

BUYING OR SELLING?

There is unlikely to be a better time than right NOW....



Kate Cox

"Our traditional selling season is Spring as buyers head towards Noosa with cheque books in hand, often glad to leave behind the southern chill and head for

some surf and sun. The media all over Australia has been repeating the theme: 'It's buy now in Noosa or miss out'. Buyers have a bit more choice in Spring and sellers take advantage of the seasonal timing.

Recently I've been selling to buyers from interstate - Victorians seem to be the majority but it is worth noting that Brisbane buyer activity has certainly increased with many looking for property to buy now and move here in a few years' time.

With buyers I like to get to know them and discover the style and type of property that suits them so I can introduce them to the right properties. It's the knowledge of the properties and the area that helps me match their needs. And if I can't find the property straight away I keep them updated on any new properties that are coming up on the market.

I enjoy connecting people with properties and my reputation is based on thoroughly understanding the needs of my clients and excelling when it comes to negotiating the price a property deserves.

I look forward to hearing from you soon about your property needs in Spring. The time is right NOW. Spring is in the air....

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Maleny House



Treading lightly

Bark Design have built a reputation for redefining how people interact with the environment. From community spaces such as art galleries, visitor information centres and bus shelters to private homes and now public art installations, the signature Bark Design embraces the environment with a subtlety that is both functional and formidable. Deb Caruso meets the design duo that are reshaping how Noosa interacts with its built environment – one project at a time.

Lindy Atkin and Steve Guthrie met when they were both working for one of the key influencers and forefathers of Noosa design, John Mainwaring. Like their mentor, site, vista, climate and the importance of spatial dynamics have resulted in a cult-like following from clients and an admiring public who are learning how to appreciate good design.

The Caloundra Regional Gallery project was their first job together and 17 years, 75+ projects and more than 20 architecture

and industry awards later, Lindy and Steve have forged a formidable partnership based on collaboration, trust and respect – with each other, their clients and the natural environment.

"We've always seen it as important to develop a really extensive brief at the start," Lindy said. "It's about how our clients interact with the space and our understanding of that interaction. It's not about what it looks like, it's about how it feels."

Steve agrees, adding that from a functional point-of-view there are great experiences to be created if the project is suited to the landscape and the climate.

The team have forged a strong style based on environmental design principles and functionality and while their signature-style skillion roofs, use of natural products strengthened by the presence of steel and glass and pavilion-style living is easily recognisable, they pride themselves on creating unique designs for every project.

"It is important to note that it's not a 'Bark house' – it's the client's home," Steve says. "Every project ends up having its own character and personality, just as the owners are all different."

Lindy says while there are consistent details throughout the Bark collective, this is more a reflection of solid design principles than templated solutions.

"Our common elements are the functional things that respond to climate such as having shade on walls; roofs that reach up to the north to make sure the winter sun is allowed to scoop into the depth of spaces; and in summer having a large enough overhang to keep the sun out of the house so that it doesn't get too hot.

"We also focus on natural ventilation rather than air conditioning so lots of louvres and strategically-placed high level windows that extract heat."

For an indication of the elements that Bark favours, you need look no further than their own award-winning 'barefoot studio' perched on a crest and snuggled between two tall Bloodwood trees overlooking Noosa from Tinbeerwah.

The studio was built in 2001 when Steve and Lindy realised the opportunity to expand their business and Lindy said it was the best decision they ever made.

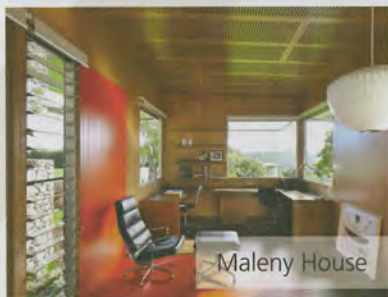
"We started looking at commercial space and it was very expensive and the buildings weren't what we wanted to be in," she said. "Since moving in here we haven't looked back. Clients love it and it gives them a good sense of what can be achieved."

"Integrating landscape into the project has been a theme right from the very beginning," Steve said. "For example, Marcus Beach House is basically two pavilions with a Moreton Bay Ash in



*It's not a 'Bark house'
– it's the client's home*

Spoonbill House



Maleny House



Stephen Guthrie and Lindy Atkin

the middle and most of our projects are designed to incorporate the natural environment in which the building is going to stand."

Despite starting out with a public space project, the majority of their work is residential with 60-70% of housing projects at any one time.

"Regardless of the work we have on, when we're developing a client project we only have ONE project and that's theirs," Lindy said.

It is this approach that has led them to build lifelong friendships with clients who actively refer them or engage them for new projects.

In fact, one of their dearest clients was the MC for their wedding which was held in the studio, again showcasing the flexibility of the space and the ability to transform it from a highly functioning office to a stunning setting for a celebration.

"Most people who come to us have worked all their lives and saved up all their money and this is the first house they've had designed for them and it's a big deal," Lindy said. "They don't know how to do anything, they don't know what the process is, they don't know

what stages you have to go through.

