

AUSTRALIAN RESIDENTIAL ARCHITECTURE AND DESIGN

HOUSES[®]



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CONNECTION
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thoughtfully*

ISSUE 120 \$12.95



Two Wall House by Woods Bagot


• SYDNEY, NSW •

Unfolding behind a facade just 3.7 metres wide, this light-filled and spatially expansive house provides a blueprint for successful urban infill projects.

Words by David Clark
Photography by Trevor Mein

 4 (family home)

 3 +2 guest/study

 2 +2 powder rooms

 Site: 160 m²
Floor: 180 m²

 Design: 6 mths
Build: 1 yr, 6 mths

 \$4,800 per m²





01 The house opens onto an elegantly designed courtyard with a garage and studio beyond. Artwork: Linus Bill and Adrien Horni.



02 Two layers of skylights allow daylight to flood the wall of the living space. Artwork (L-R): Linus Bill and Adrien Horni; Anton Parsons; Dion Horstmans.

03 A zinc-clad roof slopes back from the 3.7-metre-wide frontage, momentarily disguising the house's modernity.

In the current and urgent discussions about the density of Australian cities, the models for urban infill, highrise nodal points or development corridors are too often developer-driven, cost-cutting, sub-quality misadventures that can leave us anxious about our future urban landscapes and civic communities.

Politicians, planners, councillors and developers might learn much from an infill project like Two Wall House in Lilyfield, Sydney. Woods Bagot principal and design director Domenic Alvaro designed the home for himself, his partner Sue and their two daughters.

It's a gem of a house – light-filled and spatially expansive, unfolding TARDIS-like behind a small and discreet facade just 3.7 metres wide. It nestles in beside a grander, older two-storey terrace house. Steelwork details in the balustrading and fencing hint at a connection between the two properties. A zinc-clad roof slopes back from the frontage, disguising its modernity, which, on closer inspection, is given away by the seamless design detailing of the timber, glass, steel and stone and an over-scaled dormer window above.

The project was a collaboration between Domenic and a friend. They bought the terrace house, which sat in the corner of a large block of land, with a plan to create two properties – one for each of them. The existing house took up 4.85 metres of the street frontage, leaving a sliver of land running down the side not quite wide enough to build a house that would make financial and architectural sense.

The idea that unlocked the entire scheme was to excavate into the existing house by 700 millimetres, keeping the original Victorian facade intact and creating a new party wall that democratically gives each property an equivalent width of 4.2 metres. Immediately behind the narrower facade of the new dwelling, the interior extends across to the new party wall, taking advantage of the extra width. The additional 700 millimetres – about the depth of modern joinery – allows enough habitable space for a comfortable home. The spaces have been masterfully arranged between the two long boundary walls, primarily using joinery to define rooms and living zones.

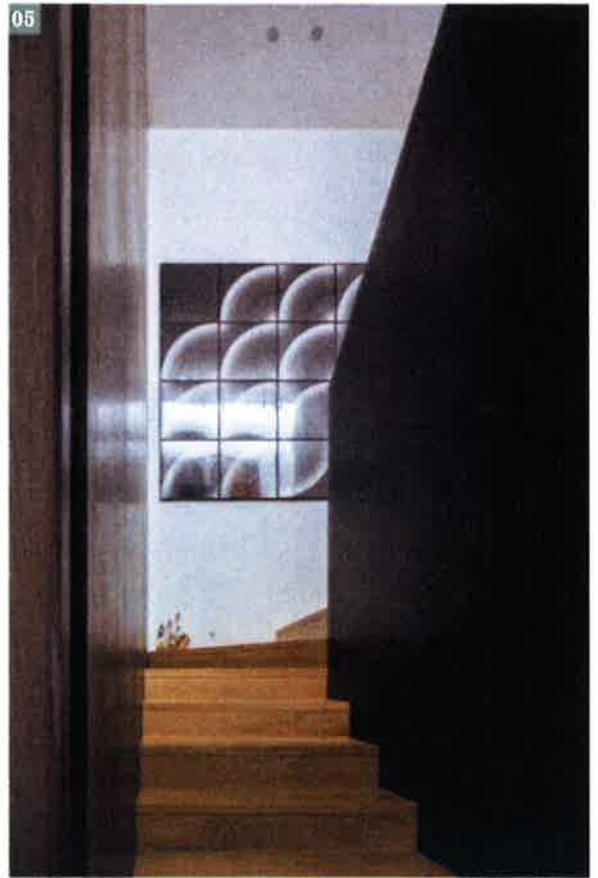
At the front is a compact and elegant sitting room. A frangipani

"... the house expands with space and light, and a very 'Australian' feel is strikingly evident from the front door."





