

DESIGN RULES

Designing a beautiful house can be like piecing together bits of a jigsaw. To help you solve this puzzle, follow these simple rules to make your home your haven.

BY AMANDA FALCONER



Have you ever driven down a street admiring the houses on either side? Then you come across one that sticks out like a sore thumb. It can seem like a blemish in a street of houses that otherwise seem to fit so well together.

Design harmony doesn't happen by accident. Everyone wants to create a distinctive home – and if you're designing or renovating one, this is your chance to put your stamp on it.

You want a home with features that are uniquely yours – but it should also fit harmoniously into your streetscape. Smart home designers know that the ideal house is one that strikes the perfect balance between the two.

While you can't become an expert designer overnight, you can follow this simple approach to creating homes that exude individuality – but aren't a blight on the landscape.

FIVE KEY BUILDING ELEMENTS OF ARCHITECTURE

If great architecture could be reduced to simple rules about five key building elements, the elements would be: colour, roofs, walls, openings, landscape and clip-ons. But the key to remember is that these elements can't be considered in isolation. It's how they work together that makes all the difference.

The kind of architecture that works best in this country is distinctively Australian. It's cosmopolitan and fresh, yet down-to-earth at the same time. Australian home designs

have come of age on the world stage and while we once looked overseas for inspiration, we've now got a home-grown style that's capturing other people's imagination.

It may be tempting to transplant the style you saw last on holiday: Tuscan, for example, or Fez-inspired. Why not leave that to Italy or Morocco where it belongs? Because when the romance or nostalgia fades, you may be left with a house that doesn't really feel at home here.

The real challenge is to create a style that's distinctively Australian – one that reflects the architectural vernacular of this country. Architectural vernacular is the building style that's "grown up" in the local area, influenced by the environment, climate, culture and history of the place. One region's architectural vernacular can be subtly – or widely – different to another region.

In fact, designing a house to work well with climate is a key factor. For example, a house in tropical North Queensland, which has been designed for a hot, cyclone-prone climate, is going to look very different to one designed for cold Hobart winters. That's one reason transplanted styles often don't work.

Homes that echo the unique characters of both the owners and their local area are often the most liveable – and aesthetically successful. There are three top Australian style trends that combine personality with a unique sense of place. And here is how you can use the five key building elements of architecture to create your own version. →

DOES YOUR HOME HAVE GOOD MANNERS?

This might seem like an odd question but it's one worth pondering. Internationally renowned town planner Andrés Duany travels the world helping to create great places to live. "We see many houses that are fine individually, but taken together, are visually chaotic, each building clamouring for attention and none of them achieving a civilised streetscape," he says.

The late Australian author and academic Professor George Seddon agreed. An "uncompromisingly new building which nevertheless keeps to the scale of the street facade, [can show] architectural good manners," he wrote back in 1972, in a book that has since become a collector's item, *A Sense of Place*.

This streetscape has houses featuring Scyon™ Linea™ weatherboard and HardiFlex® sheets.



SHANE DENMAN DESIGNS

DESIGNER AND DESIGN

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STYLE: COASTAL

If you're lucky enough to be a sea changer building a new home, then the most important thing to consider is how your home will fit into your lovely seaside location. The best-designed coastal homes take their inspiration and colour palettes from the surrounding landscape and local architecture.

For many of us, memories of summer holidays by the beach are dappled with bright sun and deep shade. To deal with this, wide overhangs of eaves, verandas and decks are a design constant in both contemporary and traditional coastal styles. They're oriented north where possible for lazy indoor-outdoor living.

DESIGNER: DAVID SCOTT / DESIGNER: BLUE COVE HOMES / STOCKXPERT



1 COLOUR
In temperate climates – Perth, Melbourne, Sydney – a sun-bleached landscape calls up hues with a high white content. Soft blue greens recall the coastal heath. Tropical climates and foliage inspire pure hues and rich dark greens.



2 ROOFS
A more traditional coastal style tends to have steep pitched roofs, wide eaves where it's possible, as well as tower elements for views and sun catching. Contemporary roofs are usually skillion, curved and flat, with deep eaves and soffits as well as roof terraces and decks.



