



the beauty within

A collaboration between an innovative designer and a fastidious builder has produced a stunning result in Sydney's beautiful Pittwater area

PERCHED on the side of a hill, this long-neglected house was an unfulfilled dream from the '60s. Inspired by the restaurant of the same name, Catalina, at Rose Bay (which was a favourite of the original owner), the house was never finished, poorly maintained and had been empty for many years until the current visionary owners took up the challenge to realise its full potential.

That potential was enormous. The site has magnificent ocean, bush and valley views and was studded with angophoras and spotted gums. At 5000 square metres there was ample room to create a private resort-style family home for the new owners, who between them have eight children.

Local multi-award-winning designer Peter Downes, who specialises in challenging and unconventional projects, was chosen to assist. With his input, the decision was made to work with the existing house rather than knock it down completely. The poorly constructed, dilapidated first floor was demolished but the solid masonry ground floor was retained. A totally unsympathetic addition at the rear was also demolished. The resulting base was ample in size, an interesting shape and well located on the site.

The living areas were positioned at the north end to take maximum advantage of the available sunlight and





ocean views. There is a large deck attached to the lounge room and a tiled courtyard at the rear adjacent to the dining room, both areas accessed via large multi-fold doors.

The secondary bedrooms were placed in the centre portion, together with the main bathroom and laundry. The main bedroom was located at the south end and has its own balcony, with ocean views to the northeast and bush and valley views to the south.

A south-facing wing attached to the main bedroom contains an ensuite, a dressing room and a study, completing the parents' retreat area desired by the owners. This wing also takes advantage of the views available in that direction, while the study opens out to a second rear courtyard.

"While coming up with a suitable floorplan was fairly straight forward, the same cannot be said of the roof," Peter said. "After considering a few options, I chose a flat roof, curved in outline to match the house, and inclined at five degrees. One of the happy side effects of this roof slope was to allow views back up the hill via highlight windows."

The curved outline produced a gentle rise from the ends to the middle, giving the roofline a dramatic, undulating profile.

Peter's next suggestion was to first construct

a self-supporting steel-framed roof, then, using the roof as a template, add the walls under. This is standard commercial building technology and results in weather protection for the remainder of the construction, thus eliminating rain delays.

For builder Greg Hunter of Constructive Constructions, this would prove to be one of his most challenging but also one of his most rewarding jobs to date.

While the curved outline presented some design challenges, the problems facing Greg were even more demanding. Most of the walls were curved and subsequently no two studs where the same length and every cut a compound cut. Every stud had to be lasered into position and then individually measured. In addition, the vanities in both bathrooms, the kitchen and the bar joinery all had to be scribed to the various curves throughout. Every panel of the eave lining was a different shape and size as well as having to successfully bend building materials to the shapes within.

Greg was also given a free hand with all the detail interior design, including the kitchen, bathrooms and laundry layouts as well as choosing all tiles, architectural hardware, profiles and finishes throughout. All lighting throughout the house is able to change the ambience at the touch of a button — from party time to a

romantic, seductive interlude.

Some additional features included in the Lees house was C-Bus technology with its own designated room for monitoring, surround sound internally with integrated front and rear outside speakers for entertaining, back-to-base alarm system, underfloor heating, anti-misting mirrors, a barrel ceiling to the main bedroom with an outer flat soffit housing perimeter lighting, a customised carousel fireplace with feature pebble surround, stainless-steel perforated panels to kitchen and bar face and stainless-steel free drop rain water heads.

Wendy Parsonage of Mosman Interiors was responsible for the sensational colours used.

A combination of brave owners, dedicated contractors and consultants has made this house a stunning, unique and fun home to live in.

PROJECT DETAILS

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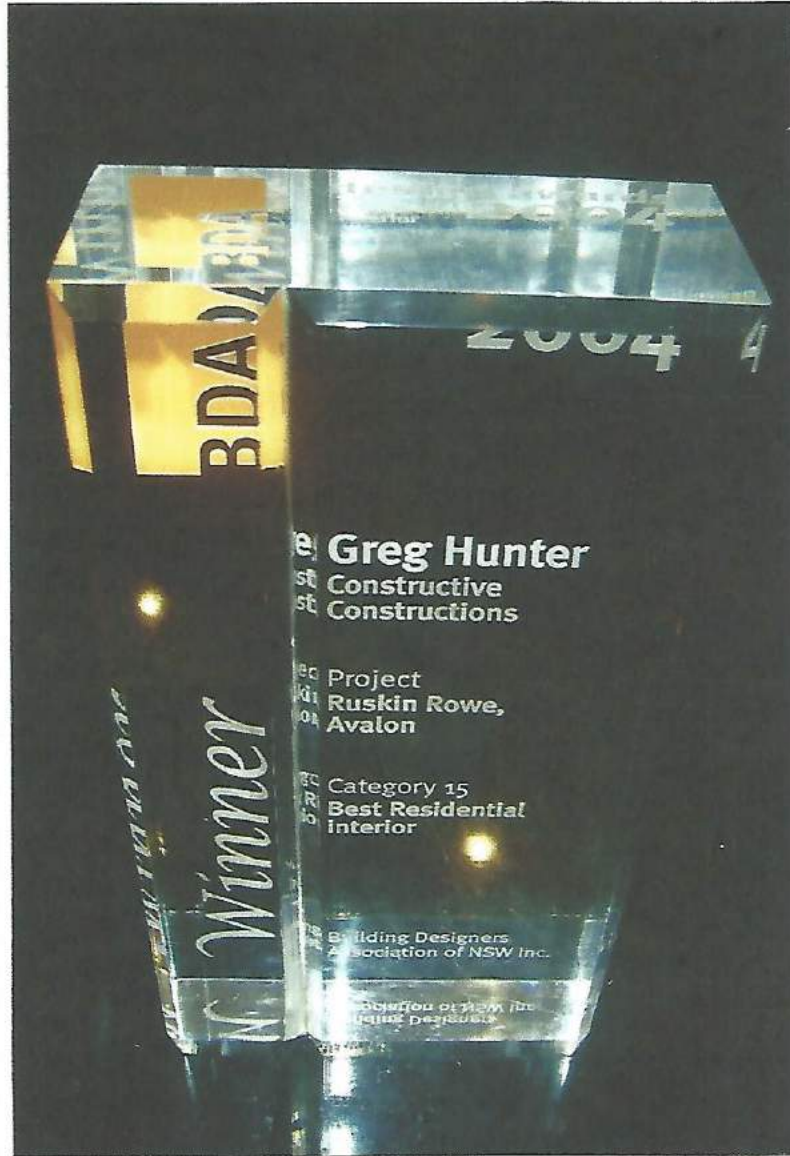






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