

ONE WITH NATURE

*A home that seamlessly blends with its natural environment
boasts a minimalist design featuring simple, clean lines*

■ WORDS / Annabelle Cioros ■ PHOTOGRAPHY / Rhiannon Slatter



A polished concrete floor is an on-trend addition to the home



- **HOUSE** Tree House
- **LOCATION** Glen Iris, Victoria
- **COST** \$800,000+
- **DATE COMMENCED** March 2011
- **DATE COMPLETED** July 2012

We love

The combination of timber and polished concrete — a sustainable but stylish aesthetic wound throughout the home

In 1913, the Californian bungalow hit Aussie shores in a big way, making its pilgrimage across the country to ultimately brand itself as a cheap and chic style. The humble bungalow became so popular that few houses were designed in any other way. Alas, the mould has since been broken and the California-influenced home has since dwindled in popularity. It's hard to believe this modern Glen Iris home was once part of the craze, but a new residence stands proudly in its place within a tree-ridden landscape.

As with many homes of this era, rooms were dysfunctional, spaces were cramped and insulation was poor. “The lounge room faced the street and had no relationship with the backyard,” says architect Steffen Welsch. “The meals area was in the centre of the house and was dark with no direct sunlight.” Along with a small kitchen, the home had no solar access, average insulation and a substandard

bathroom. This gave the homeowners the perfect opportunity to wipe the slate clean and make a start fresh.

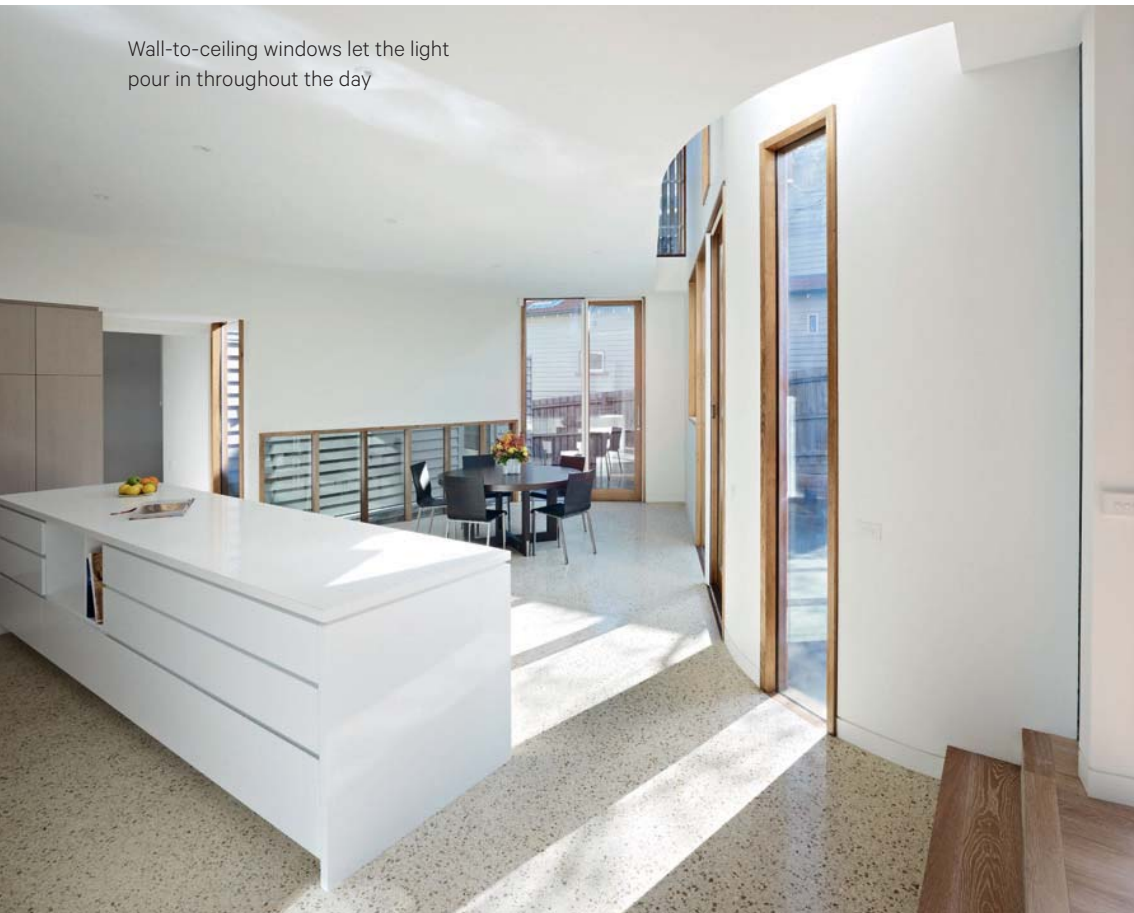
With a brief revolving around the concept of creating an “artistic piece with warmth and the subtle use of colour”, three separate areas were to be established within the home, along with bedrooms for the children and owners, an open kitchen, dining area and living room as well as a spacious laundry and pantry with plenty of storage.

