

# Complete Package



Practice : Bark Design Architects  
Architects : Lindy Alkin & Stephen Gathrin  
Photographer : Christopher Frederick Jones



A complex composition recalling the intensity of the constructivist detailing which the 1920s moderns applied to small buildings.





### Complete Package

If designing a one-off house is a pleasure, how much more so when architects design houses for their own use. This house is an even more special case, since it includes not only a dwelling, but a workspace for the architect's entire office. This, as is another studio space, is in a completely separate building, looking deceptively small in some of the photos, but including a full complement of half a dozen drafting stations and all ancillary facilities.

At first glance, this detached work pavilion seems to match the apparently relaxed idiom of the residences. But a view from its other side shows a complex composition which recalls the intensity of the constructivist detailing which the 1920s moderns applied to small buildings. Echoes abound of Van der Vlugt's Theosophist camp cabins, of the younger Jourdain's exhibition pavilion, or of Schindler's Otter house.

Indeed, on closer inspection, the main house also reveals this depth and density of detailing. Much is recognizably contemporary Australian: the triangular clerestory windows, for example, above the large areas of glazing. These are not unique to Australia, but they have been much used here in order to establish a uniform window height while still allowing for the pitched roof, which is a necessity in those parts of the country



where rainfall, when it does arrive, comes in sudden drenching showers. And the elevated end of the house nearest the studio is indeed another "Queenslander".

But this "functional" metal and panel Australian house also has a wealth of complex details for compositional reasons. As in the work pavilion, these reference not only 1920s and 1980s preoccupations with the look of metal details, but also the timber cladding, lattices and "saddlebag" closets of 1970s houses in both Australia and California. And self-references also abound; details recur in the three separate buildings, but in a slightly inflected or modified form in each. This is more than simply keeping all three in the same "style", but a more elaborate game which takes time and use to fully decode. "Aussie constructivism"? The designer/occupants would perhaps find that too academic, but in a room full of people making architecture, such fleeting references are never going to be too far below the surface.