ARCHITECT: PLANT ARCHITECTS / ARCHITECT: MOORCROFT ARCHITECTS / DESIGNER: NIGHTMAN BUILDING COMPANY / DESIGNER: GRANT MILLAR

3 WALLS AND OPENINGS
Key wall materials are those that add texture and interest while holding colour from pastel to vivid. Openings – with climate appropriate shading – should be designed with indoor-outdoor living and passive solar principles in mind.
Trims – often in one colour as a unifying element – can reinforce coastal character. White or timber tones easily marry in with other materials, chunky trims tend to work better in rural and sub-rural precincts, and almost-invisible trims in urban zones.



4 CLIP-ONS
Verandas and decks are a coastal style essential and privacy screens and balustrades can help front verandas become usable spaces.

So what are clip-ons?
Clip-ons are balconies, verandas, decks and privacy screens, for example. They're not just something added on, they're more a way to add interest and texture to facades. Clip-ons can also protect windows and other openings from sun at unwanted times.



5 LANDSCAPE
Coastal style isn't all about the house; the landscape palette and vegetation are also key elements. Choose from two basic approaches: harmony or contrast.

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STYLE: ECO

The eco home really works hand in glove with the natural setting to have minimal impact on the environment. Sustainable design practices are a must – it's just not enough to have only a solar heater and AAA shower. In fact, sloped roofs and eaves are hallmarks of environmentally responsive design, as is simple, framed, elevated construction. Using bearers and joists instead of a slab on the ground allows more of the natural trees, plants and slope to remain, and is a sensitive approach to water run-off.



1 COLOUR
Hues are low in contrast and drawn from the natural vegetation and geology. The earthy tones of Tawny Taupe and Biscotti might be offset with a tiny splash of Burnt Brick.* Low allergy pigments are a plus.



2 ROOFS
What's roof and what's veranda? There's a real crossover in this style – which does not include flat or parapet roofs! Traditional versions may be Australian farmhouse inspired with grooved eave linings and exposed rafters.

* These colours are from the Taubmans All Weather® and Sun Proof Max® ranges which give a 15-year warranty to Scyon™ Linea™ weatherboard and PrimeLine® weatherboard.



ARCHITECT: PLANT ARCHITECTS / STOCKXPRT
SHANE DENMAN DESIGNS / ARCHITECT: DESIGN KING COMPANY; PHOTOGRAPHY: BRETT BOARDMAN / ARCHITECT: PLANT ARCHITECTS / DESIGNER: COSMOPOLITAN HOMES

3 WALLS AND OPENINGS
Scyon™ Linea™ weatherboard, in soft colours and minimal contrasts, suits a traditional eco style. Panel products like Scyon™ Matrix™ cladding are great backdrops to showcase recycled materials, with additional texture added through vertical break-ups.



4 CLIP-ONS
Shading devices can be important depending on the climate. Add texture to veranda ceilings for visual interest.

5 LANDSCAPE
Choose your plants for visual impact with the home but make sure they won't damage existing local vegetation.



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STYLE: ECLECTIC

A range of influences shape this urban 'style' of anti-'style control' – its heart is the freedom to experiment. A layered approach is the key: colour can be bold, and unusual and even artistic clip-ons can add your personality to the facade.

MIRVAC / DESIGNER: NEW DIMENSION HOMES / STOCKXPRT

MIRVAC / ARCHITECT: MCDOWIE PARTNERS / DESIGNER: PLANTATION HOMES / MIRVAC



3 WALLS AND OPENINGS
The commercial influence is a big trend, with panels and express-jointed materials, while weatherboard and other grooved claddings reflect a more traditional past. Trim details around windows can also reflect this historical detailing.



4 CLIP-ONS
Almost anything goes here! Experiment with balconies, privacy screens, plantings to add visual interest to facades, and create semi-private spaces in the most urban environment. You could even be really daring and put some art on the outside with screen-printed images on Scyon™ Matrix cladding.



1 COLOUR
It's a mix! Hot, bright colours and metallics are drawn from the city and can be extreme. The more restrained cool whites and greys also feature strongly.



2 ROOFS
While there are no rules in eclectic, contemporary tends to feature the very urban flat parapet style. The linings of wide eaves are textured with express joints. Traditional, on the other hand, updates pitched styles with grooved eave linings.



5 LANDSCAPE
Water-sensitive landscapes and limited use of lawns are critical in this urban environment.

Rules are made to be broken
This simple design framework can really come in handy but, of course, you don't have to follow it to the letter. The trick is to take these typical ingredients and combine them in a way to create a home that's uniquely yours. Some day soon, you'll drive into your street towards the house you've created with your distinct vision. And even though it may blend in harmoniously with the streetscape, you'll also know that there's truly no place like home. ■