

TERRACE/GARDEN

Conceptualised by Bower Architecture & Interiors, this home was designed to 'drape' over the landscape. A cantilevered concrete patio extends into a gently terraced garden featuring concrete walkways with gravel inserts, reflection ponds and a mix of native and coastal species. Landscape design by Andrew Laidlaw of Laidlaw & Laidlaw Design with Andrea Proctor Landscapes.



After more than 40 years of living and farming on the southern tip of Victoria's Mornington Peninsula, Peter and Michelle knew it was time to downsize. But they didn't want to move far from the rolling hills and clifftops that had been the constant backdrop to their lives. They had always loved the wildness of the place and especially adored the panoramic views of the dramatic seascape below, where the waters of Western Port Bay collide with the swells of the Bass Strait.

Their priority was to find a block and build a futureproofed home in a nearby township. "They were tied to that landscape and the community they love," says architect Chema Bould, co-director of Bower Architecture & Interiors. "They wanted a good-size block close to town where they could create a beautiful garden, a sense of calm and stay connected to nature." Michelle and Peter were introduced to Bower through longtime friends whose new home was designed by the team. "They enlisted us early on and I visited a few sites with them. It was very special to be involved in that way," says Chema.

The block they purchased was a 1920-square-metre vacant corner site, located within a neighbourhood of classic 1960s and '70s timber cottages a short walk from the beach. It was also over the road from a new vacant subdivision, a factor that was to inform the design of their home. "Given this unknown future context, we wanted to create a generous set-back from the corner and make sure the house was very private along the street-facing sides," she says.

Michelle and Peter's brief was for a timeless and tranquil home filled with natural light, warmth and texture. They also wanted its design to prioritise accessibility and be low maintenance, to allow them to stay living there through their post-retirement years.

A five-metre fall across the site posed a challenge to the design of a single-level dwelling, but Chema and her team came up with a unique solution: an L-shaped descending floor plan that follows the contours of the site, with gently sloping internal ramps to negotiate the changes in level. "The idea was we wanted to drape the building over the site, working with the flow of the land rather than against it," says Chema. The result is a timber-clad house built on concrete platforms that appears to float over the landscape.

The longer side of the L houses the north-facing dining/living area and the main bedroom suite; the shorter length encompasses two guestrooms, a bathroom, double garage and laundry. The kitchen – in dark, cocooning, moody tones – is at the nexus of the two wings. The corridor-like ramps, or "gallery spaces", as Chema calls them, are strategically placed to connect the three main zones of the house. From the entry hallway, the left-hand ramp leads up to the guest quarters, while the right-hand one heads down to the main living area. From this central living zone another ramp leads down to the main bedroom suite and adjoining study. "The ramped gallery spaces flow down the site, creating a sense of journey through the house," says Chema.

The materiality of this house is as important as its ease of flow. Drawing on Michelle and Peter's love of timber – their ▶



TERRACE Homeowners Michelle and Peter on the generous concrete terrace off the living room. This home was all about "making the house and landscape talk to each other," says architect Chema Bould. It's a perfect arrangement for Michelle, an enthusiastic gardener, who loves the home's easy connection with the garden. **KITCHEN** *Opposite top left and bottom* A colourful collection of heirloom and collected plates. Ventech timber-veneer joinery in Ebon. Island and rear benchtops are Cosmic Black granite from KWD & Co. Side benchtops are Caesarstone Raw Concrete. Splashback in by Mutina 'Mews' tiles in Soot, Urban Edge Ceramics. Blade pull door handles, Designer Doorware. Kitchen stool, House of Orange. Polished concrete floors (throughout). Teknobili mixer tap from Reece. AEG cooktop and oven.



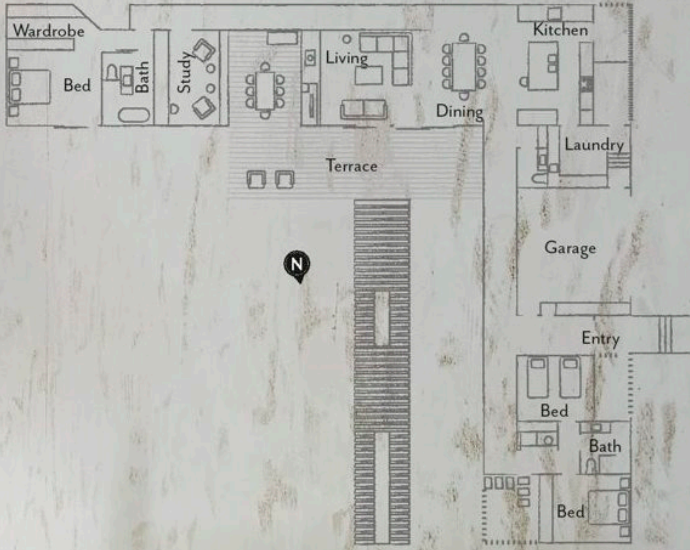
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LIVING The blockwork walls are finished with a crushed limestone and white cement render. The ceiling is lined with European oak boards in Bridgeport from KWD & Co. Ventech timber-veneer joinery in Ebon. The concrete bench was formed on site. Radiante 873 2V fireplace, Cheminées Philippe. The armchair is by Mario Bellini for B&B Italia, a vintage classic Michelle has held on to for 45 years. Jasper sofa, King. Zig Zag stool, Mark Tuckey.