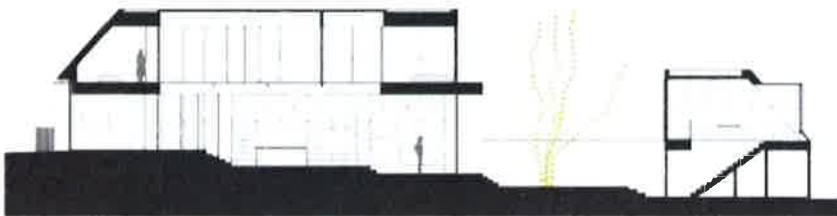
04



05

04 A long white wall, carrying the clients' expanding art collection, draws the eye through the house to the courtyard.

05 The stairway, designed for efficiency of space, brings a modernist material quality to the house. Artwork: Norman Carlberg.



Section 1:400

0 4m



06 A frangipani tree filters light through the compact and elegant sitting room. Artwork (L-R): Bruno Munari, Paul Ryan.

06

tree filters light through the large glass wall, which can be made private with roller blinds. This doubles as a guestroom, where furniture can be shifted to the edges and a bed pulled down from the dark timber joinery wall. It's a European-scale solution to hospitality. A pivoting door creates privacy and just beyond it is a powder room tucked beside the stairs.

From here, the house expands with space and light, and a very "Australian" feel is strikingly evident from the front door. It's rare to walk into a narrow row house and see so much light ahead. A long white wall, unadorned except for art that will continue to be collected over time, takes the eye through the house to the courtyard beyond. Two layers of skylights, one at the edge of the upstairs corridor and another in the roof above it, allow daylight to flood down the wall. Sculptures cast shadows and the shifting sun creates its own play of light.

At the entry the ceiling height is 2.7 metres. From here the house steps down under a constant ceiling plane so that by the time you're at the courtyard edge, it's nudging four metres. It's a lovely spatial sequence, moving from the compact scale of the front room to the expanse at the back, and the home has all the amenity of a luxurious open-plan apartment but with a grand sense of height and space. Vast sliding doors open onto the courtyard, elegantly designed by Daniel Baffsky of 360 Degrees Landscape Architects. Here, architectural detailing, considered materials and planting

provide a mix of textures and tones. There is a plunge pool and finally a garage with Domenic's studio above it.

Domenic defines this main living space with floor levels, joinery and accomplished detailing. The kitchen and dining table are on one level, and a few steps down is the living area with a large sofa. White joinery walls provide ample storage for day-to-day living and darker oak joinery provides visual contrast and marks out a different amenity – a wet bar with Domenic's whisky collection, for instance. This works as a family and entertaining space, accommodating kids, guests, meals, drinks with friends, television and lounging.

The stairs to the upper level, immediately behind the front room, are formed from eight-millimetre steel (like the stairs in the garage/studio), another way to save space that might otherwise be taken up by walling and add a modernist material quality. Upstairs, under the dormer window, is one kid's room. Then a large bathroom beside the stairs, a second child's room and finally, behind a pivoting door, the main suite with large wardrobe walls for Domenic and Sue, and an ensuite off the bedroom.

