

ARENT & PYKE'S *SUBLIME* STYLE

Nick Tobias on ART MEETS LIFE

DESIGNER
DRIVES
WITH
Charlotte
Coote

LUXE & REDEFINING THE
METROPOLIS RURAL AESTHETIC

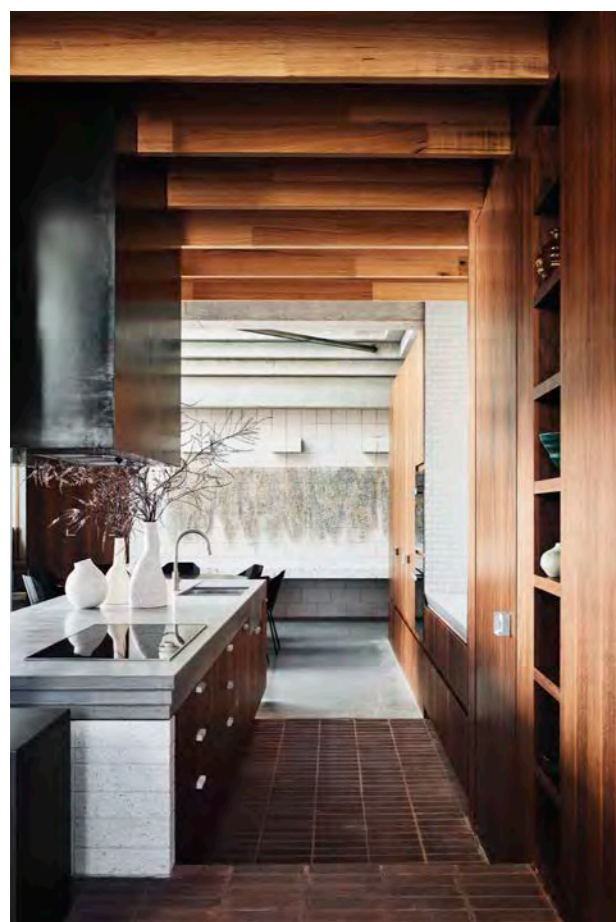
SURFACE DEEP

Rugged raw finishes deliver a low-maintenance interior with a carefree edge that is tailor-made for a family's escape from the big smoke.

Photography DEREK SWALWELL



This page Landscaped by Jim Fogarty, the native garden includes coastal and silver banksias that frame the entry to the main living, kitchen and dining space, with native sarsparilla and 'White Anzac' bottlebrush at the lower level. 'Ellis' curved bench and 'Anchor' side table, both from Grazia&Co. Anston circular concrete pavers. **Opposite page** 'Valley' sofa from Jordan. Artek Armchair 41 'Paimio' armchairs by Alvar Aalto from Anibou. Bernabeifreeman 'Spring' rug from Designer Rugs. Rotations and Undulations #1, #4, #8, #13, #17 and #21 by Sean Meilak from Niagara Galleries. GB Masonry honed blocks in Porcelain from Brickworks. In-situ polished concrete floor. Victorian ash windows by Feature Doors & Windows.



Any new build shortlisted for an architectural award in 2021 has, arguably, satisfied the most demanding criteria in many years, given how buildings have had to adapt in the COVID era and be far more than a roof over a family's heads. Albert Mo of Architects EAT certainly achieved that with this home on the Mornington Peninsula, which has been nominated at the Victorian Architecture Awards. The architect sculpted a cool and cocooning retreat in concrete and brick, enlivened by vibrant furniture and striking contemporary art curated and commissioned by Swee Lim. *What was the client's brief?* I've known the clients for a while and have designed commercial projects for them, as well as a house in Melbourne. Perhaps because this is their second home with me, they gave me more latitude to experiment. The brief was very simple – a holiday house where they could escape the city; a house that felt like a home yet was different to their primary home. They wanted somewhere they could invite their friends and family, a house to love nature in and where their children could grow up. Also, there were to be no marble benchtops! It was supposed to be rugged, carefree and very low-maintenance. *What were the challenges of the site and how did you resolve them?* All I could picture at the start was the amazing clifftop location with views to the ocean. That's what every architect dreams of – then reality hit. The site is located inland, within the village, and is very, very flat, on a corner block with a single row of mature poplar trees along an unsealed side road, which leads to the back beach. The existing house was structurally unsound and hadn't been occupied for a long while. In my first visit to the site, what struck me was there wasn't a consistent character in the area. There wasn't any particular structure or feature, or