"THE RAMPED GALLERY
SPACES FLOW DOWN THE
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OF JOURNEY THROUGH
THE HOUSE."
CHEMA BOULD, ARCHITECT



THE LAYOUT



MAIN ENSUITE Vein-cut silver travertine floor and wall tiles, KWD & Co. Bath, vanity, basin, mirror cabinet and tapware, all Rogerseller. **EXTERIOR** *Opposite, top left* A spiral staircase leads to a rooftop platform with ocean views. **ENTRY** *Opposite, top right* Silvertop ash cladding stained Porter's Paints Palm Beach Black perfectly frames the view of the garden. Michelle and Peter have owned the rug for 45 years. Artwork by P. Morris. **STUDY** *Opposite, bottom* Joinery in American-oak veneer by Ventech. Custom blackbutt desk. The couple bought the Industrie Divani e Poltrone armchair about 20 years ago. The hide rug was purchased directly from a farm near the Yarra Valley. ►

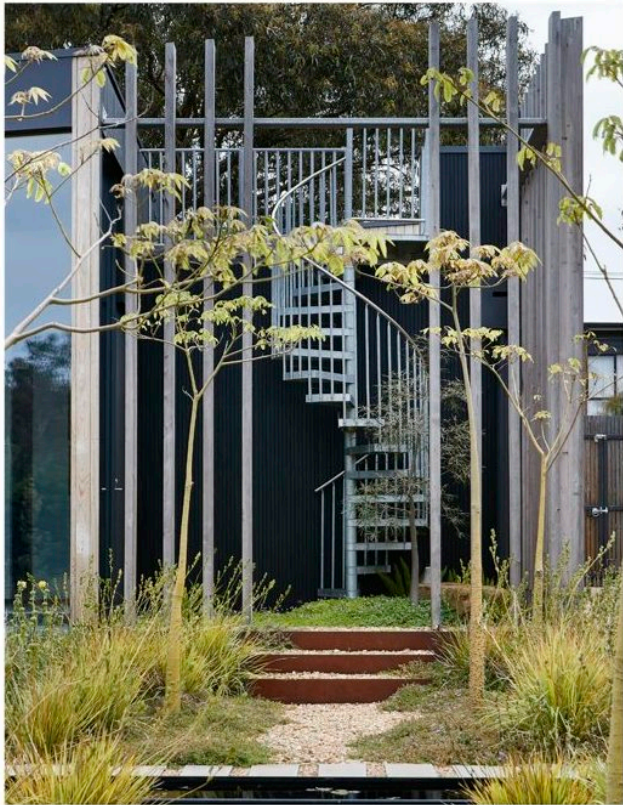


THE PALETTE

Murobond Paint
Mist (study)

Porter's Paints
Palm Beach
Black (entry
cladding)

Wattyl Orchid
(main bedroom)



**“CAREFULLY FRAMED VIEWS
CAPTURE LIGHT AND
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SEASONS. WE KEPT GLAZING
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WINDOWS TO THE NORTH,
LOOKING ONTO THE
PRIVATE GARDEN.”**

CHEMA BOULD, ARCHITECT

former farmhouse was timber – the home is clad in locally grown silvertop ash. “We wanted the material choices inside and out to be earthy, in sympathy with the surroundings,” says Chema. The floors are polished concrete throughout except for the bedrooms, which are carpeted in wool. The living area ceiling is lined in oak and all internal walls are made from concrete blockwork rendered in a textured-limestone finish. “Not only is it a textural material, it has all-important thermal mass. Combined with an insulated concrete slab and passive ventilation, it means it’s a low-energy house that is cost-effective to run,” says Chema.

The shape of the house acts as “protective edge to the two street frontages”, says Chema. The street-facing walls have minimal glazing and are instead punctuated with high and low slot windows and timber-screened indents containing garden pockets. Meanwhile, inside the shielding arms of the L, it’s a different story. Here, the home salutes light and air. Sliding doors on one wall of the north-facing living zone open up completely, connecting to a large, private cantilevered concrete patio and stepping down to a garden designed by landscape architect Andrew Laidlaw of Laidlaw & Laidlaw Design with Andrea Proctor Landscapes. The garden celebrates the local landscape, providing Michelle and Peter with their own private patch of coastal bushland to tend: there are ‘wild’ elements featuring loose, riotous plantings of indigenous species combined with geometric pathways, reflective ponds and a firepit. It’s nirvana for avid gardener Michelle.