Domenic likes to experiment with housing models in urban spaces. His previous home was a multi-level project built on a 47-square-metre block in inner Sydney. It won him accolades and a World Architecture Festival award in 2011. This one, a different typology for filling in urban space, is just as accomplished. **30**

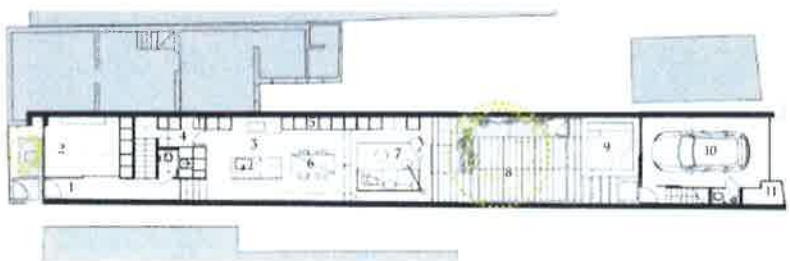


07

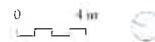
07 An over-scaled dormer window provides a place to sit and brings light into a child's bedroom.



First floor 1:400



Ground floor 1:400



- 1 Entry
- 2 Formal living/guestroom
- 3 Kitchen
- 4 Laundry
- 5 Storage
- 6 Dining
- 7 Living
- 8 Courtyard
- 9 Pool
- 10 Garage
- 11 Plant
- 12 Bedroom
- 13 Main bedroom
- 14 Study/bedroom (self-contained)

Architect**Woods Bagot**

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contact@woodsbagot.com
woodsbagot.com**Project team**Domenic Alvaro, Simon Lee,
Amy Lee**Consultants****Engineer:** Tall Ideas

Consulting Engineers

Landscaping: 360 Degrees

Landscape Architects

Joinery: Élan**Planning:** Planning Lab**Heritage:** Urbis**Certifier:** Inner West Council**Lighting:** Light Practice**Products****Roofing:** Lysaght Colorbond
roofing**External and internal walls:**
Concrete masonry**Windows:** Vitrosca

aluminium windows in

'Slate Grey'; Aneela sashless

windows in 'Slate Grey';

Alessi Design Group blinds

and awnings in 'Bronze Grey'

Doors: Custom timber doors,

designed by the architect,

manufactured by the joiner

Flooring: Solid American

oak flooring

Lighting: XAL lighting from

ECC Lighting and Furniture

Kitchen: Fiandre Marmi Lab

Statuario benchtops from

Artemdomus; Miele appliances

Bathroom: Agape Sen

fittings and Fiandre Maximum

surfaces from Artemdomus

Heating and cooling:

Ducted reverse-cycle

airconditioning

External elements: Anston

Architectural paving and

pool in 'Vega'

Other: Bassam Fellows (wood

frame lounge seating, Tractor

stools, Circular table, Tray

Rack side table, Kant table,

Mantis chairs, E15 Habibi

side table, Walter Knoll Oki

occasional table and La

Chance Salute coffee table,

all from Living Edge; B&B

Italia Mart armchair, Tufty-

Too sofa and Husk armchair

and footstool from Space

Furniture



08 High-quality materials and architectural detailing contribute to a sense of expansion in this urban infill project.

NEW HOUSE



Lune de Sang Pavilion by CHROFI

• NORTHERN RIVERS, NSW •

In a slow-growth forest in the Byron Bay hinterland, the final dwelling in a collection of powerful, monumental concrete structures has been completed – all designed to endure.

Words by Trisha Croaker
Photography by Brett Boardman

01 A wall of local stone, broken with blackbutt in shaded areas, acts as a spine, stitching together the house and landscape as one.

01



In a world alarmingly besieged by impermanence, the exploration of architectural permanence is an all-too-rare occurrence. Even rarer is the investigation of houses designed as current and future ruins; and of dwellings designed to stand in a potentially post-apocalyptic world. Such rigorous questioning lies at the heart of an extraordinary series of future-focused buildings in the Byron Bay hinterland.

Conceived as relics in the landscape, the three complementary projects on the site offer themselves as deceptively simple concrete and stone carcasses; like ancient structures that have been rediscovered and made exquisitely habitable, but which may at some stage be reclaimed by the forest. Their creation is the result of a decade-long collaboration between Sydney-based practice CHROFI and clients Andy and Deirdre Plummer, the owners of a former dairy property, which they are transforming into a 115-hectare slow-growth hardwood forest specializing in hard-to-find cabinet timber species. With some species taking three hundred years to mature, this is an enterprise focused on glorious varieties of the past being grown for the future.

