



# The Alfresco Office

The Sunshine Coast Regional Architecture Awards recently celebrated the built environment. Deb Juleff discovered local winners who take their art seriously.

Perched high on a hill in the Noosa Hinterland sits Bark Design Studio, a functional and inviting space that speaks volumes about the office inside. Created by the inhabitants of the alfresco office space, Bark Studio blends a fully functional office with its surrounding environment.

It is this coexistence with the environment that captures Bark Design's philosophy and has resulted in recognition and numerous awards,

competition for the Caloundra Regional Art Gallery. The pair won the competition and the design and delivery of the building marked the beginning of a successful partnership.

Bark Design's Studio in the Noosa Hinterland was awarded a commendation as well as being chosen as the Sunshine Coast Region House/Building of the Year at the Royal Australian Institute of Architects (RAIA) Sunshine Coast Regional Architecture

"Designed as a home office, it currently functions primarily as a design studio, but with evidence of regular habitation. Stephen and Lindy have well and truly met their brief to showcase their design approach and philosophies whilst making an inspiring place to work for the Bark Design team and their clients.

"This building is almost a physical embodiment of the way the practice not only approaches its architecture, but

to lightly touch the ground. The detailing of every aspect of the building is meticulous in its resolution without being laboured."

According to Stephen, the office was a bit of an experiment and the brief to themselves was to showcase their design approach and philosophies whilst making an inspiring place to work for the Bark Design team and its clients.

"The challenge was to get away from all but still have all of the technology and amenities required to service clients," he says. "Our driving force in design is to incorporate the site, climate and natural environment, especially the integration of landscape."

This is apparent when looking at Bark Studio with the two eucalypts integrated

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including scooping the pool with four awards at the Noosa Living Smart Awards.

Bark design started up in 1997 when founders Stephen Guthrie and Lindy Atkin collaborated on a design

Awards held on Friday 8 April.

In commenting the project, awards director Hamilton Wilson says: "This is a tremendous little building. It was a pleasure to visit and the jury is sure that it would be a great place to work.

about the essence of their personalities. Well structured without being banal, playful without being reckless, economic without being frugal and experimental without being ill considered," Hamilton says. "The building is logically conceived

into the building which juts eastward looking at the coastline between Noosa and Cooloom.

The main studio space services five full time staff and is more of a verandah in that it is long, thin and opens up on all sides. The functional part of the office is on the rear side of the building with kitchen, toilet, storage and files. The mezzanine level incorporates a library as well as sleeping and bathing spaces.

The studio has been designed as a place that someone could live permanently or could run a home studio.

"The whole building incorporates environmentally sustainable design and climatic principles," Stephen says. "As the building gets the eastern sun, automated external sunscreens were installed to provide protection from glare. The steel structures can be recycled and the walls, ceilings and floors were all constructed around the size of the large sheets of plywood, sourced direct from the factory to minimise wastage."

Louvers are a key feature throughout the space to encourage natural ventilation. "The changeover of air is fantastic. We can pretty much control the breeze as it comes up from Cooloom," Stephen says.

"We always try to create a climatic responsive design process using simple, proportionate spaces using the climate and the site that the house is on with the economy in mind.

"Designing our own space was a relatively easy task. Lindy and I already had the land and knew it intimately so when we returned from a trip to Los Angeles and Cuba we were inspired to begin," he says.

According to Stephen, they try to instil a collaborative process with clients from the early stages. "We try to steer clients towards thinking of the house as something that starts a lifestyle rather

than a pre-conceived idea of what it should look like and what it should be built with. Those answers come out of the process of defining a lifestyle."

Bark Design Architects works on a broad range of projects from residential to commercial and everything in between. Stephen says the projects the team works on range from thousands to millions of dollars.

"One of our most recent projects was as one of the 12 leading architectural firms on Elysium," he says. "This has been a fantastic opportunity for Lindy and I giving us the chance to work with some of our most exceptional peers."

Bark Design will now compete in the State RAIA Architecture Awards.

### Integrated Environment

Bark Design Studio designed by Bark Design Architects  
 185 Sunrise Road, Noosa Hinterland.  
 Project Architect: Lindy Atkin Design Architect, Developer and Interior Designer: Bark Design Architects  
 Project Team: Stephen Guthrie and Lindy Atkin  
 Builder: Ron Scholes



PHOTOS: Peter Hysell

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