

# a practice that makes perfect



Kennedy Nolan is an architectural practice devoted to creating beautiful, thoughtful and innovative projects for life and living. Through its work it touches the hearts of its clients and designs houses that resonate with shared memory and layered texture.

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**It takes years to build a successful practice and it takes dogged determination to maintain the ethos upon which a practice is built. Rachel Nolan and Patrick Kennedy established Kennedy Nolan in 1999 and they have survived and thrived over the past 16 years staying true to the beliefs they hold dear; they both have the love of 'home', the respect for the past and memory, and their intuitive designs speak of inclusion, comfort and pragmatism. They are different personalities, yet their design aesthetics gel together perfectly.**

As young Melbourne University architecture graduates, they slipped into residential design effortlessly through many invitations from family and friends to advise on, redesign or design their homes. As the commissions began to accumulate, Kennedy Nolan the practice was established.

Nolan and Kennedy came to Melbourne from their respective country towns of Albury

and Wodonga and brought with them a desire to succeed at their craft, but do it their way. They have a deft touch with the yellow trace, and their love of the house and home has ensured that residential work has become the major focus of the practice.

To Kennedy Nolan, designing residential projects is not just designing a place to reside; it is a living, breathing, organic process and, through experience, can be refined to a perfect design that encapsulates the needs and desires of the client. Kennedy Nolan has a particular aesthetic, but this vision is tempered by the requirements of individual needs. Clients come to the practice because they see in Kennedy Nolan's work a regard for detail, practicality and integrity.

There is a thread in the process of the work, one that links the outdoors with the interior. Both Kennedy and Nolan have been

below—Patrick Kennedy and Rachel Nolan.  
opposite—Hampton House 11.



designing this way since they started and it just keeps getting better and better. It's not simply about adding an outdoor area or providing a landscaped exterior. It is about a certain flow, a sensitivity for space and dimension and extending boundaries. The key to Kennedy Nolan designs is experience. Not just the years of work that translate into fine design, but textural experience. Texture comes in many forms, but for Kennedy Nolan it is about sight and smell, light and sound and how these qualities are integrated into each and every project. It is looking beyond the bricks and mortar to create a home that is memorable, a home that supports and reinforces memory for the client.

During conversations with Nolan and Kennedy, certain words and ideas keep reappearing, such as the processes of domestic life and how that is interpreted in the design



above—Merricks beach House.

of a home, spatial ritual and how the design of a house can help smooth the workings of everyday customs, so that they become an effortless practice, and landscape – the terrain within that is in sync with nature and the exterior. The practice looks beyond the obvious to understand how people live, work, play and interact with the structure of their home.

Kennedy Nolan has won many awards for its designs – recognition that its processes are right, that it captures and interprets a brief according to site and requirement. It's not enough to design with expertise, however; it's also about creating beauty and substance. The duo knew that they were on the right track when, in 1999, at the very beginning of their career, they were awarded a Victorian Australian Institute of Architects Residential award. Since then there have been a swag of accolades including: the 2007 Victorian AIA

award for residential alterations and additions, a 2013 Houses award in the category New House Under 200 square metres and, in 2014, the practice was both winner of the Residential category and the Overall winner in the Interior Design Excellence Awards (IDEA), received 2 Victorian AIA awards for separate residential projects and was the recipient of the Houses Heritage award.

Although residential design is the main focus for Kennedy Nolan, there are other projects that have broadened the scope of the practice. It has been involved with designs for Sacred Heart Primary School, Northcote High School and a childcare centre at Melbourne University, as well as various multi-residential projects, and it has brought its particular aesthetic and a conceptual freshness to each project. While these projects extend the practice, Kennedy Nolan also offers its

clients a different design perception from the norm. On the books at the moment is a large multi-residential project that will afford the team the opportunity to apply their wealth of knowledge and experience to creating a new vision for apartment living and a childcare centre, along with the presentation of concepts and idea-based designs for Melbourne Central.

For Kennedy Nolan, it's not about reinventing the wheel, but learning from every project and applying the knowledge accordingly. Through its many projects it has made a substantial contribution to the landscape of the built environment in Australia. Beauty, intuition and understanding are the foundations of a Kennedy Nolan design; experience, connectivity and innovation the building blocks. They are architects of distinction practising perfection. **0**