

DUAL PERSONALITY

Architect and Grand Designs Australia TV presenter, Peter Maddison drew on the surrounding area's 1950s heritage to design a contemporary home for builder Dean Atkinson, wife Dana and their family

■ WORDS / Marg Hearn ■ PHOTOGRAPHY / Gerard Warrener

Referencing the local Beaumaris environment, the landscaping was designed by Mark Browning from Cycas Landscape Design and Consultancy, and includes indigenous and native plants

Bedroom and living space functions are clearly delineated in two parts: a masonry section and an adjacent cantilevered zinc-clad box



Designed by Maddison Architects and craftsman-built by Atkinson Pontifex, this substantial home atop a hill has won a bevy of industry accolades



The quaint bayside suburb of Beaumaris, 20km southeast of Melbourne's CBD, has evolved in a slow and very measured way. So too did this head-turning modern home, designed by architect Peter Maddison, director of Maddison Architects, and built by its owner, Dean Atkinson, co-director of Atkinson Pontifex, a boutique Melbourne Bayside construction firm.

When Dean and his wife, Dana were looking for an architect to design their family home, Fiona Austin, a local interior designer and director of Austin Design Associates, suggested Peter Maddison as a first port of call. The synergy between prospective client and architect at their initial meeting back in 2006 was immediate.

Dean is a longtime resident of Beaumaris, which is also familiar territory for Peter as Beaumaris is home to many experimental and often minimalist

houses designed by notable Australian architects during the '50s and '60s. Examples include Grounds Romberg & Boyd, Chancellor and Patrick, John Baird, Yuncken Freeman, Mockridge, Stahle & Mitchell, McGlashan Everist, Douglas Alexandra, Peter McIntyre, Tad Karasinski and Kevin Borland.

A 1956 Royal Institute of Architects *Guide to Victorian Architecture* attributed Beaumaris with "the greatest concentration of interesting homes in the metropolitan area". According to *The City of Bayside Inter-War & Post-War Heritage Study 2008*, "The recurrence of modern architect-designed housing in Beaumaris from the late '40s until the late '60s has been a highly significant theme in the historical development of the area." Clearly, an innovative, architect-designed, contemporary home that would be respectful of its local context, was to be a key element of the design brief.

"Dean is very passionate and considered about what he does," Peter says. "Through this project — personally building a home for his family — Dean was interested in exercising and showcasing his skills as a builder. He was happy to entertain a challenging build and an architecturally challenging design."

Other than the requirement to accommodate a few "toys" at basement level, namely a caravan, speedboat, the obligatory builder's ute and a workshop (a carryover favourite space from Dean's previous abode), "It was an otherwise open-ended brief as to how it might look," recalls Peter. A media room, powder room, parking for several cars, lift and stair access completed the picture underground — about one-third of the interior space. Dean was, however, resolute about the use of low- or no-maintenance materials. Having built many homes for clients — and indeed

himself — near the sea, Dean had an intimate understanding of material durability.

"I love the sea, so when I saw the water from the block, I had to have it," says Dean of the elevated 970m² property. The existing two-storey beach house was assessed for renovation but found to be "structurally beyond salvation", says Dean, a life member of the Beaumaris Conservation Society. Extensive effort to protect and incorporate two large native trees in the design couldn't prevent one from falling due to drought conditions, however a great deal of natural vegetation was retained. Comfortable outdoor living and enjoyment of the 180-degree bay views were priorities, as was compliance with local building regulations "to avoid being constrained by what I could or couldn't build," Dean says.

Atkinson Pontifex regularly works closely with architects and, as was the case here, respects

design as the architect's domain. The building firm does, however, like to collaborate in the early stages of design to discuss construction options, materials and budget. It was an approach that meant "no variations for the owner," laughs Dean. In handing over the reins, he says, "I had a lot of confidence in Peter and in his design — he got it pretty right first go."

Explaining the design concept Peter says, "I wanted to show a visible connection to the area in terms of the mid-century style that had a lineage with mid-century houses." His clients were on the same wavelength. "We wanted to create a home that referenced the '50s and '60s with state-of-the-art building technology that was respectful of the surroundings and had a unique Beaumaris feel," says Dean.