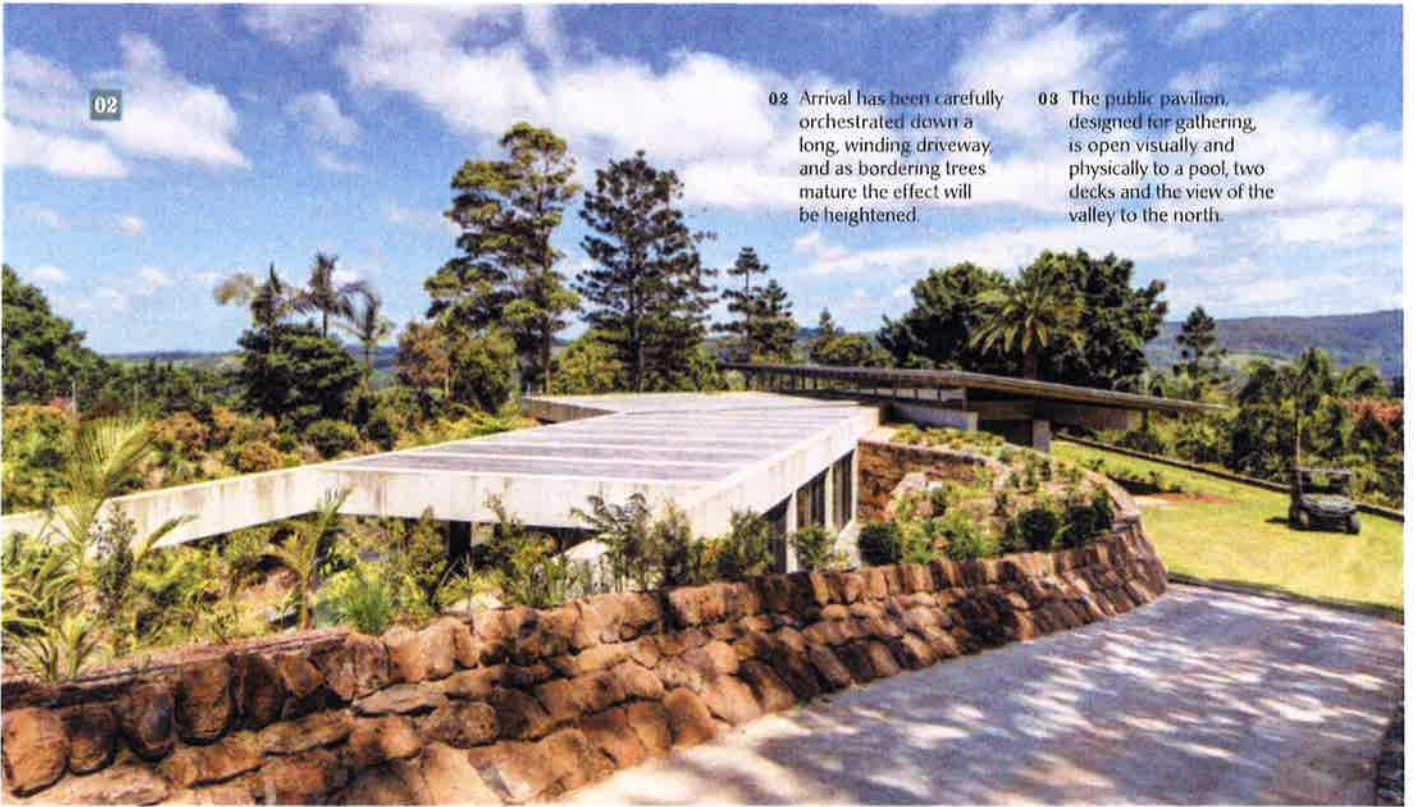
The Lune de Sang Pavilion, the most recent building to be completed on the site, joins Stone House (see *Houses* 100), the Lune de Sang Sheds (see *Architecture Australia* vol 103 no 1), General Manager's Residence and guest houses nearby. The single-storey pavilion forms the hub for farm life. In addition to longevity, the owners required a house that would accommodate two very disparate needs. With a big extended family, they needed their home to be robust yet elegant, catering for large and frequent gatherings. It also needed to afford a private space for Andy in particular to retreat to when desired. They wanted prospect and refuge in equal measure and for the dwelling to be "embedded, sutured and stitched" into the landscape.

