

Invincible

Packed with all the ingredients for an everlasting holiday mood, this inspiring home celebrates views of Port Phillip Bay via vibrant green outlooks.

summer



This page The deep-red hues of the forest pansy trees (*Cercis canadensis*) are echoed through the colours and materials selected for the interiors – from soft brown tones through to rust.
Opposite page The main living area offers unimpeded views over Port Phillip Bay.

Words **STEPHEN CRAFTI** Photography **DEREK SWALWELL**





As longtime friends of the owners, architects Rachel Nolan and Patrick Kennedy of Kennedy Nolan Architects know this place intimately. So, when it came to designing a new beach house for a couple with adult children, they could appreciate both the history of this site and what could be realised on the impressive plot at Somers, overlooking Port Phillip Bay.

While Rachel and Patrick enjoy spending time with their friends at Somers, they along with their clients could see the shortcomings of the two-storey 1980s home that was partially buried in the hilly site. Having the view of the water to the south of the beachside property also limited the amount of light it received and meant it suffered poor cross ventilation.

“There was almost a tension between the aspect and the original house,” says Rachel, who from the outset was captivated by the majestic gumtree that framed the water’s edge.

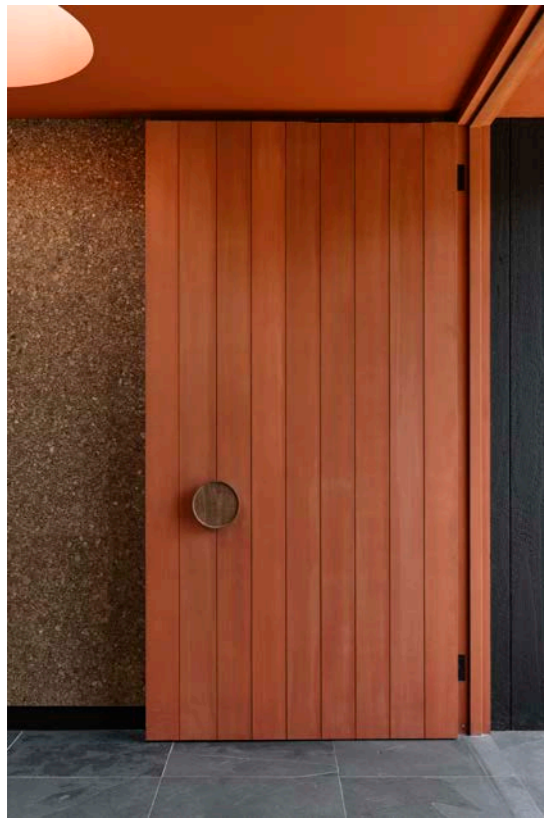
The other dilemma facing Kennedy Nolan Architects was, as with many other practices, building during Covid and outside of Melbourne, which is about 90 minutes away. “We quickly realised how valuable our builder Peter Bartlett from Bartlett Constructions was as well as our landscape designer Amanda Oliver,” says Rachel, pointing out both the level of detail achieved with this build and the way the gardens have been conceived – one with a natural coastal style sits on the waterside while the other is a more European-style garden seen upon arrival at the house. >

This page, clockwise from top left Vintage Persian carpets and travertine walls add depth and texture in the living area. Above the fireplace is *Nude on Bed* by Mark Howson; at left is a woven work by Tony Raguwanga Cameron. The island bench in red travertine from Peraway Marble is illuminated by Gervasoni ‘Brass 96’ and ‘Brass 95’ pendant lights in matt brass from Anibou. Bark artwork by Eunice Djerrknu Yunupingu in the dining area. The kitchen and dining area can be completely opened by large sliding doors, with the balustrade creating a balcony-like effect. Expormim ‘Fontal’ chairs in Japanese Red frame from Ke-Zu and simple conservatory table in Oregon from Mark Tuckey. Opposite page The living area features a natural palette of materials, from timber-lined walls and ceilings to linen curtains to filter the light and the ‘Oxo’ coffee table in Oregon from Mark Tuckey. ‘Mantis’ floor lamp with tripod base from Luke Furniture. Above the sofa is *Untitled*, 1992 by Wayne Eager.