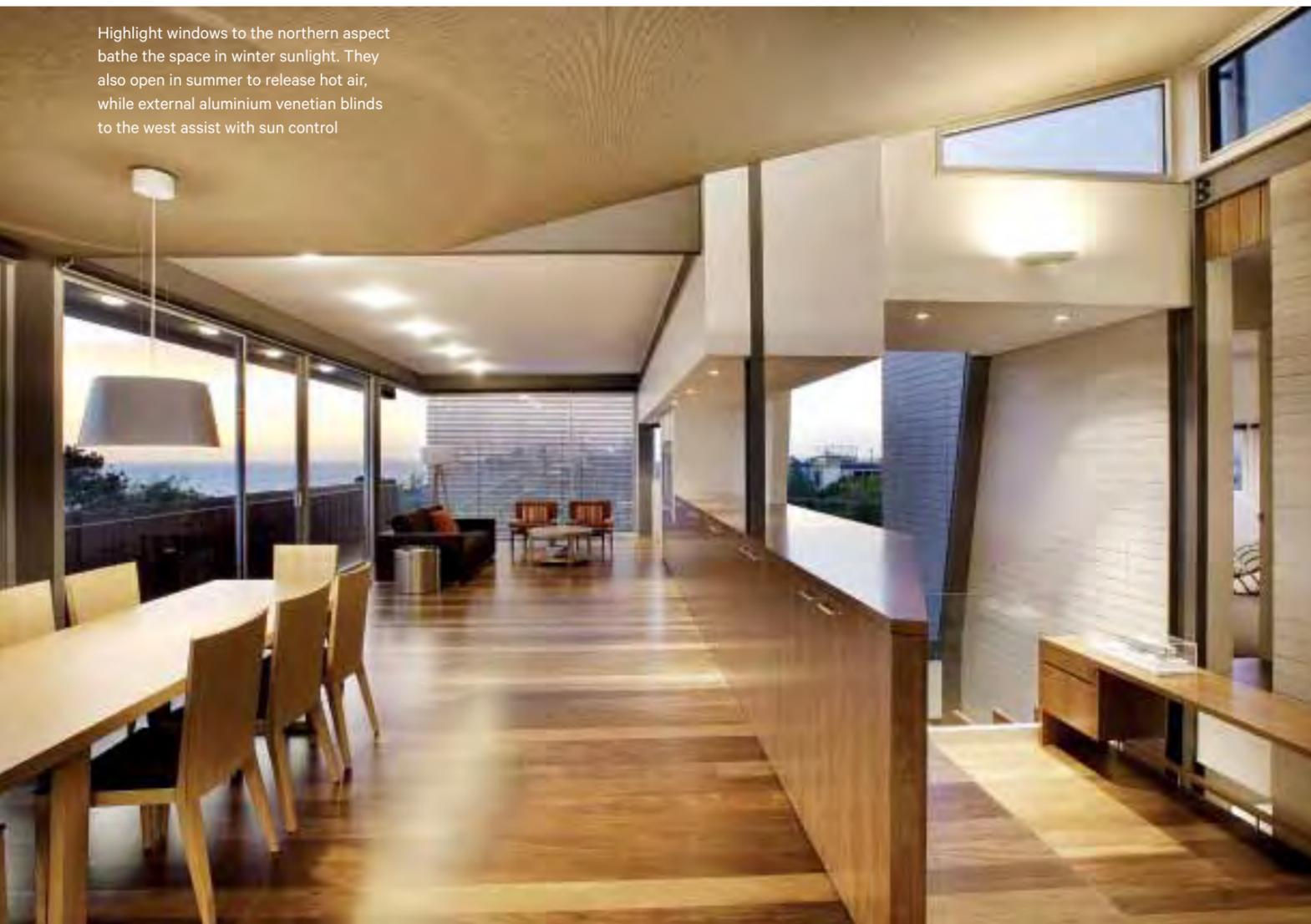
In approaching the design and creating two distinct parts to the house, "The aim was to make

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The visitor's experience starts via the landscaped entry from the street and reveals itself when stepping through the front door

Highlight windows to the northern aspect bathe the space in winter sunlight. They also open in summer to release hot air, while external aluminium venetian blinds to the west assist with sun control



Looking out from the living spaces and the deck, and the feeling it evokes, is comparable to standing on an expansive viewing platform. A slot section between the zinc balustrade and eave above, frames the view beautifully

the house clearly legible. Breaking the mass of the building into components gives clarity," says Peter. The uphill side is composed of Alabaster sawn-face masonry brickwork (400mm L × 100mm H). The downhill side atop a large steel frame, cantilevered over the ground level and pool, is clad in zinc panelling. The intermediate part, the meat in the sandwich, is timber. "What we were trying to do is to clearly show the way the building worked — that's a typical modernist thing. Everything was reduced back to show how the structure went together," Peter adds.

Contained within the masonry component on ground level are two bedrooms and a bathroom, powder room and laundry, while the first floor houses three bedrooms, two bathrooms and a playroom. The zinc-clad section flows onto decking on three sides and overlooks the mesmerising bay, comprising the kitchen, dining

and living on the first floor. Underneath is a second living space opening on to a generous undercover outdoor kitchen abutting the pool decking.