The arrival has been carefully orchestrated down a long, winding driveway. As bordering trees mature, the effect will be a heightened, theatrical one with tree canopies giving way to openness and views in a sequence designed for maximum effect. First impressions are of a deceptively simple structure, a powerful form composed of three dramatic elements. A rectangular in situ concrete and glass-sided box stretches east-west, massive concrete roof beams and columns

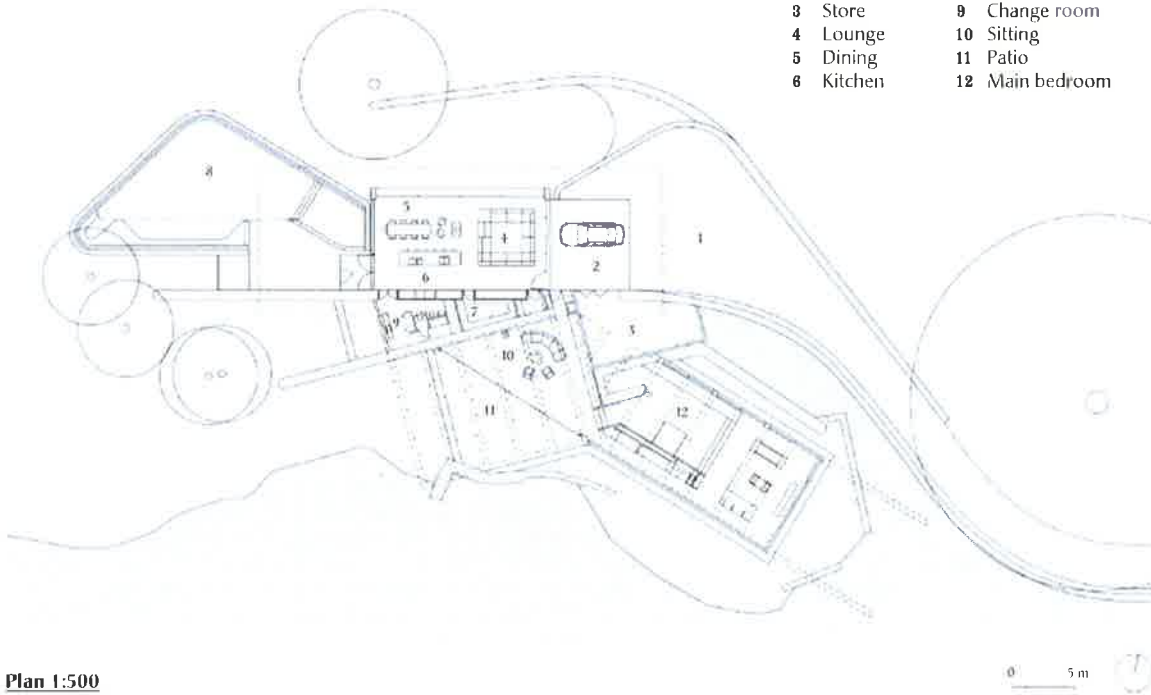
02

02 Arrival has been carefully orchestrated down a long, winding driveway, and as bordering trees mature the effect will be heightened.

