

in your dreams

sleek, modern beach shack keeps it simple

words & photos **claire plush** and courtesy of **christopher frederick jones**



Nestled in Sunshine Beach, away from the hum of Noosa Heads, is a modern holiday retreat that pays homage to the original beach shack.

WHILST IT MAY LOOK a little different to its predecessors on the outside, its foundation is made of much the same: sea, sun and salty air.

Lindy Atkin and Stephen Guthrie from local architecture firm Bark Design used these natural building blocks as inspiration for a low-maintenance holiday home for a young Melbourne family.

The result is a robust beach house that sits comfortably on a leafy 536 square metre site and wraps around a secluded central oasis, perfect for spending long, lazy days at home.

The owners bought the land in 2009 after an unsuccessful search for the ultimate holiday home. At the time of purchase, a tiny shack riddled with asbestos and a rundown shed occupied the property. Still, the couple saw the small slice of coastal land as the ideal location to build their second home.

Enlisting the help of Lindy and Steve was the next step the owners took, after spotting one of Bark Designs' recent projects nearby.

Through phone conversations, emails and several face-to-face meetings with Lindy and Steve, it became clear what elements were important to the couple and what form the house would take.

The owners wanted it to have a relaxed beach vibe, be relatively fuss-free and extremely secure.

Set behind a timber fence, and pushed towards the southern boundary of the property to gain maximum sunlight, it is obvious the house has taken visual cues from coastal shacks of mid last century.

A low-lying boardwalk leads visitors from a sturdy gate across a manicured lawn to a timber-screened entry.

Entering the house, a sense of calm can be felt. White empty walls and polished concrete floors bounce light around the space, making it feel expansive and seamless.

A guest room falls off the main hallway near the entrance, complete with a walk-in robe, small patio and a bathroom that can also be accessed from the pool area. Side tables are positioned on either side of the bed and have been custom-made by Lindy and Steve as part of their agreement to furnish the house on behalf of the owners.

Lindy says that she and Steve chose ready-made furniture for the home as well as designing several pieces themselves.

"It's the dream commission," she says of the opportunity to work across all areas of the project.

Further into the house a laundry branches to the left and opens on a private drying courtyard on the southern edge of the property. >

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As the heart of the home is entered, the ceiling lifts and the walls seem to drop.

An open kitchen, large living area and outdoor patio are melded together to create a striking social space under a double-height ceiling.

A narrow pool screened off by timber slats runs parallel to the outdoor space but on a higher level.

Lindy explains the positioning of the pool is for two reasons.

“One is that you don’t have to have a whole fence around it because the pool forms the fence itself. Secondly, to get it up to the light a bit more,” she says.

Hidden from the street and surrounding houses, the entertaining area is the focal point of the home and uses the northern side of the property.

“Because there’s no view to the ocean, the whole idea was to make this a central oasis and catch the sun,” Lindy explains.

A smaller room flows off the back of the main indoor living area, housing an essential part of any holiday home – a large pool table. Walls of doors line three edges of the poolroom and open onto the living room, backyard and a smaller patio where the owners like to enjoy an afternoon drink.

For the owners, who regularly share the home with visitors during holidays, it was essential that the house was open yet had defined spaces where people could retreat separately.

“To be able to have the space and all feel connected, but then to be able to close it off and have different zones was something that we were quite keen to try and achieve,” says one of the owners.



Behind the kitchen, stairs climb to the second level of the home passing twin wall polycarbonate windows.

A mezzanine study floats on the landing and hangs slightly over the kitchen area below.

To the right of the study, two stairs lead to the carpeted kids’ quarters featuring a media room, bathroom and two bedrooms. Reading nooks are created with boxed windows in each room and custom-made bunk beds provide ample sleeping facilities.

From the kids’ area, a bridge lunges over the main body of the house to a parents’ retreat at the back of the site.

Enclosed to waist height, the bridge is lined in polished ply and overlooks the living area and kitchen on one side, and the outdoor space on the other.

Open cavity sliders conceal and reveal the main bedroom, which is shaded by the trees outside. Attached to the room is a walk-in robe and a large ensuite where louvres provide privacy and cross ventilation.

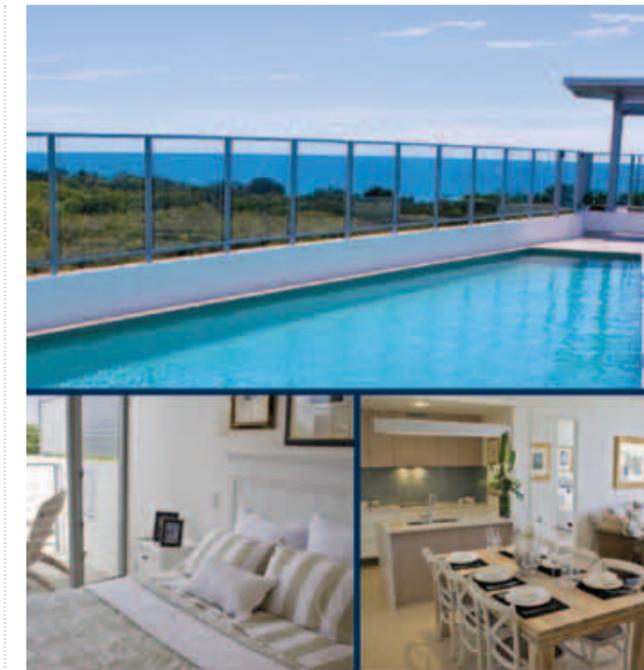
Remaining faithful to its inspiration, the U-shaped home is a true beach house that provides the owners with a place to unwind by the sea.

Whilst it’s a world away from their city lives and is a stark contrast to their ‘dark’ Edwardian house in Melbourne, it’s these differences that they relish.

“I love the brightness, and just how relaxed it is. We walk in and it all opens up so easily,” says one of the owners.

“It’s such an easy space to live and feel comfortable in.”

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