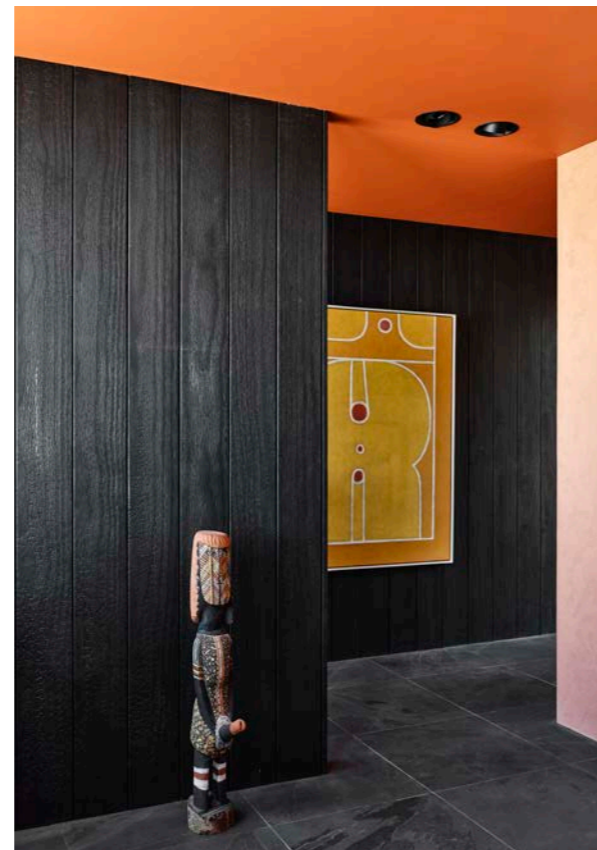
These pages, clockwise from left A terrace accessed from the guest wing features an angular steel wall to allow privacy from a neighbouring property – ‘Tornaux’ outdoor chair and footstool from Feelgood Designs. Artemide ‘Dioscuri’ wall light from Enlightened Living. The entrance to the home is via a bridge walkway framed by established eucalypts. The charred-timber arched wall creates a veil for the guest wing as well as intensifying the hues of the bush setting – Accoya charred ‘Shou Sugi Ban’ cladding from Britton Timbers. There’s a sense of transparency in the house allowing the indoors and outdoors to appear as one.





« Unlike many beach houses that come with a singular view, and often, a predictable floor plan, the Somers house had to meet the requirements for full accessibility given one of the owners is wheelchair dependent – a matter of concern when the new house had to navigate significant level changes across the site, including the pavilion adjacent to the beach. So, the plan became quite strategic, producing three interconnected pavilions that cascade down the property, with the first floor located at ground level conceived as a self-contained apartment for the owners. The upper level, oriented to the north, with its own separate entrance, is used by the children, and on the lowest level lies the perfect spot for guests. Unlike the former dwelling which closed in on itself, the new house features unimpeded sightlines across the water through to Phillip Island. “We haven’t included a broad sweeping deck from the living areas, rather this more complex arrangement of windows and balustrades built into these window frames,” says Rachel, pulling back the sheer linen curtains to explain how the windows and balconies become one, with built-in flywire to prevent insects.

While the floor plan centres on a central core that combines both elevator and lift, the design itself is an interesting fusion of the owners’ travels to Mexico, visiting homes by eminent architect Luis Barragán – known for his vibrant and monumental walls of considerable height often painted in strong colours such as hot pink. But while this vibrant colour palette works beautifully under a clear Mexican sky, in Somers, where it’s often overcast and cold, these hues would not have been appropriate. Instead, Kennedy Nolan took inspiration from late Indigenous artist Queenie McKenzie, whose work is displayed on some of the walls. Earthy tones that fired this legendary artist, such as ochres found in the Kimberley Ranges where she worked, became the palette. Against these rich colours is the presence of charred Japanese-style timber, used both inside and out. These hues were also the perfect canvas for the interior, with a melange of materials such as terrazzo for the floors in some of the bathrooms, Oregon timber for walls, joinery »



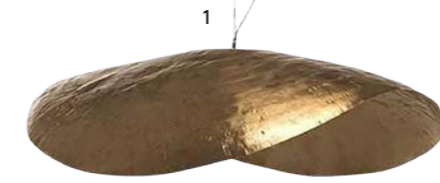
This page In the study lined with built-in bookshelves, large Nemo ‘Lampe de Marseille’ wall-mounted light in Grey from Cult. ‘Strut Medium’ table from Blu Dot in Oxblood. The provenance of the painting is unknown. Opposite page, clockwise from top left The warm colour palette for the interiors is introduced at the entrance. Blushing rose-pink walls and an ochre ceiling frame a Japanese-style paper lantern from Lanternshop, Driade side chair by Patricia Urquiola and rug from Loom. In the hallway the yellow painting is *Untitled* by artist Mark Howson. Totem sculpture by Tiwi Island unnamed artist.



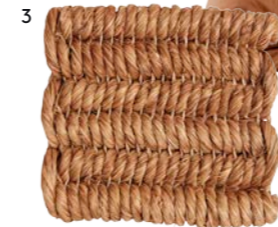
« and floors, along with black slate in the kitchen and living areas. And as with the layers of sand found in the Kimberleys there's the presence of Persian travertine in the kitchen splashback and benches. Beaten brass lights over the island bench add to this complex, yet highly sophisticated, palette of colours and materials.

