



# Beachhouses

DOWN UNDER

Stephen Crafti



# Perched above the Dunes

ARCHITECT ANTHONY GIONFRIDDO

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This beach house peers over the dunes. A thin strip of publicly owned foreshore separates the house from the beach. "We could have elevated the house a few metres higher. But we wouldn't have gained sea views. It would have simply made the house more prominent amongst the gnarled scrub," says architect Anthony Gionfriddo, who designed this two-storey house at Blairgowrie, a one-and-a-half hour's drive from Melbourne.

Gionfriddo excavated the site, removing five metres of soil. "It's a relatively steep slope. I was keen to anchor the house into its coastal setting," he says. The materials used for the house are treated quite differently on each level. The lower level is made of reinforced concrete. The upper level comprises a steel frame, expansive tinted glass, timber cladding and stone. "The materials pick up the colours of the surrounds. The limestone was quarried locally. And the western red timber will eventually turn a silvery grey, like the trunks of these trees," says Gionfriddo, pointing to the twisted tea trees.

As the site was excavated, the entrance to the house is on the first level. And instead of creating an obvious opening to the street, the front door is concealed behind timber-battened walls. Even the windows to the street are battened down

with screens. "I wanted to maximise the sea breezes in the house. The front door can be left open without having unexpected visitors," says Gionfriddo. The first level includes the kitchen, living and dining areas, together with main bedroom and ensuite. Both this bedroom and the living area feature open fireplaces set in limestone feature walls. Large sliding glass doors lead to a terrace with a lap pool. And to ensure the views aren't restricted from the living areas, a toughened glass balustrade defines the edge of the pool.

While the pool cools down the living spaces in the visual sense, it also acts as a canopy for the children's bedrooms below. The lower level also includes a guest bedroom, ensuite and kitchenette for friends and extended family. "The house was designed for a family with two children. But they also enjoy having friends staying over," says Gionfriddo, who included in the design a sophisticated kitchen for entertaining. The kitchen features an expansive Calcutta marble central bench. With its golden hue, there's a constant reference to the surrounding dunes.

Photography by Dan Magree



















