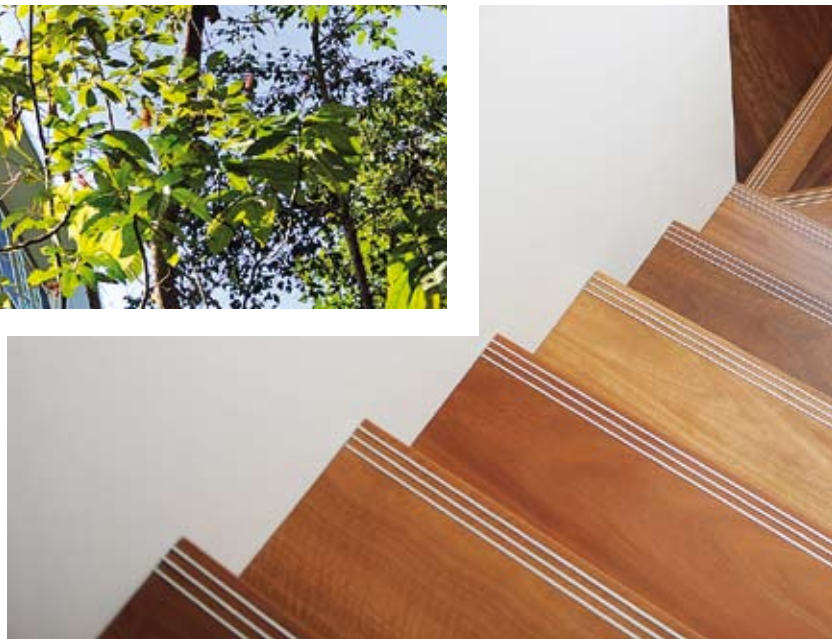




Views for life

Drawing on the iconic Queensland veranda for inspiration, architect Chris Morrison designed his home with all the benefits of outdoor living, cleverly tucked indoors

Words KYLIE JACKES





The ubiquitous Queensland veranda and back deck always rate highly whenever people discuss the best aspects of their home.

Synonymous with relaxation and entertaining, the veranda is a favoured spot in any house as it allows you to enjoy the outdoors but remain shielded from the weather. With this in mind, architect Chris Morrison set about designing his Buderim home to resemble a long linear veranda.

Although relishing the chance to design a place for himself and wife Cherie, Chris admits it was the most challenging project he has undertaken. The narrow block on the side of a steep hill, located off a busy street, presented many design constraints such as height restrictions and a minefield of underground services.

But, with an elevated south-east outlook,

Chris chose to keep the house simple and capitalise on the site's best aspect — the view. "The project was really driven by the forest views and the distant ocean views and, because the site was orientated to the south-east we could use an expansive amount of glazing without attracting heat gain," he explains.

Inspired by commercial architecture, Chris likens the home to a veranda with several long, narrow, open-plan living spaces enjoying unencumbered views, with a wall of glass providing a buffer from the weather. Set on two levels, the upper floor features a deck that helps draw in the breeze from the leafy tree canopy, while downstairs a wraparound patio creates the feeling you are literally sitting in the midst of tree trunks.

With simple lines, the house has a contemporary feel and is built from a mix of robust lightweight materials including Colorbond, aluminium, steel, glass and fibre cement, which were selected for their durability and timeless appeal.

"My idea of living on the Coast is having a home that doesn't need constant maintenance, which is typical of old Queenslanders with lots of timber, so I chose building materials that respond well to the environment and, once they're erected, there's no maintenance," Chris explains.

Subtle in colour, with an earthy palette of taupe and olive green, the home reflects the natural surrounds, yet its shape casts a modern silhouette among the trees. "I love the way the house's straight lines and ordered form contrasts against the randomness of the trees when you drive up the street," Chris says.

Despite a relatively small footprint of just 300 square metres, the house feels deceptively larger and accommodates five bedrooms, two spacious living areas and



Cherie, Chris and Thomas Morrison

HOME TRUTHS

Best spot in the house

The deck when it's raining. The forest transforms from shades of light green to dark green. When it is humid and it rains we get cloud mist floating between the house and the forest, and the surrounds become very eerie, like a scene from the movie *Sweeney Todd*.

Favourite architectural feature

It would be the straight lines of building forms that contrast against the randomness of the forest.

Biggest splurge

The glass was a big investment but if you didn't have it, it wouldn't be the same house it is today.

three bathrooms. "Although the house isn't really large, it feels much bigger than it actually is because it has been built with simple square forms and spaces with minimal internal walls," Chris explains. "And, with so much glass in the house, you don't feel constrained because you're always looking out at the view."

Originally designed for just the two of them, Cherie says the house was quickly required to accommodate three people, with their son, Thomas, proving a somewhat unexpected arrival. "After we'd submitted the plans to council for approval, I found out I was pregnant. We didn't want to change the layout because it would take so much longer to get building approval," Cherie explains. "But we were confident the design was flexible enough to deal with the change, so Chris's office became the nursery and his workspace moved downstairs."

With a second child due in the next few months, the couple agree the house is more than big enough for a family of four. "When the kids are young they'll be upstairs, but I am sure when they get older my office will move upstairs and downstairs will become one big play area," Chris says.

Furnished with dark chocolate leather lounges, which complement the spotted gum timber floors, the decor has been kept minimal so as not to detract from the ever-changing view. "Because the interior walls

are all white they take on a greeny glow from the trees during different times during the day. And, at night when we draw the blinds, car lights coming up the hill hit the trees and project a leaf pattern on the walls," Cherie says.

Chris says their home has given him a greater appreciation of the many factors that can affect design. "As the architect and client you really see both sides of the equation, particularly budgetary considerations," he says. "You want to explore ideas and create a statement, but you still have to deliver it on budget and with this house we exceeded our expectations." 