This page Ceramics by Mark Young add a curvaceous touch on the hand-trowelled concrete bench by Concrete Collective with Brodware 'City Stik' pullout kitchen mixer. Cabinets by Esar Joinery in American walnut veneer. Inax 'Madoka' tiles on the splashback from Artedomus. Miele 'H6260BP' oven and 'KM6388' induction cooktop with Schweigen 'UMPA95' rangehood. Brightgreen 'D900 SHX' curved LED downlight. Opposite page, from top In the dining area, Gubi 'Multi-lite' pendant lights are suspended from a custom electroplated steel cross. Ligne Roset 'Rocher' dining chairs by Hertel & Klarhoefer from Domo. 'Stamp' dining table by Grazia&Co. Octorondo wire sculpture on dining table by Neil Taylor from Niagara Galleries. Commissioned fibre art wall sculpture by Emma Davies. Custom wall lights by Architects EAT. Custom linen curtain by O'Gorman's. 'Trace' outdoor armchairs by Adam Goodrum and 'Lily' tray table by Nancy Ji, both from Tait. Victorian ash door frames by Feature Doors & Windows. Bowral Bricks 'Hamlet' pavers in Ash from Brickworks. Concrete joinery handles by Material Immaterial Studio. Wall sculpture by Emma Davies.

house numbers to tell you where you were. So I set myself an » « “urban” design task to produce something that spoke of its location and created a dialogue to the streets. The real challenge was to balance domestic privacy. I was attracted by the mature poplar trees and wanted to use them as a soft foreground to the house, allowing their shadows to cast onto the facade and animate the surfaces. White concrete masonry blocks were chosen to accentuate the shadows and play with them, creating screens and reliefs for articulations. The result is a long white facade with varying degrees of depth and transparency. With the unusual shapes of the frustum roofs, they evoke street engagements and curiosities. People stop and examine the building. They now affectionately refer to it as the ‘Pyramids of Flinders’. The long facade is essentially a defence mechanism to provide and suggest domestic privacy. *Are there any particular considerations when designing a home in a regional setting such as this?* The concept of a beach house or a second home is that it is a place to get away with the family or get together with a lot of people. Many of the spaces are to facilitate these collective experiences – kids bunking together, an open washroom doubling as a mudroom, multiple entry points into the house, and different indoor and outdoor living areas. These areas converge when you eat. We aimed to design a house that is permanent and anchored in the sands, as opposed to the lightweight beach vernacular. This is more of a bunker than a shack. *What were some of the ideas and influences that shaped your design?* I’m fascinated by concrete and its fluid nature while providing structural strength. In the past I have visited the Venice Biennale and seen many works by my