A surprise feature outside is a spiral staircase leading to a rooftop terrace, where Michelle and Peter can soak up those beloved sea views. “The home and garden work together to give them all the things that were important to them – a connection with the landscape, privacy and calm,” says Chema. “It’s a special house, very relaxing and unique.” ▶

*Bower Architecture & Interiors, Collingwood, Victoria;
bowerarchitecture.com.au. Laidlaw & Laidlaw Design,
Hoddles Creek, Victoria; laidlawlandscape.com.*



MAIN BEDROOM The wall of glass brings greenery right into the room. Curtain made from James Dunlop Textiles 'Laconia Air' linen. Vintage Nore dining chair by Norman Archibald. Eggcup stool, Mark Tuckey. Manhattan carpet in Beige, KWD & Co.



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THIS IS THE LIFE

Michelle and Peter wanted the home to tread lightly on the earth and to reflect the hues of the environment. The exterior is clad in shiplap silvertop ash, its tones harmonising with the surroundings, while the garden of grasses reinforces the sense of being in the landscape. Windows are minimised on this side, replaced with timber slatting and pocket gardens, adding a sense of mystery to the street presence, says project architect Chema Bould. ►





FACADE The house, clad in shiplap silvertop ash, presents a guarded exterior to the street. Roof in Colorbond Monument. Window frames by AWS. There are 12 different indigenous grasses planted here, including golden-toned *Austrostipa stipoides* (under the tree), green strappy *Dianella brevicaulis* and *Poa poiformis* (between path and driveway) with yellow-flowering everlasting (*Chrysocephalum apiculatum*). Locally sourced granitic gravel.

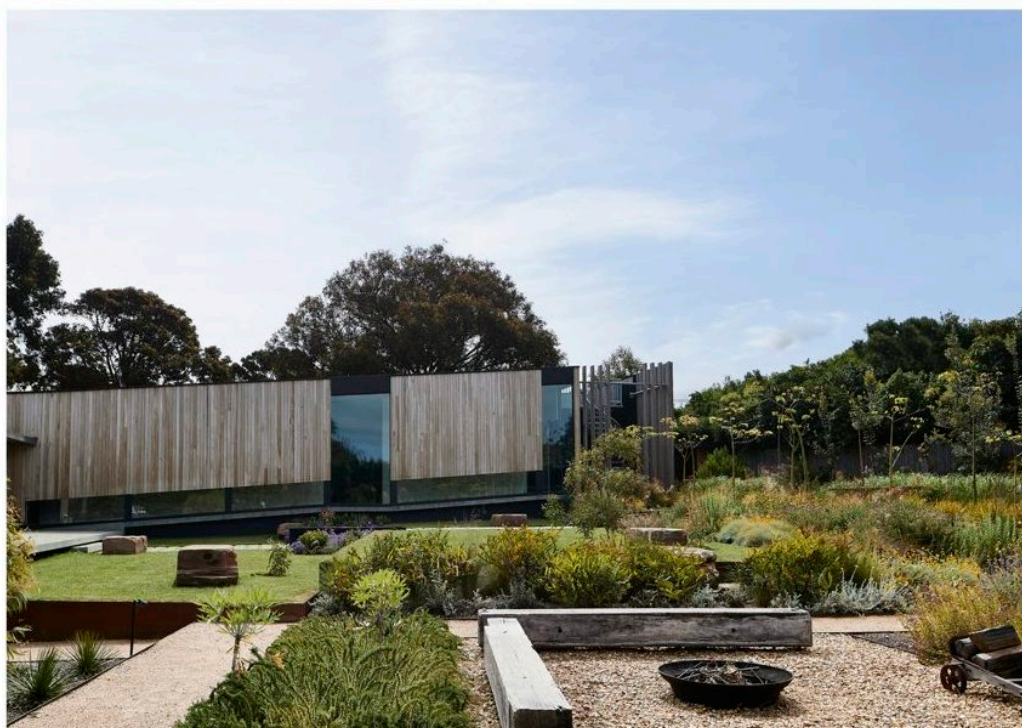
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**"THE CEILING COMPRESSES AND
OPENS UP AS YOU MOVE THROUGH
THE HOUSE, MAKING EVERY ROOM
A DIFFERENT EXPERIENCE."**

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REAR TERRACE *Above* Purple-flowering *Alyogyne* 'Blue Heeler' and grapevines (*Vitis vinifera*) hug the back terrace. Barwon chairs, Eco Outdoor. **SIDE PASSAGE** *Above right* A low slot window offers a glimpse of the internal ramp leading from the living area to the main bedroom; a tall feature window frames the garden views. **GARDEN** *Right* Giant slabs of recycled timber create seating around the firepit. Plants here include prostrate rosemary, mountain cabbage tree and clay wattle. In the background is a row of distinctive silk floss trees.



Salt of the earth

Built as an ode to its seaside location, this home is as robust as it is tranquil and timeless.

STORY *Elizabeth Wilson* | STYLING *Jess Kneebone* | PHOTOGRAPHY *Shannon McGrath*

