were less unusual than 10 years ago, the house still stood out because of its castle-like features.

"We are delighted that they have taken an interest in our home just from our website. It was completely unsolicited which is great."

The television series is expected to be shown on an American Cable channel later this year and will air in 26 countries.