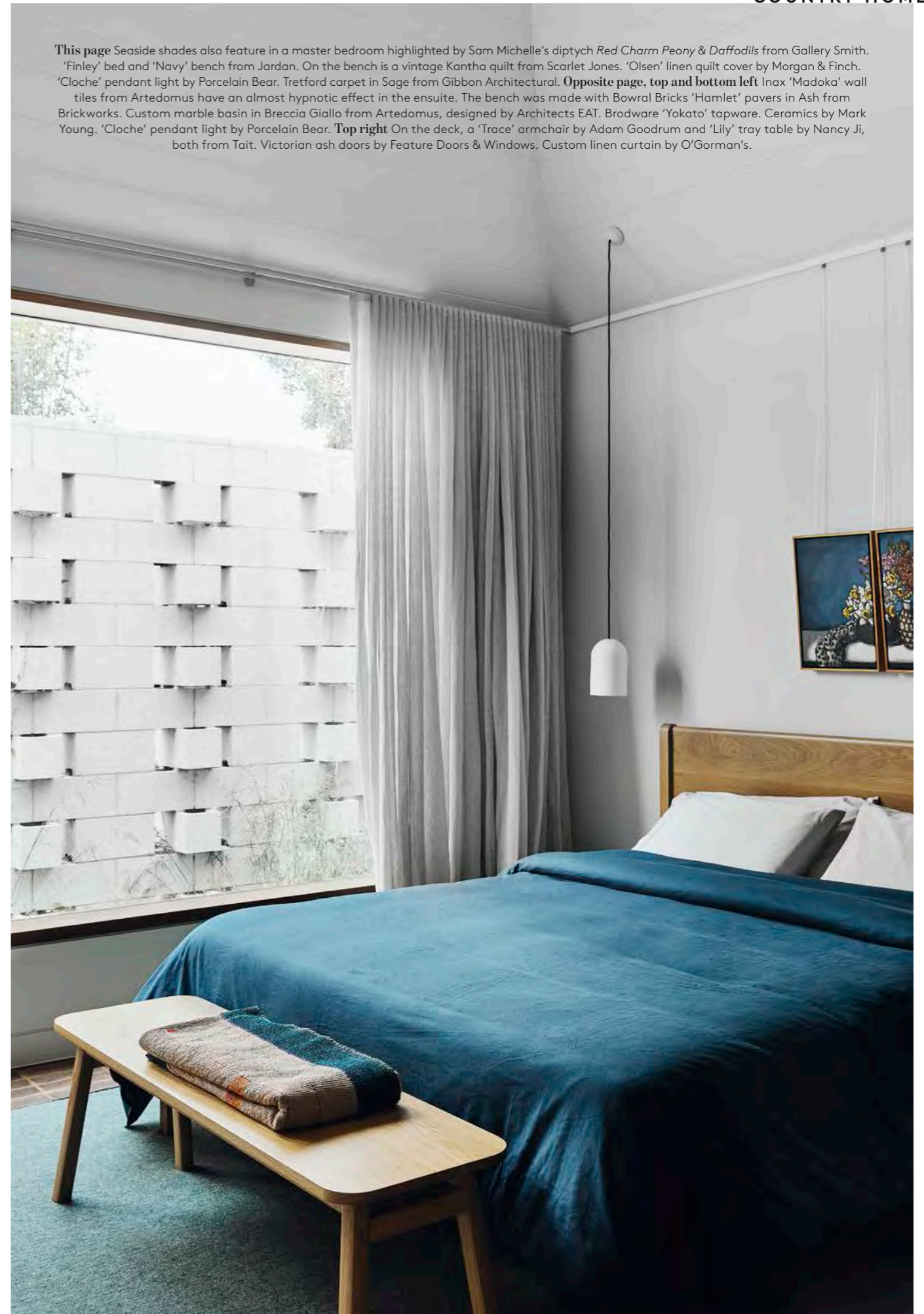


This page Commissioned artworks by Tom Adair and a ‘Valley’ sofa by Jordan bring the living area to life. Conde House ‘Barringer’ coffee table by Atilla Kuzu from Apato. Bernabeifreeman ‘Spring’ rug from Designer Rugs. Gubi ‘Multi-Lite’ pendant light suspended from custom electroplated steel. Custom wall lights by Architects EAT in GB Masonry honed blocks from Brickworks. **Opposite page, from top** In the rumpus room, the blue tones of George Raftopoulos’ artwork *Comeback Kid* from Studio Gallery are seen in the Ligne Roset ‘Togo’ three-seat sofa from Domo. ‘Anchor’ side table from Grazia&Co. Bernabeifreeman ‘Plateau’ rug from Designer Rugs. The small bowl was a gift from the client’s mother. A ‘Spartacus’ cast-iron fire pit from Schots Home Emporium gets year-round use.





This page Seaside shades also feature in a master bedroom highlighted by Sam Michelle's diptych *Red Charm Peony & Daffodils* from Gallery Smith. 'Finley' bed and 'Navy' bench from Jordan. On the bench is a vintage Kantha quilt from Scarlet Jones. 'Olsen' linen quilt cover by Morgan & Finch. 'Cloche' pendant light by Porcelain Bear. Tretford carpet in Sage from Gibbon Architectural. **Opposite page, top and bottom left** Inax 'Madoka' wall tiles from Artedomus have an almost hypnotic effect in the ensuite. The bench was made with Bowral Bricks 'Hamlet' pavers in Ash from Brickworks. Custom marble basin in Breccia Giallo from Artedomus, designed by Architects EAT. Brodware 'Yokato' tapware. Ceramics by Mark Young. 'Cloche' pendant light by Porcelain Bear. **Top right** On the deck, a 'Trace' armchair by Adam Goodrum and 'Lily' tray table by Nancy Ji, both from Tait. Victorian ash doors by Feature Doors & Windows. Custom linen curtain by O'Gorman's.



architectural idol Carlo Scarpa, in particular the Brion »
« Cemetery in San Vito d'Altivole near Treviso that has more of a direct influence to this house. The internal reverse step concrete pyramids here aren't because of the Brion Cemetery, however – the idea was to use the same white concrete blocks as on the walls to create the ceiling of the pyramids. But to do so, concrete needed to be the supporting structure behind the blocks. To me this defeated the purpose, and I would rather stay true to the material, so I chose to expose the concrete and make it the final ceiling surface. The heaviness of the concrete structure now makes the external masonry feel like eggshells, with complex engineering and detailing. The real connection to Scarpa's work was made with stepped detail such as the kitchen bench and window shrouds. We even found someone in India to make door and joinery handles for us that resemble this detail. The obsession with concrete then extends to the blocks and pavers. We've rotated the blocks in various ways to create screens, wall lights and entry shelves. The pavers used externally in the landscape are brought into the house, to become walls, bathroom vanities, the base for the kitchen island, the joinery and the fireplace. We specified to retain the 'frogs' in the bricks and expose them to become a feature, rather than hide them in mortar. A frog is a depression in one bearing face of a moulded or pressed brick. This reduces the weight of the brick and makes it easier to remove from the forms. *How would you describe the completed home and what are some of your favourite design elements?* I like the entry sequence of the house. It starts from entering the pedestrian gate on the main street, with the dusty pink brick pavers providing a conduit between the native