Not entirely ridding the home of its Californian charm, alterations were made to the existing single-storey structure, which is now the foundation of the two-storey add-on. Walls were removed and recreated to construct three bedrooms for the couple's young children as well as a bathroom and play area. A rooftop terrace — a design feature of the home that showcases the stunning greenery outside — overlooks the new landscaped backyard and is



A curved appearance offers a cocoon-like feeling along with the rich timber

Wall-to-ceiling windows let the light pour in throughout the day



The colour scheme is very much neutral, focusing on the balance of light and letting nature work its magic

also accessible from the master bedroom.

With the home completely rewired to consist of three distinct areas — a children's space, a communal family section and a parents' retreat upstairs — it's obvious the disrupted flow of the previous house has been banished. Instead, the family can enjoy time in separate areas of the home and come together in the "heart" of the house, conveniently located in the middle.

The colour scheme is very much neutral, focusing on the balance of light and letting nature work its magic. "Balanced light inside and outside, as well as articulation of external and internal rooms, is important to us," says Steffen. "We chose white for the inside to reflect natural light and timber for the outside to absorb it. The timber cladding

Design tip

A neutral colour scheme is a classic palette that can be easily changed and tweaked over the years

will weather and take on the same colour and tone as the trees that dominate the backyard."

Sustainability is a new addition to this home, with Steffen and his team deliberately orienting living areas to make the "most of solar access". This included applying passive solar design principles through orientation, cross-ventilation, zoning, high thermal insulation, solar hot water and 5000L rainwater tanks.

