



House photos: Christopher Frederick Jones

Shared vision

Living in Budapest while they designed and built a house more than 15,000km away, the Hadley family developed a close relationship with their architects and builder, despite the distance

Social media is a popular way to connect. For the Hadley family, it also provided a way to stay involved with, and document, the construction of their home on the other side of the world. "I started a blog as a fun way of keeping a record of all the people involved and to serve as a timeline of the house," Robert says. The project began more than a decade ago when he and wife Anne bought a Maleny block of land overlooking the Glasshouse Mountains. With a long-term plan to create a home they could return to with sons Alex and Nick after travelling the world

with his job in international banking, the design concept developed and distilled over time. "I suppose I am somewhat of a frustrated architect, so it was a project of mine to pull together various designs from architects I like, as well as styles of furniture," says Robert of his detailed brief, which featured examples of houses by Glenn Murcutt and Lindsay and Kerry Clare. Flicking through *Vogue Living* at an airport in Amsterdam, he was drawn to the home of artist Stephen Dunlop, which was designed by Bark. Thrilled to discover it was a Coast architectural

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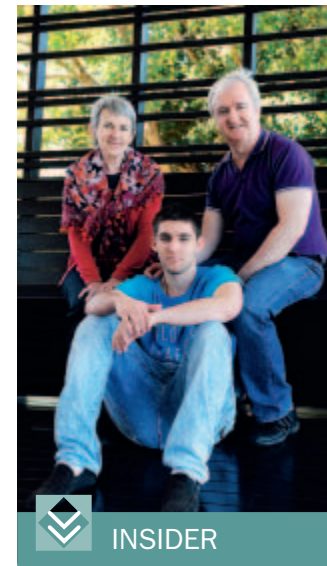
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practice he emailed off his brief while waiting to board his flight. Within days, Lindy Aitkin and Steve Guthrie had sketched initial concept plans that encompassed his vision of mid-century modernism paired with Japanese sensibilities.

"I guess I was an over-enthusiastic client, but we just clicked and were friends before we'd even met," says Robert of the countless emails and phone calls that followed. Similarly, he and Anne immediately hit it off with builder Nathan Quail and wife Cristie from Quail Constructions, whose work on the house won the 2010 Custom Built homes category at the Sunshine Coast HIA Awards.

"Each week, Cristie would email us photos of the build, which was a really wonderful way for us to be involved and get a feel for the progress, even through we were so far away," Robert reflects.

The couple also had Skype sessions with Nathan, Lindy and Steve, as well as video walk-throughs, which Anne says "really brought the house to life".

"It's hard to find the words to describe how it felt when we did finally see it after it was complete," Robert adds. "We knew it would be good, but actually seeing it exceeded our expectations."

Capturing the striking beauty of its surrounds, the house has panoramic views of the Glasshouse Mountains, right down the coastline to the Gold Coast, where skyscrapers can be seen on a clear day.

A gabion rock wall by Coast stonemason Bernie Boyer defines the edge of the property and reflects Robert and Anne's love of raw, robust materials. Beyond the fence, a central courtyard landscaped with natives and giant boulders from a nearby quarry takes the form of a Japanese Zen garden complete with flowing water and raked pebbles.

To the north, a pavilion comprising a music/work studio and guest suite was designed as a separate retreat for visitors with its own rural outlook.

"Of an afternoon, cows will come right up to our neighbour's fence, which is really lovely to look across and see," Anne says.

The star feature to the south is undoubtedly the mountains, which are framed throughout the house from various vantage points, including the garage and laundry. A soaring 4.5m front door echoes the scale of the volcanic giants. "I wanted the door to feel like it was opening the vault to the pyramids," Robert says of the handcrafted timber piece.

Upstairs, bedrooms for Nick and Alex are linked via a shared bathroom and separate TV area to form a boys' zone. An internal bridge leads to the other end of the house where Robert and Anne's bedroom overlooks the view and a void below that is screened with sliding shojis. Tactile materials such as recycled blackbutt walls, Quila joinery by Minka, rendered internal walls and exfoliated granite tiles add to the sensory experience.

Just as Robert envisaged, the flowing floor plan on the lower level is designed around the view and select furniture pieces, including a Nanna Ditzel dining table, Grasshopper chair and George Nelson pendants lights. Window boxes and shelves provide a ledge for an extensive collection of Charles Schneider art deco glass, which captures the light.

"Not everyone has a chance to build the house of their dreams, but we did," Robert reflects.

"Although the house makes the most of the drop-dead wonderful view, I often sit and look simply at the craftsmanship of the joinery and the way it all fits together. The attention to detail and quality of the work is beautiful and is a testament to all the people involved."

Favourite spot

Robert I like the window box that links the courtyard to the living area, and the eastern deck, which provides the connection with the view and outdoors, yet is protected from the weather.

Anne I love the laundry – it has been 14 years since I've had a proper one. When we lived in Singapore, the laundry was an outside room, in Amsterdam it was just a tiny cupboard and in Romania, a 1m-wide room. Here, it's so spacious and the windows are just the right height for me so I can see the view. It's a pleasure to do the washing.



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