"We encourage them to speak to other architects and to our clients to ensure they feel comfortable with who they are working with. You have to develop a rapport with somebody and it's got to be right because you're going to live with it potentially for the rest of your life. It should be an enjoyable process."

Steve said that sometimes clients need help to understand how good design can enhance their lifestyle.

"Sometimes our job is to help get our clients out of the box that they're used to and into an environment that is fit-for-purpose and designed specifically for them and their environment. It is an evolutionary process.

"The context for good design is developing a climatic and landscape response with cultural and historic factors that are overlaid and intermeshed with the client's wishes, wants, desires and lifestyle personality."

Lindy said that while this sounded big picture, it does not have to mean big budget.

"We have delivered homes that cost from \$300,000 up to \$2.1 million," she said. "We even delivered a two-bedroom



Growth by Bark

"Growth" was the winner of the Noosa Biosphere Art Prize 2012 and was commissioned for Floating Land Festival 2013.

For the project, 10 architecture students worked with Bark Lab for six months to create 3,000 plywood pieces in the shape of the iconic Noosa Council floral emblem, the Boronia Keysii.

"At the time, Noosa Council had been lost to amalgamation and we wanted to get it back," Steve said. "It was our miniature political statement."

While "Growth's" themes were partly about navigation, for Bark Lab it was really about the process and working with the students.

"The reason it was architectural for us was that it was about looking at and responding to the site," Steve said. "That's why the students were into it too because that's what we do. When you go to investigate a site, you work out what's the most special thing or what should be highlighted and how it looks from every angle."

The project grew a life of its own with an invitation to participate in the Arts & Science Festival at the Sydney Powerhouse and an expanded version of 11,000 pieces as part of the annual "Sculpture by the Sea" on Bondi Beach.

The last stop was talks at the local art galleries on the project and its evolution. "Growth" was recently awarded the "Art in Architecture" prize at the recent Australian Institute of Architecture, Queensland State Architecture Awards.

home with stand-alone solar power for \$40,000. It's not about money – it's about redefining the space and how people interact with it."

"Rather than having quantity, focus on the quality of the home," Steve said. "How it interacts with the natural environment outside and the people and animals inside. It doesn't have to be expensive – it is an investment but it doesn't have to cost the earth, literally.

When it comes to the "s" word that is banded about these days Steve and Lindy have a more philosophical approach grounded in their training and practical experience.

"I think the word sustainability is just good design and that is what we were taught at University," Steve said. "Then it got branded and became a thing. Some people think it is about solar panels and a water tank whereas it's much more to do with analysing a site and working out the sun path and using smart materials that are sustainably produced or recycled."

For Steve and Lindy, at the heart of sustainability is the people.

"That's the main thing. If people are happy in their environment it can nurture them and they feel more connected to the landscape," Steve said.

Lindy can sense a move towards 'slow architecture' inspired by the Slow Food revolution where people are seeking a more authentic experience and responsible production.

"People are really starting to look at the inherent values in a property and using materials sensibly."

Steve agrees saying that client's awareness of sustainability issues had increased dramatically over the past decade.

"In terms of our first discussions with clients, we are talking about sustainable design elements as a normal thing whereas before there was a lot of uncertainty.

"As well as designing tailored houses for individual clients, we enjoy doing a lot of local government work, which is architecture but also embraces urban design and place making."

From the Caloundra Art Gallery to the Noosa Visitor Information Centre and Noosa Junction Bus Shelter, about 20% of Bark's projects at any one time have been public works for local councils across Queensland's eastern coast.

One of their next projects, Beerwah Town Square, will include butterfly towers which will have the Richmond Birdwing Butterfly over them and coin slots for kids to "make a wish" and donate to Wildlife Warriors and continuing the theme of marrying art and design, there will be multimedia presentations with sound recordings.

"A lot of our projects include artistic elements such as the shade panels for the Noosa Junction Transit Centre and the Cairns Bus Station," Steve said.

"Residentially, we have employed similar elements, such as at Woodgate House where we used acrylic screening to play with the natural light to create shadow patterns that mimic images from the natural surroundings.

"It's about making a positive difference in people's lives through design and fostering an awareness of how design can improve quality of life.

"The whole process requires a lot of trust and we have worked hard to get that. We want to make it so comfortable for people that they can rely on us to manage the entire process for them."

Bark Design have recently expanded into offering full furniture packages so the design philosophy can carry across the whole house.

What's next for these two? In the short term, they are off to Iceland where they have been invited to speak at the Iceland Academy of Arts which is home to Iceland's School of Architecture and Design.

In the long term, in their own words "Architects never really retire!" and let's hope they don't for the sake of the next generation.



Designed for your natural state

Multi Award-winning Bark Architects design homes that are individually crafted for your environment and lifestyle.

Red Rock Beach House, 1770



"We are now the proud owners of the most amazing beach house on one of the most amazing beaches in Australia. And as we sit watching turtles, whales, sea eagles, ospreys and wallabies there is literally nothing we would change. The design process was a pleasure. Lindy and Steve captured very early the essence of what we wanted, a modern beach house immersed in nature." - Ian, Client