The brickwork also forms the "spine" of the home and runs from the front entry through the centre. "That's a very Beaumaris '60s style," adds Dean. Spotted gum is another prominent and hardy material that's used for external decking, ground-floor external cladding, as well as the entry door and is carried through internally in the flooring and stairs.

"The upstairs living area is the drama in the house — it's very theatrical," Peter says. Looking out from the living spaces and the deck, and the feeling it evokes, is comparable to standing on an expansive viewing platform. A slot section between the zinc balustrade and eave above, frames the view beautifully. "This frame really accentuates the line of the horizon," Peter says.

Streamlined, light and airy, the open-plan kitchen, dining and living spaces enjoy panoramic water views. The stainless-steel benchtop provides a generous 6m-long work space



A design dilemma that Peter resolved in the project's planning stage was how to face the living spaces towards the south in order to capture the bay views while still managing to bring in the sun from the northerly aspect. He mastered this by "peeling the roof off" and inserting highlight windows. The east and west ends of the living block on the first floor were also "peeled open" and glazed, not unlike telescope ends.

The kitchen is "sensational" to cook in, according to Dean, who sourced the longest piece of stainless steel he could muster to create the 6m-long benchtop. The sight of boats moseying by, as if in front of the kitchen sink, assures volunteers aplenty to wash dishes.

The bedrooms are relatively compact, the idea being to have larger living spaces designed for communal family living. For the children, spending their time here means a toss-up between

watching the ships through the telescope and having fun in the pool. A study area above the front door is another prized position for watching the world go by.

Integration of the architecture and the landscape was important to both the architect and the homeowners. "The architecture starts at the front gate and the geometry runs through the whole building," Peter points out. Atkinson Pontifex has been involved in the Chelsea Garden Show for several years and has a great interest in the way houses connect to their gardens, often working in conjunction with prominent landscape designers.

In addition to capturing the winter sun from the north and the use of durable materials, sustainability was explored in many other ways. All glazing is tinted and laminated for improved solar control and insulation, while

remote-controlled electric blinds provide shade. The thermal comfort and cross-ventilation achieved internally are exceptional. This is a home that heats efficiently and quickly in winter thanks to the penetration of winter sun from the highlight windows to the north, complemented by hydronic heating. In summer, these same windows, which have electric motors, open up to draw hot air out of the home in a thermal chimney effect. East- and west-facing doorways attract cooling breezes and move hot air through, up and out of the home to quickly cool the interior.

The above-ground pool, which has two quirky glass viewing windows, is another structural feat, heated by geothermal technology. This involves tapping into the power the earth produces naturally, resulting in the need for less energy to heat the water. Solar pool heating with gas as a top-up, means year-round usability. A sizeable

White Boral Alabaster sawn-face brickwork forms a spine wall that runs through the centre of the home

water tank with a 21,000-litre capacity collects rainwater used for irrigation, the pool and toilets.

“Structurally, the entire house is one of the most complex residential challenges any builder is likely to encounter,” says David Pontifex, co-director of Atkinson Pontifex. “Sure, a few extra posts in the front would have been easier and cheaper than the 50 tonnes of steel and the structural complexity, but it’s the fine look and the level of detail that sets it apart,” he adds.

The specification of sisal carpet to the ceiling of the main living spaces (a solution chosen for acoustic and thermal performance) typified the way Peter constantly challenged the mainstream, according to Dean and David. “So often we do things just because it’s the way we’ve done them before, as opposed to considering what the objective is,” Dean says.

Construction kicked off in February 2007 and the owners moved in 22 months later (November 2008). At the project’s end, there were no regrets. “I felt like I’d run a marathon — exhausted but very excited. I’d do it again in a heartbeat,” says Dean, who derives his fitness from stand-up paddleboarding on the bay. “The amount of detail Peter put into the home was out of this world.”

This unique residential design by Maddison Architects is one that further enhances Beaumaris’ architectural capital. ♣



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LEGEND

FIRST FLOOR

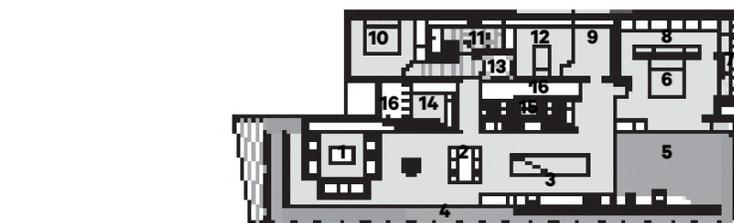
- 1 Living room
- 2 Dining room
- 3 Kitchen
- 4 Balcony
- 5 Deck
- 6 Master bedroom
- 7 Ensuite
- 8 Walk-in robe
- 9 Play room 1
- 10 Bedroom 2
- 11 Bathroom 2
- 12 Bedroom 3
- 13 Lift
- 14 Study
- 15 Stairs
- 16 Void

