

PERSPECTIVES
Frank Platell



The home exploits passive-solar principles in stylish fashion.

PICTURES: SHARON SMITH

A place in the sun

YOU'D expect a committed environmentalist to live close to the bush — in this case Banksia Parklands at Ardross.

The home owner in question being a medical practitioner and comfortable with scientific concepts, it also was logical that the residence would be designed along passive-solar lines.

Architect Garry Baverstock met the brief and brought it to fruition in a cute two-storey concept on a hillside. It maintains year-round living comfort, never less than 18deg, in winter or more than 28deg, in summer, while exploiting river outlooks framed by tall eucalypts.

The request for a big, open living area — which ended up measuring 12m x 8m — called for an innovative detail to maintain this comfort in the form of a fully glazed solarium covered by a timber pergola with louvres angled at 35deg, to the north.

This boosts the winter heat input, topping up the reflected warmth from the masonry mass which has been getting direct sunlight up to 4m indoors by day. In full shade, the solarium contributes to the cross-ventilation efficiency from cool breezes.

The tight battle-axe site made it comparatively easy to meet the privacy and security requested of the owner. But the precinct guidelines on heights, setbacks and overlooking constraints made it almost impossible to achieve a passive-solar concept.

"But it was all championed through the local council by Shirley de la Hunty," enthused the architect.

"She could see our future in such solar projects that exploit the free energy from the sun."

For the owner there is the choice of working upstairs with the best of the views from the study, or relaxing in the great room downstairs where window walls for the solar benefits also integrate a garden that calls for minimum maintenance.

While the ground floor is self-contained with the main bedroom there is another equivalent suite upstairs, plus other sleeping areas for visiting family.

The garage and a sheltered parking bay are on the west side for protection from the summer sun.

The limestone look to the masonry walls contributes to the overall harmony with the environment.

The lofty entry has a steeply pitched ceiling that highlights the staircase. A cylindrical column directs the gaze to the great room, which introduces a comfortable folksy theme, especially with the rustic fireplace.

It is easy to appreciate how more than 80 were entertained at an engagement party. **cont →**



Innovative features maintain year-round living comfort.

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Easily accessible storage space is a highlight of the kitchen design.



The dining and living areas are flexible to suit changing needs.



A tranquil ambience permeates the home.



The gardens are low-maintenance and suit the passive-solar nature of the home.

→ It is all overlooked from an end kitchen where there is a bay window seat to the north which has been taken over by a big pet dog. It is a galley-type work area with about 8m of bench cupboards, all with emerald-fleck black granite tops.

The emphasis on storage space is on deep drawers which make everything-accessible. There is a slide-out pantry with wire storage racks.

The generous living and dining areas can be adjusted easily to suite the occasion.

Getting as much garden as possible on the tight site contributes to the tranquil ambience indoors. Every low-maintenance court has a function, one being to catch the early morning sun of winter to brighten the day.

The Ardross residence is not open for inspection. Inquiries about solar designs can be made to architect Garry Baverstock, phone 9386 3888.



The hillside home sits beautifully on a tight battle-axe block.