

HOUSES[®]

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COOL CITY SPACES

beach retreats



sleek lines furniture update

interview with luigi rosselli

smart spaces AIGP, Brannigan, Carroll + Carroll, Crawford, Boyle, Terroir
coastal homes Jones, Gionfriddo, Weir + Phillips, JCB, Middap Ditchfield
interiors McBride Charles Ryan, F2, Stanic Harding, Withers Miller, Liminal

dune dweller

Embedded into the delicate dunal topography of Victoria's Mornington Peninsula, this two-level family home by architect Anthony Gionfriddo embraces its low key coastal bush context while also giving a stylistic nod to the five-star Balinese resort ambience favoured by the clients.

OUT OF TOWN

THIS BEACH HOUSE SPEAKS VOLUMES about the power of collaboration. Anthony Gionfriddo's architectural vision has combined with the technical nous of builder client Matthew Hill to embrace an ambitious brief – to anchor a luxurious holiday house in the dunes while making the most of coastal bush views and remaining discreet from the narrow roadway at the front. The house also had to cater for children as well as adults and cope with the occasional large gathering.

The tranquil beauty of the original site was what drew Matthew here just a few years ago. His family made use of an existing fibro shack, while fermenting the notion that something great could happen on this site. After a few chats with the architect a complex but elegant design took shape.

The approach to the house is up a narrow, sandy street hidden away in the back blocks of Victoria's Mornington Peninsula. The architect has cleverly kept in scale with the surrounding housing stock – mainly modest fibro weekenders – by cutting the driveway into the natural slope of the block and tucking the garage and lower-level bedrooms under the main living level. Council would have been happy enough to give the green light to an upper street-facing level but Anthony wisely resisted. "There was nothing to be gained by building up at the front. This site slopes so steeply at the back that we could build the two levels that were necessary to accommodate the family and guests, without the monumental facade out on this narrow little road," he explains.

The visual impact of the front entrance has been diluted further still by a screen of hand-nailed, western red cedar battens, rhythmically spaced to allow light to seep into the front rooms of the house while also providing privacy and security. The timber has a gently expressive grain, explains the architect, that draws the admiring eye to its specific details rather than dulling the senses as would a monolithic facade.

The staged entry sequence – one enters side on, past a timber screen that hides the front door from the street – also hints at the playfully unfolding nature of the interior. Once inside the foyer one gradually discovers each portion of the skewed floor plan. All rooms are arranged to spill out into a wind-protected, grassed courtyard. "It is open plan but not everything is on show at once. The form turns so that as one detail is revealed, another is concealed," Anthony says.

Schematically, the house is a collection of discrete zones that flow into one another but retain a sense of exclusive identity, thanks in part to the L-shaped floor plan. Both upstairs and downstairs the house can be sectioned to keep the kids in view or out of sight, the guests private or engaged, the owners ensconced or involved. Varying ceiling heights flow through the house, subtly reinforcing this notion without being overt. The main bedroom illuminates this principle. It is accessible almost immediately inside the front door, but can be excluded from the foyer by the aforementioned door. It can also be entered from

across the courtyard, where floor-to-ceiling glass panelled doors can be opened to let in the ocean breeze and allow interaction with kids on a Saturday morning, or closed and draped for the Sunday sleep-in. Worth noting here is the remarkable feature wall in the main bedroom, finished in limestone quarried from nearby Portsea. Originally this was to face externally but the character of the stone was such that the architect and builder decided to turn it inwards to the room where its fractured texture is offset by glass ellipsoid wall lights.

At about five metres, the ceiling reaches its highest point in the living area. A custom-made lighting solution allows flexible responses to lighting requirements and obviates the need for a cherry picker to change light globes in the ceiling. A stone fireplace surrounded by the thematically consistent dark timber slats completes a warm and functional space, finished with polished concrete and local aggregate floors and extensive glazing facing inwards to the courtyard.

Swimming pools can sometimes be rather drab and unimaginative affairs, plonked in the corner of the backyard or up against the patio with only their shape to separate them from a million other pools. Not here. Anthony is certainly capable of thinking outside the kidney, and this is an exemplar. Running along the outermost edge of the outdoor entertaining area, the pool is an elegant stretch of water acting as an emphatic "full stop" to the top floor. It reads as a giant, watery window-box that not only engages the visitor on the patio, but acts as a bulkhead to the level below. Built upon a series of blades that form the walls for the downstairs bedrooms, the pool was one of the first parts of the house to come "out of the ground" and drew quizzical looks from friends and neighbours. "It was basically a box suspended in the air and I'm sure more than a few people didn't know what to make of it."

Downstairs comprises the kids' and guests' zones with a space for the clients' home office. Afforded natural light via a thickened glass skylight that is actually a "floorlight" in the courtyard above, it can accommodate the children as they grow older and provides access to the backyard, where a replica cubbyhouse has been built. From this level, a door through to the garage completes the circumnavigation.

A striking aspect of this house is the level of finishes. It's a credit to the construction team, which included its fair share of old-school artisans. A couple of them painstakingly put together the stone walls in the bedroom and lounge, and the joiner deftly crafted the heavy timber-slatted doors and balustrades that feature throughout.

