

Shoreside Retreat

*Text / Leanne Amodeo
Images / Derek Swalwell*



Sandy Point is one of those small Victorian beachside towns that swells with out-of-towners in the summertime. It's relatively unaffected by the coastal housing boom, and the untouched coastline and good surfing conditions make it all the more appealing as a weekend getaway spot. For the owners of one home, the town holds a special place because of their long-standing association with it, so in briefing Melbourne-based architecture practice Kennedy Nolan, they asked for a space suitable for extended stays.

'Our clients didn't want a house that stands out among a community of modest dwellings, but it did need to reflect and amplify their genuine connection to the place, which has evolved over generations of family holidays,' says architect Rachel Nolan. The resulting scheme is a rhythmic waltz of plan, form and materiality, all finely attuned to respect not only the steepness of the site, but also the remoteness of its setting.

At the heart of the home's pinwheel layout is an external courtyard from which four separate volumes radiate. There's no internal connection between these zones, so entry into each is via the courtyard, a cloister of sorts that offers an outdoor dining area protected from the region's harsh winds. It also mediates the level changes, as each volume dramatically twists or turns depending on the slope of the terrain. All formal dynamism aside, the arrangement firmly embeds the home in its place, making it appear both unobtrusive and incredibly sympathetic to its surroundings.

The timber cladding functions as a type of exterior camouflage as well, particularly as it continues to fade and grey over time. And by repeating this material inside, the architects have achieved a sense of cohesion, adding warmth and robustness to the interiors in the process. 'We sought to reimagine an idealised coastal experience,' explains Nolan. 'So the perception of place as you move from room to room is very sensual, heightened by the view of the stars, a burst of cold air and the sound of crashing waves.'

Curved timber batten ceilings in turn echo the rolling sea, while the circular windows recall a ship's portholes. In contrast, the olive-green walls evoke the exterior landscape, and provide a complementary backdrop for the clients' understated furnishings. From the timber dining table and collection of handcrafted artworks and objects to the white light fittings and ample window seating, the home's relaxed aesthetic is undoubtedly inviting.

It's a suitably inward-looking home that offers the clients their own little hideaway. The structure doesn't only envelope, though — it also works hard to accommodate the multiple generations staying in the house at any given time. So, while everyone has their own private quarters, the courtyard as the shared common area literally brings everyone together — either via planned gatherings or incidental interactions — and therein lies the design's resounding success.

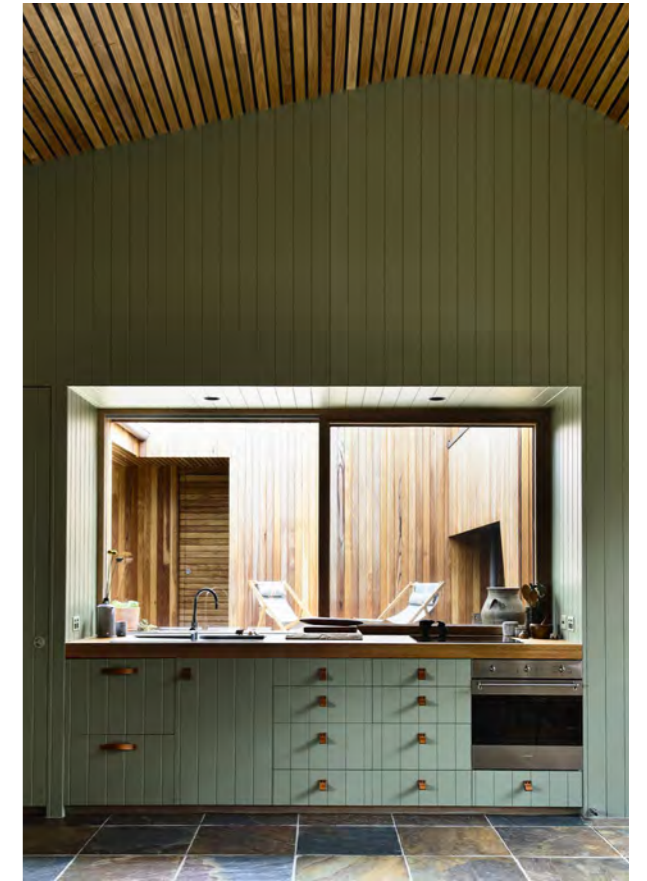
Previous page
Melbourne-based Kennedy Nolan designed this family holiday home on the rugged coast of Bass Strait in consideration of the steep site and remote setting, and the resulting structure offers the family a perfect hideaway