A noted feature of the home is its curved shape, which blends effortlessly

A step up to the lounge room signifies a room with a purpose



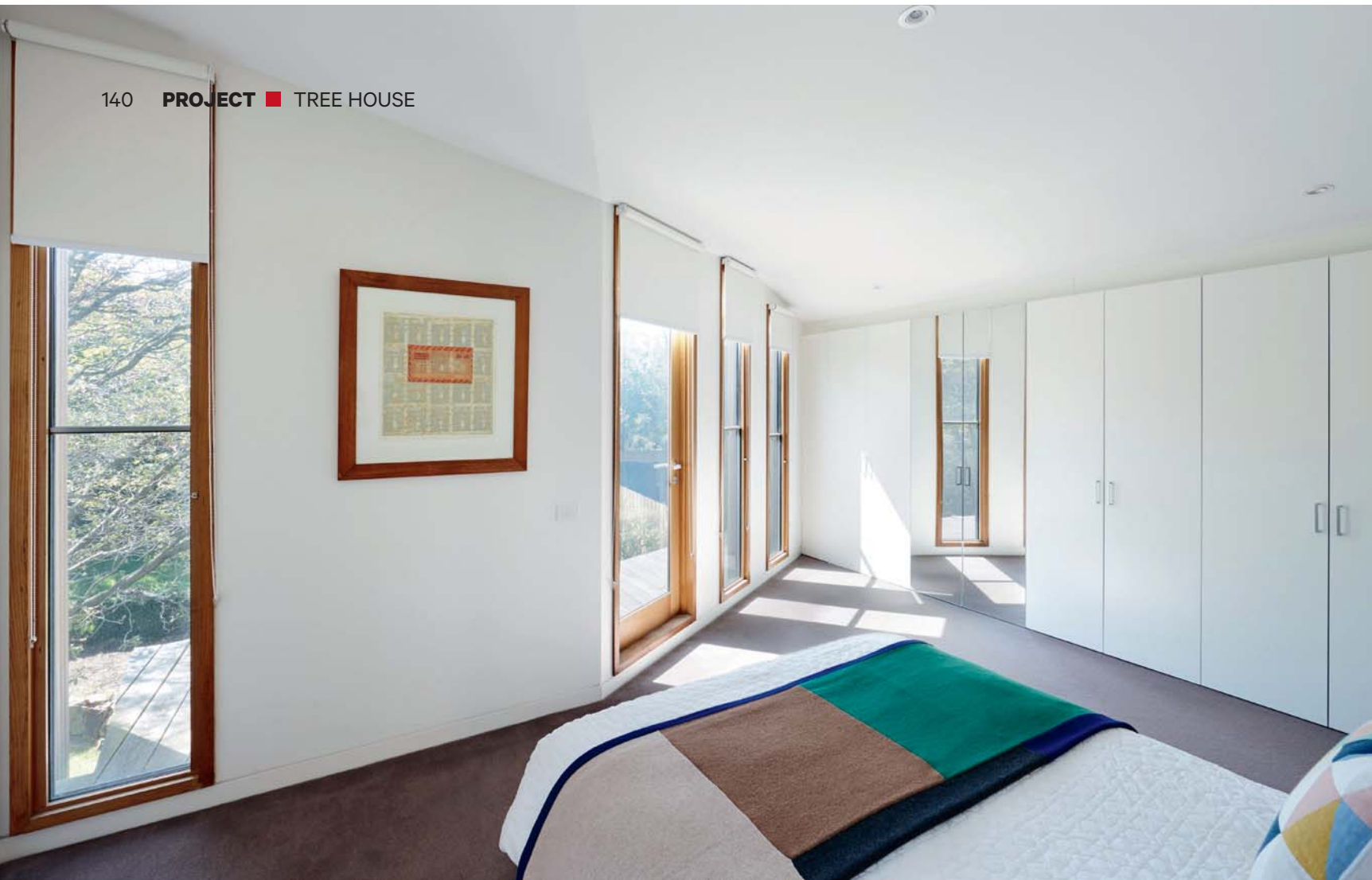
There's plenty of room for the children to play in this spacious abode



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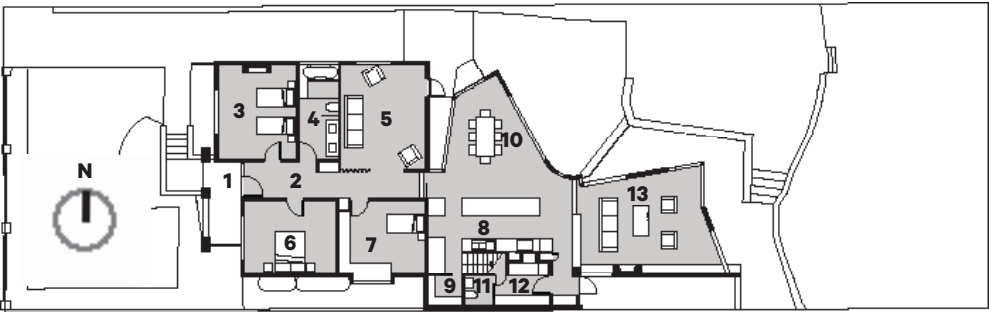
into the landscape. “The tree-filled backyard and sloping land gave us the inspiration to build a house that relates to its natural surroundings rather than the suburban built environment,” says Steffen. “As a result, the building’s terrace follows the slope of the site and is directly linked to the backyard. The built form and façade were developed to evoke the qualities of a tree, and we feel we have achieved that.” 🌳