GROUND FLOOR

- 17 Entry Bridge
- 18 Entry
- 19 Guest bedroom
- 20 WC
- 21 Bathroom 1
- 22 Laundry
- 23 Laundry deck
- 24 Bedroom 1
- 25 Play room 1
- 26 BBQ deck
- 27 Dining deck
- 28 Pool deck
- 29 Pool
- 30 Wading pool

BASEMENT

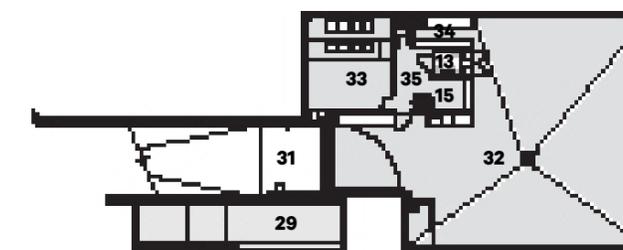
- 31 Driveway
- 32 Garage
- 33 Theatre
- 34 Workshop
- 35 Entry Lobby



FIRST FLOOR PLAN



GROUND FLOOR PLAN



BASEMENT FLOOR PLAN



PROJECT TEAM

- **ARCHITECT**
Maddison Architects
(maddisonarchitects.com.au)
- **BUILDER** Atkinson Pontifex
(atkinsonpontifex.com.au)
- **ENGINEER** BBD Engineering
(03 9585 1544)
- **INTERIOR DECORATOR**
Austin Design Associates
(austindesign.com.au)
- **INTERIOR DESIGNER**
Maddison Architects
(maddisonarchitects.com.au)

- **STRUCTURE** Builder Atkinson Pontifex (atkinsonpontifex.com.au) Cladding VM Zinc (vmzinc.com.au) Decking Timber Fabrications (03 9775 1666) Fencing Radial Timber (radialtimbers.com.au) Joinery Blue Box (03 9585 1829) Landscaping supplier Bayside City Council Nursery (03 9583 8408) Masonry Boral (boral.com.au) Pool Atkinson Pontifex (atkinsonpontifex.com.au) Roofing Colorbond (colorbond.com) Stair builder Slattery and Acqroff (stairking.com.au)
- **FIXTURES & FITTINGS** Bathroom Rogerseller (rogerseller.com.au) Benchtops Stone Italiana (stoneitaliana.com.au) Flooring Big River (bigrivergroup.com.au) Floor tiles Signorino Tile Gallery (signorino.com.au) Kitchen tap Abey Gessi Oxygene Hi Tech (abey.com.au) Lighting Lights + Tracks (lightsandtracks.com.au) Sinks — indoor and outdoor kitchens SJB Stainless Steel (sjbstainless.com.au) Stainless-steel benches SJB Stainless Steel

(sjbstainless.com.au) Taps Astra Walker Icon Plus (astrawalker.com.au) Wall tiles Lifestiles (lifestileswtc.com.au)

- **FURNITURE & FURNISHING** Beasley lounge chairs Temperature Design (temperaturedesign.com.au) Cousins coffee table Temperature Design (temperaturedesign.com.au) Drum coffee table Temperature Design (temperaturedesign.com.au) Dining chairs Temperature Design (temperaturedesign.com.au) Jack sofa Temperature Design (temperaturedesign.com.au) Kitchen appliances Miele (miele.com.au) Outdoor butterfly chairs Gordon Mather Industries (gordonmatherindustries.com) Sinclair dining table Temperature Design (temperaturedesign.com.au) Tri-pod lamp Temperature Design (temperaturedesign.com.au)
- **SERVICES** Glazing Pilkington (pilkington.com) Joinery Bluebox (03 9585 1829) Landscaping Cycas Landscape Design and Consultancy (cycas.com.au)



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02



03

GET THE LOOK

Get the sleek Beaumaris style with these clever designs



04



05

01 Barrel chair by Yellow Diva Design from Insitu. insitufurniture.com.au

06 Tripod lamp by Temperature Design. temperaturedesign.com.au

02 Torremato pendant by Lights + Tracks. lightsandtracks.com.au

07 Beasley chair by Temperature Design. temperaturedesign.com.au

03 Sinclair dining table by Temperature Design. temperaturedesign.com.au

08 Cousins coffee table by Temperature Design. temperaturedesign.com.au

04 Jack sofa by Temperature Design. temperaturedesign.com.au

09 Freestanding fridge/freezer (KFN14827 SDE CS) by Miele. miele.com.au



06



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