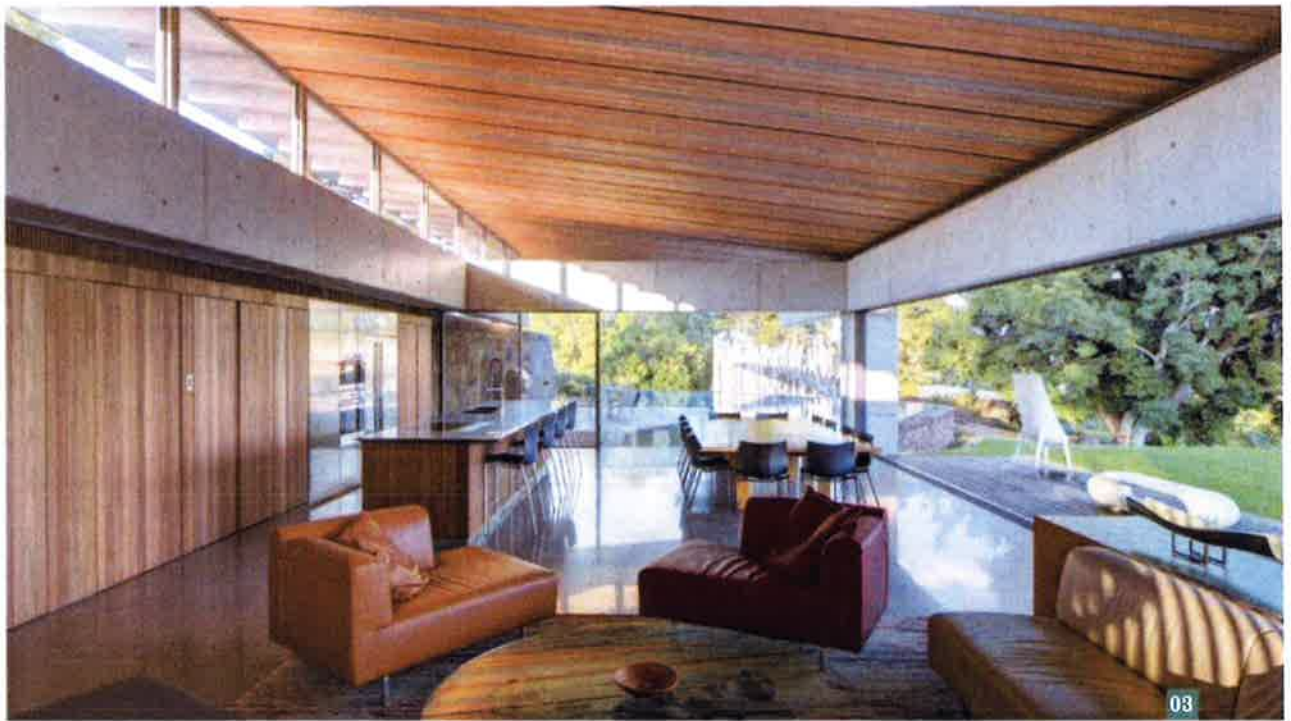
03 The public pavilion, designed for gathering, is open visually and physically to a pool, two decks and the view of the valley to the north.



- | | |
|------------|-----------------|
| 1 Driveway | 7 Pantry |
| 2 Carport | 8 Pool |
| 3 Store | 9 Change room |
| 4 Lounge | 10 Sitting |
| 5 Dining | 11 Patio |
| 6 Kitchen | 12 Main bedroom |



Plan 1:500



embedding the house. Along the southern elevation, a seemingly impenetrable wall of local stone, broken only with blackbutt in shaded areas, acts as a spine, stitching the house and landscape as one. Overhead, a strong yet surprisingly delicate oversized steel skillion roof lifts gracefully from the south and swoops to the north, hovering widely and tautly over four roof beams, two cantilevered dramatically to the east and west. The overall result is one of superbly tensioned lightness and strength, flight and permanence.

This box is the more public pavilion and gathering space, appearing initially as one large room catering to social activities such as cooking and dining. Open visually and physically to the north, west and east to a pool and two decks (all protected with massive roof overhangs), it reaches out to the valley while framing distant views. Materials have been pared to the minimum, with honed concrete floors below and golden blackbutt panelling above. A wall of vertical blackbutt panelling along the southern elevation (topped with clerestory windows) conceals a series of annexes housing a bathroom, butler's pantry and mudroom.

Rarely is the line between public and private spaces as strongly drawn as in this home, which has a second pavilion for sleeping, bathing and reclining physically separated and hidden from the living space. From the living area, you must go outside to go inside the private spaces. The private pavilion will become increasingly hidden as plantings mature.