garden and the build structure. Through a gap between the »
 « long facade and the garage, an outdoor shower is provided for washing off wetsuits and other gear after a trip to the beach, then the space opens up to the inner outdoor sanctum. Internal living spaces look into this north-facing courtyard garden. Once inside, the largest two of the frustum roofs reveal their internal structure – the reverse step concrete pyramids. The skylight in the centre provides all-day illumination to the living and dining areas. I also like the casualness and looseness hinted by various elements – the wetsuit racks, the two open yet private outdoor showers, the firepit and the dining area, which can be completely opened up to the cosy barbecue deck. *How does the project respond to the surrounding landscape?* We were blessed by our landscape architect Jim Fogarty, who we worked with on the client's Melbourne house seven years earlier. Jim has intimate knowledge of the local landscape, as he has a house not far from this site. Flinders' microclimate is different to Melbourne's. It is often very wet, hence the chosen plants are all native species without requiring any irrigation. Jim's hard landscaping echoes the architecture, from its detailing to its form and materiality. *What informed the selection of furniture, fittings and finishes?* Half the furniture and fittings are local, from Jardan, Grazia&Co, Tait and Porcelain Bear, while the rugs are by the client's friends Rina Bernabei and Kelly Freeman for Designer Rugs. The other half are more iconic – a 'Paimio' chair by Alvar Aalto for Artek, 'Rocher' chairs and a 'Togo' sofa by Ligne Roset, a 'Trapeze' wall light by Apparatus, a 'Multi-Lite' pendant by Gubi, as well as a 'Barringer' table by Conde House. We designed our own custom-made Breccia Giallo marble basins and electroplated nickel silver basin. *What*

informed the selection of the art? Client: It is an eclectic collection and based only on the beauty we saw in each piece. Some were purchased after love at first sight; others were purchased after careful consideration of how they would complement the space. Beauty, form, colour, texture and subject were all elements that spoke to us when choosing art to fill the walls. Working with art consultant Swee Lim, we placed an emphasis on supporting local artists and Melbourne galleries. We commissioned pieces from Tom Adair, Emma Davies and Andrew Taylor, and found them a joy to collaborate with. These very different artworks showcase celebrate the unique areas where they hang. Emma Davies' soft sculpture from recycled material is almost fabric-like above the multipurpose study and craft bench; Sean Meilak's drawings look at home alongside the striking internal stepped pyramids; and George Raftopoulos's *Comeback Kid* makes a colourful statement and adds a touch of whimsy to the rumpus room. *Were you happy with the execution? How do you use the space?* Client: Architects EAT designed our ideal beach house. It's where we can spend time as a family, and with our extended family and friends. The bunkroom is often full of cousins, creating cherished childhood memories and lifelong bonds, while the outdoor showers and wetsuit rack ensure our love of the beach remains outdoors. The flow of the house links indoor and outdoor living spaces, ensuring our family can be together, or apart, as needed. In the cooler months, the children frequently request the fire pit be lit so that marshmallows can be roasted. The design of the house offers privacy without high fences and bathes us in natural light with a feeling of airy space. It's a place to stop, reflect and enjoy life away from the city. eatas.com.au; jimfogartydesign.com.au; sweedesign.com.au

This page The all-native garden by Jim Fogarty features banksias, native sarsparilla, white Anzac bottlebrush, silver swamp everlasting bush and native fan flower as groundcover. GB Masonry honed exterior wall blocks in Porcelain from Brickworks. Door frames in Victorian ash by Feature Doors & Windows.





This page, clockwise from top Artworks by Miles Hall from Nicholas Thompson Gallery beside the front door with concrete handles by Material Immaterial Studio, India. The native garden by Jim Fogarty. GB Masonry honed wall blocks in Porcelain from Brickworks. Custom blackbutt timber slatted screen by Cannon Built. Linen cupboard finished in American walnut veneer with custom steel frame and Brodware 'Yokato' robe hooks.