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An artwork by indigenous Gija artist Shirley Purdie hangs in the living room, where large windows offer a sensual experience and create a bridge between the indoor setting and the greenery just outside





Together, the open-plan entrance, kitchen and dining room offer another communal space for the family to come together, either in the kitchen or around the large wormy chestnut table by Mark Tuckey. At one end hangs Jörg Schmeisser's *Diary and Shells*, its monochrome palette creating a visual focal point. While the house is not the family's primary abode, personal items and homey touches abound





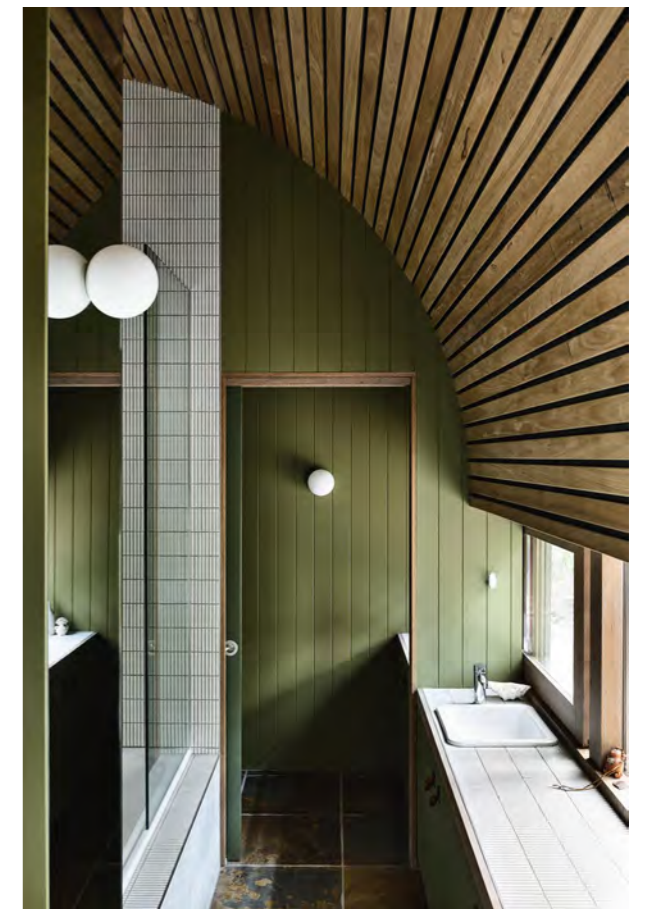
In the family room, a Paris Au Mois Daout lantern from Hub Furniture hangs above a built-in sofa with custom ikat upholstery by Walter G, creating a cosy nook for cooler weather and a temperate spot on warm days





Facing page
In the bathroom, Artedomus tiling on the walls and floors continues the mint and olive-green palette found in the house and outside

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The clients' collection of art and furniture fills the home, and the complementary mustard and yellow tones of printmaker Gwen Scott's *Refuge*, Hermann armchair by Thonet, and a large vase add a summertime glow. In many of the rooms, curved timber batten ceilings create a cocoon effect befitting the home's atmosphere and location





The interior and exterior have been designed to embed the home in its surroundings, from the timber cladding on the facade to the internal courtyards and the foliage-inspired colour palette