

## COUNTRY STYLE LIVING

Elements of country design are being increasingly embraced by urban dwellers in their city homes. Take a look inside some of the best in this Country Style Living feature.

# Country comforts built into design



A big open living room includes sitting and meals areas.

The weather is always on the mind of farming folk and this homestead makes the most of local conditions. **FRANK PLATELL** reports.

**F**ARMERS have a different philosophy from city folk when it comes to a new home — and they will take their ideas to town.

This is demonstrated in a passive-solar concept by architect Garry Bayerstock in the Wheatbelt town of Pingelly.

A rambling, Australian-style country home in one of the main streets, it has strategically placed verandas across the front and down one side, contributing to year-round living comfort. And it has most of the features that farmers ask for in town living.

Garry sees country people as pioneers in the evolution of solar housing, in looking for answers to their weather extremes. In the 1970s, few city people knew where north was but in the country it was part of their consciousness.

In interviewing about 200 farmers over the past 30 years, he found the first thing most did on waking in the morning was to assess the weather. Then they related it to the practicalities of a work schedule.

Garry said living on the land often had periods of real hardship for those who could not afford heaters or air-conditioners. They had to stay comfortable at low cost, right down to wearing the appropriate apparel for the season.



This homestead in the Wheatbelt town of Pingelly has been built using passive-solar principles.

They had been quick to grasp the principles of solar design because of their synergy with the countryside and understood how it worked.

The egalitarian attitude of farmers, rich or poor, was reflected in their down-to-earth manner and good grasp of reality. They did not make decisions on fad or fashion but looked for a contemporary lifestyle that was functional and practical.

Farmers spending \$300,000-\$400,000 on a home were looking ahead to the next 100 years, one that could be serviceable for the next two or three generations. They did it once and did it well because in the long run it was cheaper.

Conforming to this thinking is the passive-solar homestead in the Pingelly townsite. The verandas have been positioned to keep out the low-angle

summer sun to the east and to the south while the porch shades the west.

The north elevation has a solar veranda with louvres angled at 35deg. This allows the maximum sun penetration of more than 3m in winter while keeping this side in solid shade in summer.

It has all the features that most farmers ask for in town living, foremost being a big country-style kitchen with an island bench opening on to a big meals area for all occasions. The kitchen and meals area form part of a big open living room, previously referred to by ancestors as their great room.

The space flows through double doors to a retreat which has a piano, common for country entertaining when they make their own fun.

A multi-purpose foyer takes in the main office and the space flows through to the main suite and the sleeping accommodation for guests.

A mud room/utility area for cleaning up after working in the paddocks is part of a multi-purpose bathroom which is in three segments.

The home has been orientated to get the maximum winter sun from the north into high priority areas such as the family living, dining and study areas, which are all integrated with the deck via the louvred veranda.

Cool breezes from the south and south-east are trapped by the shape of the home and forced through in efficient cross-ventilation for night cooling in summer. The indoor comfort zone is around 22C in winter, rising no higher than 28C in summer.



Verandas around the home are positioned to keep out the summer sun.



After a day's hard work, the owners can relax in this outdoors area.