“We wanted to create a cocoon-like surround, one of protection but also one that would allow the owner, often house-bound, to feel part of this great environment from her living area or when she wakes up first thing,” says Rachel. The light continually changes the feel of the materials used in the home. And, in the garden the established forest pansy tree (*Cercis canadensis*), with its deciduous leaves, also creates a different aspect depending on the time of year.

The furnishings also capture the spirit of the proximity to the beach, with rattan pieces combined with generous doses of timber. And whether they choose to come together in the loggia on the lowest level, complete with open fireplace and built-in barbeque, or peel off on their own (the children's wing includes a living area, kitchenette, bathroom and terrace), it's a design that's suited to the entire family whether used together or independently. And for those fortunate to visit, including Rachel and Patrick, the lower-level functions as a self-contained suite. “It's not a prescriptive house that you have to use in a certain way. It's layered and allows the spaces to take on a different feel at any time of day or year,” adds Rachel. And while this house is clearly new, there are subtle elements to remind you of the past, of when you leave the beach and the feel of seagrass matting beneath your feet. ■ kennedynolan.com.au; amandaolivergardens.com.au; bartlettconstructions.com.au



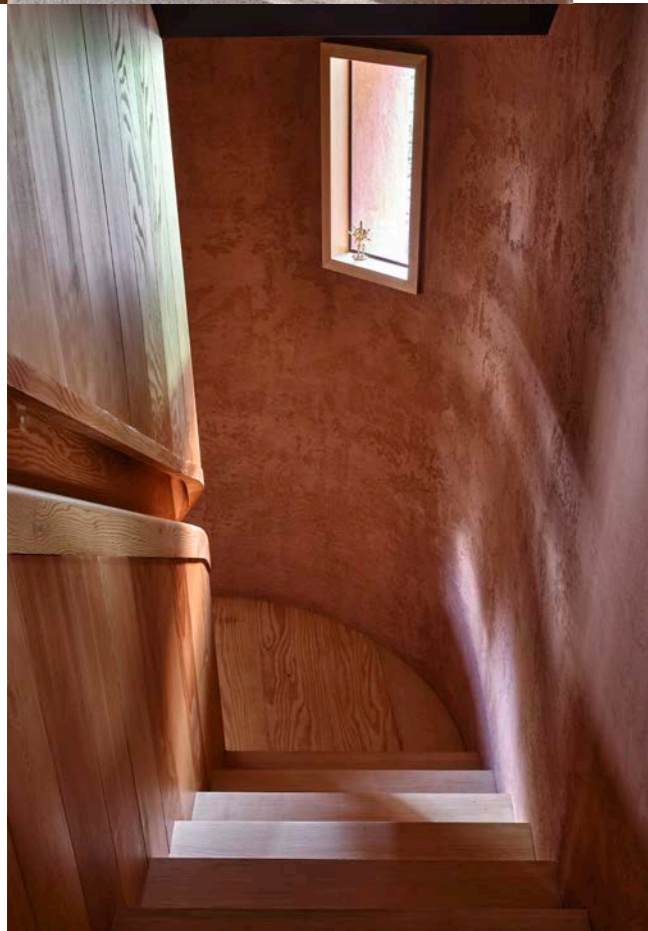
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SIGNATURE STYLE
KEY PIECES



1 Hammered brass pendant light, approx. \$435, from Vakker. 2 Linen duvet cover in Cedar, \$365/set, from Cultiver. 3 Rabi Malay abaca banana fibre floor rug, from \$600/sqm, from International Floorcoverings Australia. 4 &Tradition 'Wulff' armchair, from \$7000, from Cult. 5 'Blevio' table, POA, from Molteni&C.