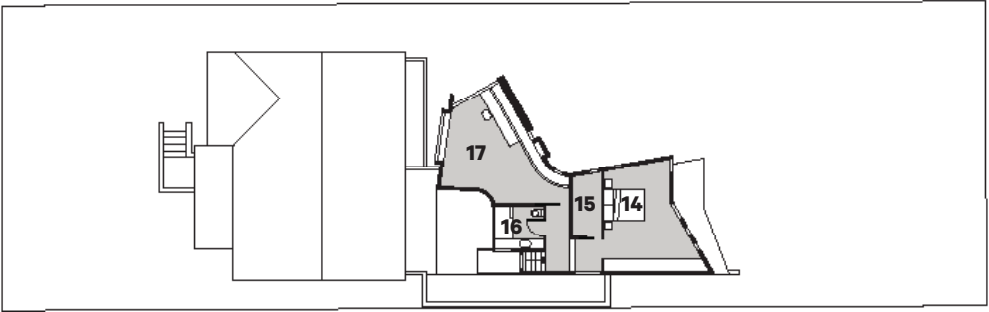


LEGEND

- 1 Entry
- 2 Hall
- 3 Bedroom 1
- 4 Bathroom
- 5 Children's room
- 6 Bedroom 2
- 7 Bedroom 3
- 8 Kitchen
- 9 Pantry
- 10 Dining room
- 11 WC
- 12 Laundry
- 13 Living room
- 14 Master bedroom
- 15 Walk-in robe
- 16 Ensuite
- 17 Retreat



GROUND FLOOR PLAN



FIRST FLOOR PLAN



PROJECT TEAM

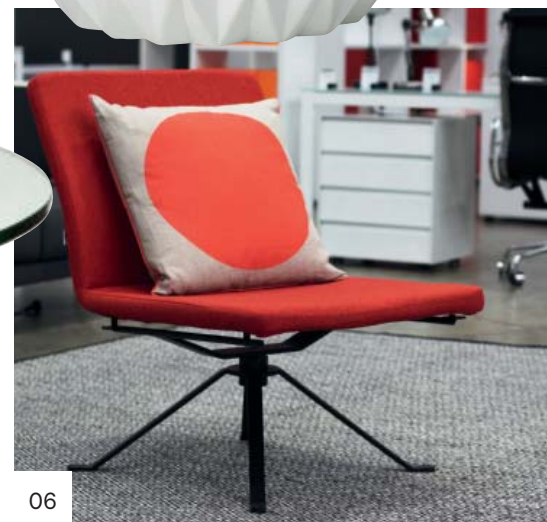
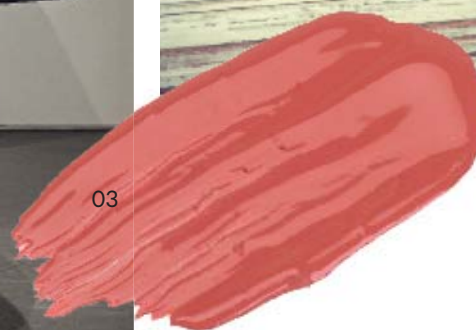
- **ARCHITECT** Steffen Welsch Architects (steffenwelsch.com.au)
- **BUILDER** P & JM Deleo (0418 100 707)
- **ENGINEER** Maurice Farrugia & Associates (03 9696 9073)
- **BUILDING SURVEYOR** Metro Building Surveying (03 9497 4522; metrobs.com.au)
- **ENERGY RATER** Homestar (03 9397 5589; homestar.com.au)

- **STRUCTURAL TEAM** Contractor P & JM Deleo (0418 100 707)
- Cabinet maker** Munro Joinery (03 9466 2353)
- Retractable flyscreens** Phantom Screens (03 9737 1602; phantomscreens.com.au)
- Windows & doors** Mouldright Joinery (03 5221 2999; mouldright.com.au)
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- Timber cladding** Woodform Architectural (03 5446 0100; woodformarch.com)
- Paving** Pavers Plus (03 9870 0900; paversplus.com.au)
- Carpet** Fowles (03 9265 5539; fowles.com.au)

- **FURNITURE & FURNISHINGS**
- Rental furniture** Living Edge Furniture Rental (03 8416 3400; livingedgerental.com.au)

- **SERVICES**
- Heating & cooling** Call Mercury (1300 135 343; callmercury.com.au)





- 01 Lema Wow dining table from **Go Modern**.
gomodern.co.uk
- 02 Hand-painted wooden letter from
Love Letters. loveletters.me.uk
- 03 Cover Garden Floral No.270 paint from
Mylands. mylands.co.uk
- 04 White vase from **Amalfi Homewares**.
amalfihomewares.com.au
- 05 Lamb's wool cushion from **Oscar & Eve**.
oscarandeve.co.uk
- 06 Kos chair with cushion from **Aero Designs**.
aerodesigns.com.au
- 07 Coffee table from **Milan Direct**.
milandirect.com.au