



House photos:
Christopher Frederick-Jones



A great escape

Designed to embrace outdoor living, this sophisticated Sunshine Beach house provides its Melbourne owners with a sunny oasis of leisure

A holiday house should be a true escape. A place where daily routines and hectic schedules can be casually tossed out the window and no one really cares if you tip toe inside with sandy feet after traipsing back from the beach.

For Melbournites Sue and Nigel, plus their children, Matt and Emma, it takes just four-and-a-half hours to leave behind their daily life, kick off their shoes at the front door of their Sunshine Beach house and slip into holiday mode.

"As soon as we arrive I love walking in and opening up the doors. The sun streams in and you feel instantly relaxed," Sue shares.

Open plan and airy, the inviting layout of the beach house offers a complete contrast to the family's restored heritage home in Melbourne, which is exactly what they wanted.

Holidaying on the Sunshine Coast for years, Sue says the family developed an affinity for Sunshine Beach and decided it was the perfect place to establish a laid back home away from home.

"Rather than ocean views, what was really important for us was a great location, which was quiet and away from the crowds, yet still in walking distance to the beach," she explains.

Finding the perfect block three years ago, the

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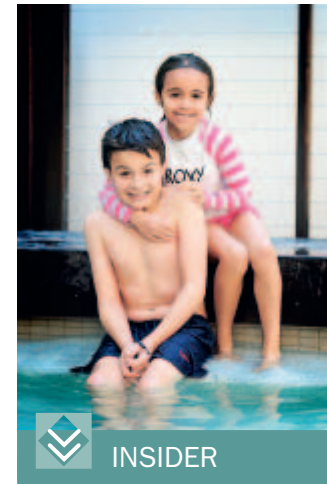
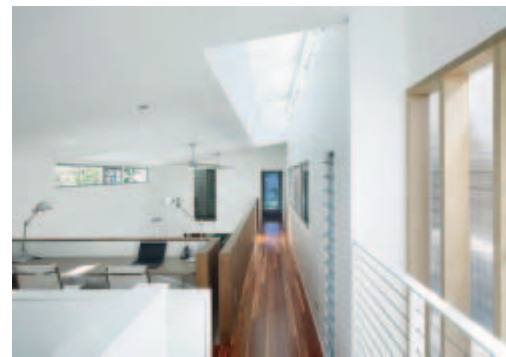
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couple envisaged creating an 'oasis of leisure' and enlisted architects Lindy Atkin and Steve Guthrie from Bark to make it a reality.

"We wanted an open, casual place where we could go backwards and forwards to the beach and which was easy to lock-up and leave. We also wanted to integrate a few separate spaces within an open-plan design to offer flexibility when the kids are older," Sue explains.

Working within the parameters of quite a tight site, enveloped by neighbouring houses, Steve and Lindy directed the focus of the home around a double height indoor outdoor room and swimming pool zone to create a central living and entertaining area that embraced the natural elements.

Designed to reflect the look and feel of a mid-century coastal beach house, albeit with the inclusion of a few modern luxuries, the exterior is a robust mix of exposed timber framing, timber screens, FC weatherboards and polished concrete, which flows indoors.

In keeping with the property's simple palette of materials the elevated lap pool is finished in Rockcote render for a textural finish similar to off-

form concrete, while a timber screen provides the framework for a jasmine vine to grow and form a fragrant green screen.

Between the courtyard spaces mondo grass and Eumundi Quandong trees also add to the greenery and enhance the feel of a private oasis.

With glass doors stacking back to provide a seamless connection between indoor and outdoor spaces, the lower level comprises a bedroom and bathroom for guests, open-plan kitchen and living area and a room centred on a pool table

"That was Nigel's request," Sue says with a laugh. "And it works really well, particularly when we have a lot of visitors. There is enough room for everyone to spread out, play pool, be in the pool, or sit and chat in the cabana or the courtyard."

To reach the upper floor a stairwell clad in polycarbonate sheeting leads to a study mezzanine, where a bridge connects bedrooms at either end of the house. To the north a parents' retreat sits above a courtyard space, while the children's end features a rumpus zone linked to their bedrooms.

To draw in natural light and enhance the sense of space a high set clerestory pop up window

encourages winter sun and natural cross ventilation.

Similarly, in the bedrooms, a pop-out corner window box, complete with louvres and upholstered seats, creates a visual connection to the outdoors while also providing a perfect spot to read.

Taking colour cues from driftwood and ocean hues, white walls are warmed with walnut stained plywood panels along the bridge, while timber veneer joinery merges seamlessly with the ebony kitchen cabinetry.

To furnish the larger spaces, the couple commissioned custom pieces from local company furniture by Marx and enlisted Lindy and Steve to design beds and select lighting including a pair of David Trubridge pendant lights that form a focal point in the dining area.

Built by GV Emmanuel Constructions, the project was completed in time for Nigel's 50th birthday party, which proved the perfect celebration to christen the beach house.

"It is our second home, but sometimes I'd like it to be our first," Sue reflects. "Whenever we leave you always wish you had just one more day, but the good thing is we know we're coming back."

Best spot

Matt: I like the pool and TV.

Favourite aspect

Emma: I like my room and my bunk bed and the window in the pool.

What works

Sue: We can leave all our things here and know when we come back everything will be exactly where we left it, which makes it easy to slip straight into holiday mode. Sunshine Beach has a really nice community feel. I love walking to the village for dinner and picking up a few things from the deli for lunch on the way home from the beach.



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