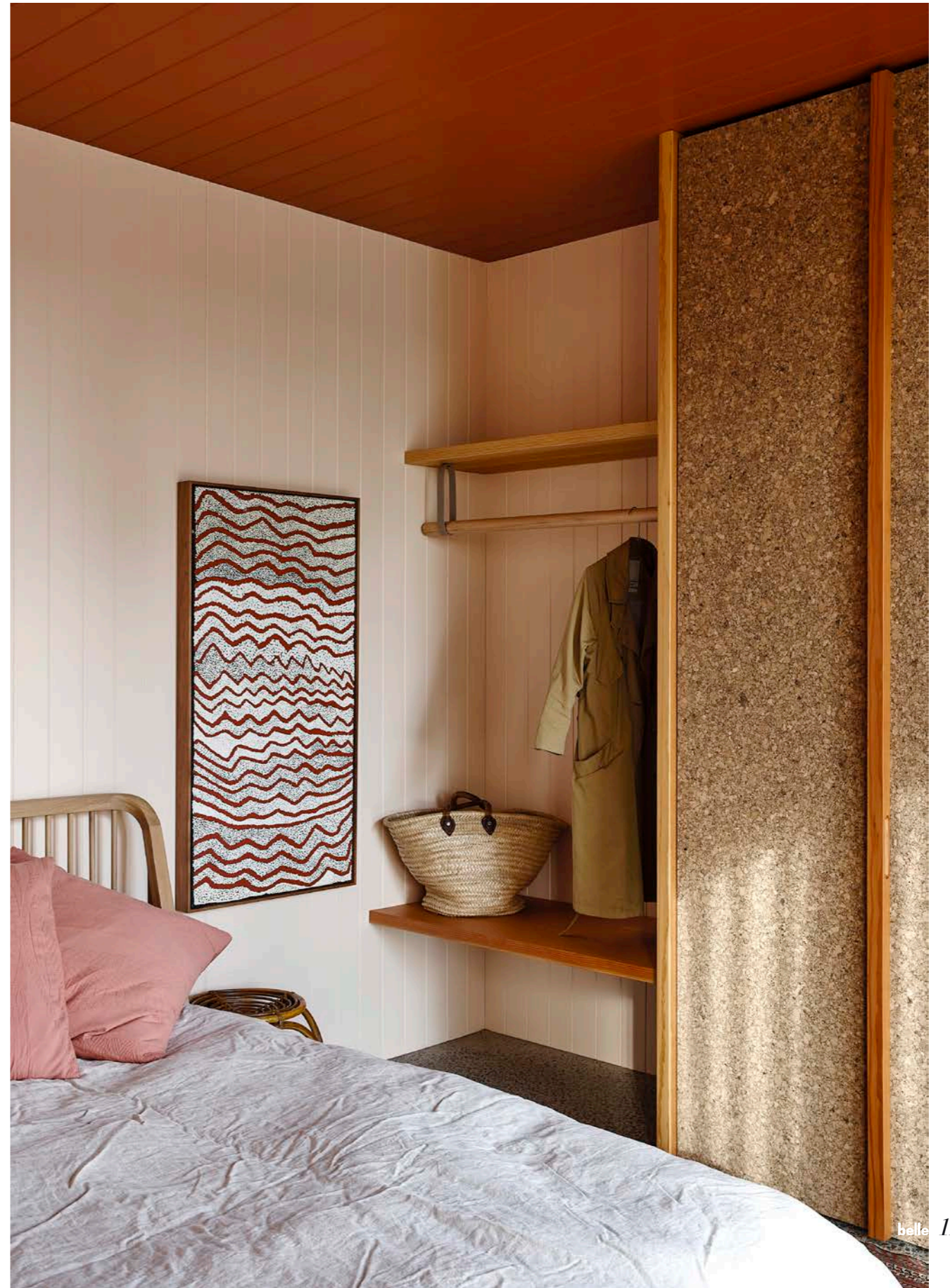


This page, from top Popular in beach houses in the 1950s and 60s, the old-fashioned seagrass matting, from the Natural Floorcovering Centre, evokes a sense of the past. Gnarled tree trunks frame the house. Opposite page, from top The main bedroom benefits from diffused light through the 'Laconia Air' linen curtains in Rust from Mokum. Ole Gjerløv-Knudsen 'Safari' chair from Nord Modern. A forest pansy tree frames the entrance to the home, with glimpses of the bay beyond. The stairwell with its rendered ochre walls.



SPEED READ

» Longtime friends of the owners Rachel Nolan and Patrick Kennedy of Kennedy Nolan Architects were charged with redesigning a beach house for a couple with adult children. » Overlooking Port Phillip Bay, the Somers house had to meet the requirements for full accessibility as one of the owners is wheelchair dependent. » Three interconnected pavilions cascade down the property with the floor plan focusing on a central core with elevator and lift. » The colours were inspired by the earthy tones of late artist Queenie McKenzie, whose work is displayed on some of the walls. » Charred Japanese-style timber was used inside and out along with a melange of materials such as terrazzo, Oregon timber, black slate and Persian travertine making up the highly sophisticated palette.



This page, clockwise from top left
The ensuite bathroom to the main bedroom includes a number of customised fittings such as the vanity designed by Kennedy Nolan. Bathroom floor tiled in 'Fatima's Reflection' terrazzo from Fibonacci. On the wall are mosaic tiles in Peach from Bisazza. Middle of Nowhere 'Flynn' round mirrors in Black from Life Interiors. Generous built-in timber joinery in the main bedroom suite. Framed by gumtrees, the rear garden overlooking Port Phillip Bay provides a tranquil environment. **Opposite page** In a guest bedroom the 'Autumn' cork tile on the robe front is from Portugal Cork Co. Artwork by Helicopter Joe Tjungurrayi.