Aiding this demarcation is one of the precinct's many sinuous stone walls, applied not just as a respectful nod to the owners' love of sculptor Andy Goldsworthy's work and old pioneer walls on site, but in this instance also to rise up and conceal, along with an earth berm, the almost subterranean private world behind it.

Entry to the private pavilion is through a cleverly camouflaged blackbutt door that leads into a world of much greater intimacy and beguiling geometries. Replacing the public rectangle's soaring ceiling is a flat-roofed exploded tangram – a series of geometries stretched and frictioned past one another to create one fluid space kinked and divided by cabinetry. Replacing the few massive concrete beams and columns of the public pavilion is a continuous sequence of concrete roof ribs and legs, consciously holding spaces securely. The lower ceilings, closer views, more intimate roof overhangs and tangible evidence of the house and roof anchoring to the site all contribute to a pervasive sense of serenity, and of it being unbreachable.

A corridor, with a wall of blackbutt cabinetry and a skylight, divides a rectangular sleeping/bathing/dressing space to the east and a triangulated reclining/art space to the west. In the latter, CHROFI has stretched the internal space north-west to a fine tip, and the roof overhang south-west in a similar fashion. With full-height doors leading to a covered outdoor terrace, backed internally by an unbroken stone wall and circled externally by mounded earth and stone, the effect is of an airy and luxurious cave. It is a secure retreat in which to enjoy an extraordinary collection of art, including works by Claudia Borella, Richard Whiteley and the owner, Andy Plummer.

This subterranean idea is further explored in the open-plan sleeping/bathing space, wrapped on three sides in glass and circled with earth and stone, with the bedroom carved out of the floor and dropped three steps lower. It's hard not to think that in lesser hands, any of these strategies could have resulted in an oppressive space. But here they are liberating, speaking of freedom and containment, flight and permanence. Like the rest of this joyous dwelling, these are spaces that simply belong here. In perpetuity. **35**



04 Lower ceilings, closer views and more intimate roof overhangs contribute to a pervasive sense of serenity, and of the private spaces being unbreachable.

05 The open-plan sleeping/bathing space in the private pavilion is wrapped on three sides in glass and circled with earth and stone.





06 The private pavilion is anchored into the ground via a continuous sequence of concrete roof ribs and legs.

07 The sleeping zone is marked out within the open-plan space by being sunken by three steps. Artwork: James Cuppy, from *The Weather Reports* series.

06




07

 2 (family home)

 1

 1 + 1 change room

 Site: 115 ha
Floor: 400 m²

 Design: 1 yr, 6 mths
Build: 1 yr, 6 mths





08 The public pavilion opens to a deck by the pool, framing long views to the mountains

09 The warm tones of the custom island bench and kitchen wall in the public pavilion contribute to the sense of it being connected to its site

10 A corridor with a wall of blackbutt cabinetry and a skylight divides the sleeping and bathing zone from a triangulated reclining/art space. Artwork: Coloured vessels by Ben Edols and Kathy Elliott. Vessel on table by Giles Bettison.

Architect

CHROFI

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Project team

John Choi, Jerome Caleaux, Steven Fighera, Tai Ropiha, Clinton Weaver, Eoin Healy, Max Kamlah, Elke Jacobsen, Olivia Savio-Matev, Albert Quizon, Dmitriy Lewicki, Ria Chaney

Builder

Cedar Creek Construction

Consultants

Engineer: KPH Consulting

Lighting: Lo-Fi

Cost planner: QS Plus

Products

Roofing: Lysaght Spandek; ironbark timber decking; in situ concrete; custom in situ concrete splitters

External walls: Bush rock; in situ concrete

Internal walls: Blackbutt vertical cladding

Windows and doors: Vitrocsa windows and doors

Flooring: Honed in situ concrete; ironbark decking

Kitchen: Custom island bench and kitchen wall by Boffi

Bathroom: Custom cantilevered basalt-clad vanity; custom milled log bench; Rogerseller sanitaryware; Boffi fixtures

Heating and cooling: In-floor hydronic heating

External elements: Basalt pavers in split finish; Kronos Cava Alborensis pool tiles in 'Aran' from Rocks On; Moodie Outdoor Products reinforced concrete grass pavers