Anthony Gionfriddo points out that this project had to function as a real house and not just a holiday house – the clients spend a lot of time in it. The real achievement here is not just that this function has been realised, but that the final realisation has overcome difficulties of site, scale, conception and construction to be as practically close to faultless as is possible. **CHRISTOPHER MOORE**

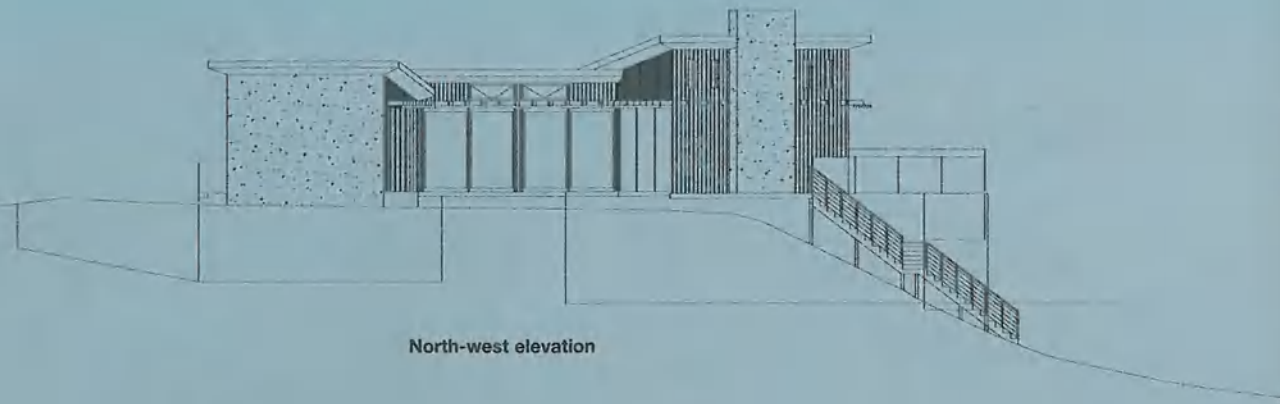


PREVIOUS PAGES: In contrast to extensive glazing elsewhere, the front entrance presents a semi-solid face of western red cedar. **THESE PAGES, ABOVE:** The grassed courtyard provides a sheltered outside space accessed from all rooms. **BELOW:** With its stone-clad fireplace the lounge is a snug winter room.





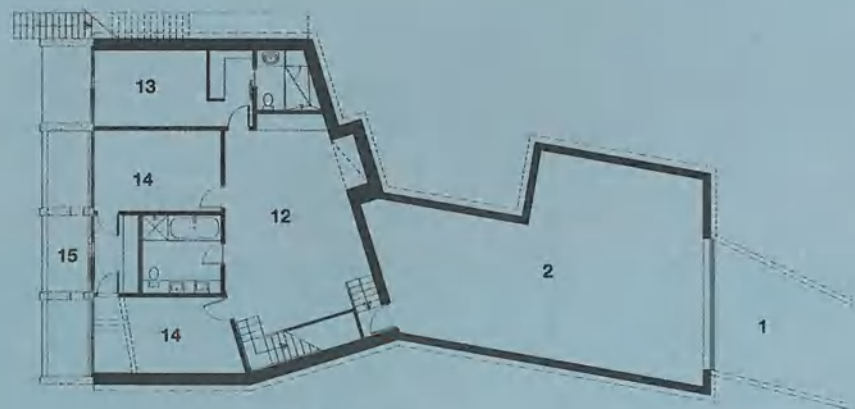
OUT OF TOWN



North-west elevation



Ground floor



Lower ground floor

- 1 Driveway
- 2 Garage/gym
- 3 Entry
- 4 Main bedroom
- 5 Kitchen
- 6 Laundry/pantry
- 7 Dining
- 8 Living
- 9 Grassed courtyard
- 10 Deck
- 11 Pool
- 12 Rumpus
- 13 Guest bedroom
- 14 Bedroom
- 15 Terrace



PREVIOUS PAGES, LEFT: The front door features an outdoor shower. RIGHT: The pool cantilevers over the lower ground level. THESE PAGES, ABOVE: The view from the opposite dune. BELOW: Looking out to the grassed courtyard.



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PRACTICE PROFILE
 The practice specialises in residential design, including new houses and alterations and additions. Personnel includes a principal architect and a lighting consultant.

PROJECT TEAM
 Anthony Gionfriddo,
 Jane McGuinness

BUILDER
 Concept Design and
 Construction Pty Ltd

CONSULTANTS
Engineer Greg Schofield and
 Associates
Landscaping Concept Design &
 Construction
Interiors Anthony Gionfriddo
 Architect and Concept Design &
 Construction
Lighting Jane McGuinness

PRODUCTS
Roofing Lysaght Spandek Hi-Ten
 metal deck roof, Colorbond
 'Woodland Grey' finish;
 powdercoated steel frames to
 eaves **External walls** Western
 red cedar, shiplap profile; Portsea
 limestone wall; marine ply lining to
 eaves **Internal walls**
 Plasterboard, painted Dulux
 'Berkshire White' at half strength
Windows and doors Capral 300
 and 400 series anodised
 aluminium frames **Doors** Stained
 Tasmanian oak slatted sliding
 doors, Centor A6 open rail sliding
 door tracks; Designer Doorware
 hardware **Flooring** Polished
 concrete with exposed Dromana
 granite aggregate and off-white
 cement; Supertuft Escape Velour
 'Mocca' carpet **Lighting**
 Lumascape 'in-ground' uplights;
 iGuzzini suspended track with
 'Metro' and 'Parallel' fittings; Flos
 'Brera V' wall light **Kitchen** Fisher
 and Paykel dishdrawers;
 Electrolux espresso machine;
 marble benchtops and
 splashback **Bathrooms** Fowler
 'Newport' toilet suites; Frameless
 Glass shower screens; Logic
 bath spouts; Luma shower arms
Climate control Daikin rc aircon;
 natural gas hydronic heating
Other Dining table and chairs
 custom-made by builder

TIME SCHEDULE
 Design, documentation
 12 months
 Construction 12 months

PHOTOGRAPHY
 Dan Magree