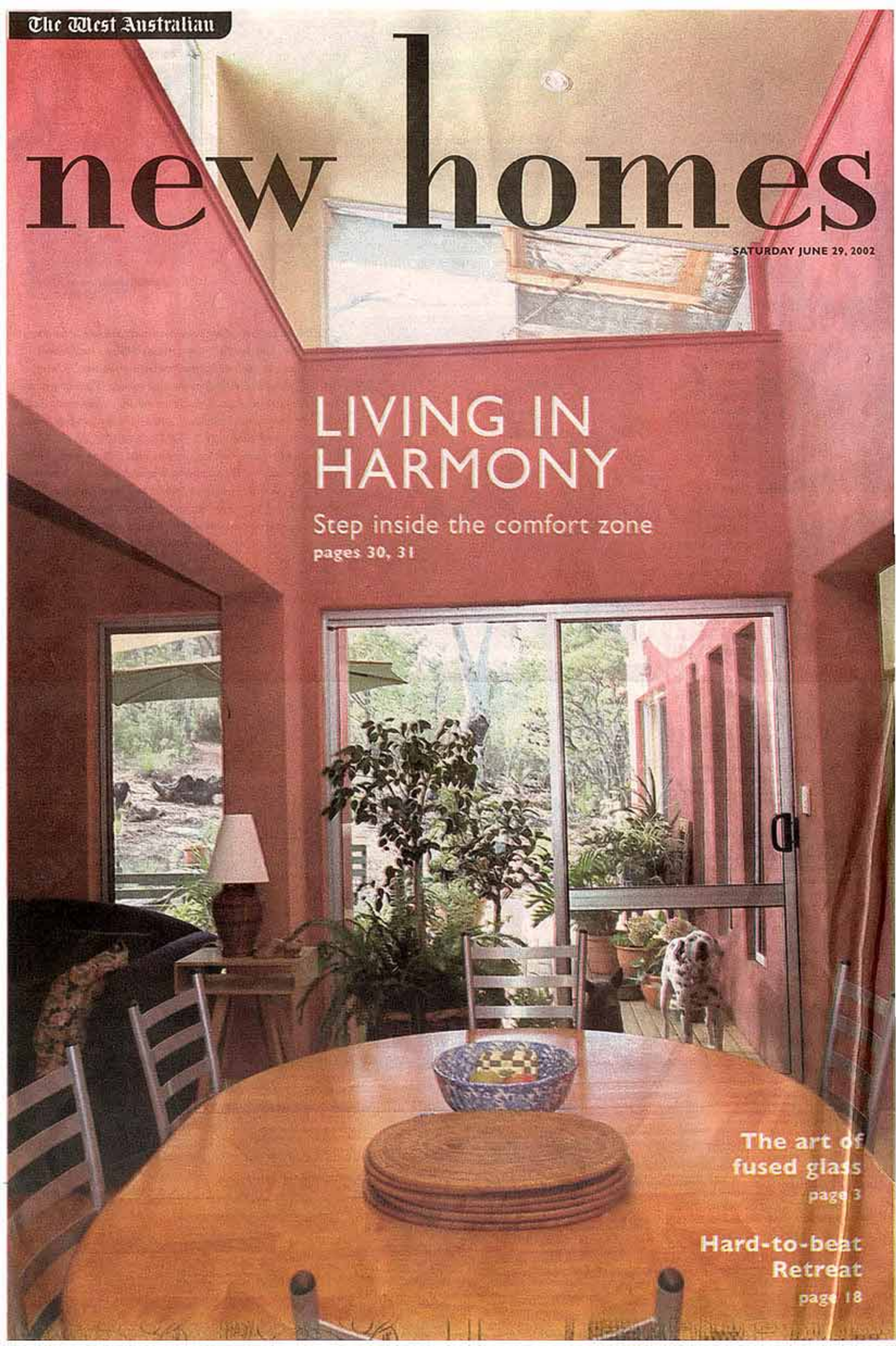


new homes

SATURDAY JUNE 29, 2002

LIVING IN HARMONY

Step inside the comfort zone
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The art of fused glass
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Hard-to-beat Retreat
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Going solar to

THERE was nothing but dense bush along the gravel track as we peered through big eucalypts, looking for a passive-solar home.

Then there was a glimpse of it emerging from the varied green environment — an earthy burgundy texture to walls and violet-blue paneling reflecting distant hills.

As it came into full view from a circular driveway it proved an exciting structure with its overlapping skillion and curved roofs. The clerestory windows thus afforded were obviously a critical detail for exploiting the winter sunshine, penetrating about 5m indoors.

It was quite fascinating indoors, not only for the bright light and the virgin forest all around, but also for the floating effect. With the full-depth windows you were looking down over natural contours that had not been disturbed by the elevated concept.

For the owners, Michael Pugh and Kate Sinclair Pugh, their passive-solar home fulfilled a dream with its proven significant savings in energy costs.

From the hillside they likened it to living in a tree



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The concept is based on two pavilions — one, with a kitchen, for living, the other for sleeping and with a home office. The generous dining area serves as a link and a breezeway between ...
”

fulfil a dream



house with a bird's-eye view for a great distance down a valley, even from the bathroom. The Gidgegnup home achieves the comfort zone the owners wanted, never going below 18deg. in winter or above 28deg. in summer. They also enjoy the bush's tranquility, broken only by noisy native birds that have found a smorgasbord of varied seed laid on for them daily.

Garry Baverstock, of Ecotect Architects, has succeeded in bringing the outside inside. You appreciate the dense growth of balga, the big eucalypts and the merging splashes of colour with wildflowers in the undergrowth.

The concept is based on two pavilions — one, with a kitchen, for living, the other for sleeping and with a home office. The generous dining area serves as a link and a breezeway between the two and adjoins the 6m x 5m lobby. From here the space flows out to decks on the north-east and the south-west, one for the alfresco living in winter and the other for summer.

The construction is partly reverse-brick veneer with a mini-corrugated metal as external cladding. This provides the internal masonry walls needed for thermal banks which soak up winter warmth by day and radiate it back at night. The plan overall is a Z-shape to act as a breeze trap, capturing the cool sou-westerly winds of an afternoon and

the north-easterly winds at night. The whole house can be quickly ventilated with up to five complete air changes every hour.

The main pavilion is about 12m x 6m and has the sitting area at one end with a slow-combustion heater that uses the supply of free firewood on the 2ha block.

An upstand/servery screens the generous kitchen which has about 8m of bench cupboards, and a steam oven as well as the traditional electric, fan-forced wall oven. An island cupboard doubles as a snack bar for two and it incorporates a wine rack that is easily replenished from the cellar below.

This pavilion also has a well-appointed laundry, and the second bathroom that doubles as a mud-room, where anyone working outdoors in the wet can clean up before coming indoors.

The architect only takes credit for designing the passive-solar concept that is working so well. The owners carried the project through, in the selection of materials, finishes and colours, to harmonise it all with the bush.

■ The solar house, complete with a selectively cleared firebreak, is not open for inspection but for inquiries call Garry Baverstock, on 9386 3888.