

Automatic

climate control



IN THE searing summer heat when it can be 40C plus in the bush outside, it is never more than 28C indoors with a passive solar home north of Waneroo.

When it drops below freezing and the sprinklers switch on automatically to combat the frost in the gardens, it never goes below 18C inside.

Most of the time the temperature hovers between 20C and 24C indoors, and that is exactly what Lee and Egon Hefele wanted for a comfortable, tranquil lifestyle on their Bailey Road property.

By FRANK PLATELL

They have every reason to enthuse over the result, though they chuckle at being computer-analysed, psycho-analysed and tape recorded (for the brief) after approaching architect Garry Baverstock, of the Solar Design Centre.

They had found from years of experience that the traditional home in the bush could be too hot in summer and too cold in winter. They were looking for year-round comfort when they retreated to their "acres" at Waneroo.

They were delight-

ed to find after the sessions that the architect's "discussion sketch" was exactly what they wanted. It has the big living spaces to the north to exploit the winter sun, while the bedrooms trap warmth through precisely-angled, clerestory windows at the roof ridge.

Only about 50 per cent of the north wall is glass, adequate for a comfortable heat intake in winter. On the south side wings trap the cool breezes in front of bedroom windows in summer to cross-ventilate the whole home.

A closer inspection shows that the front veranda has clear acrylic sheeting to keep out the rain. Louvre panelling above has been designed to let the sun penetrate up to 4.5m indoors in winter, while excluding it completely in summer.

Living areas are big and bright, but it is a soft level of diffused light in this Homes of the Year entry. It enlivens spaces which are all so different with the angled walls and fittings and rake ceilings.

So little is predictable as you open doors that it becomes a walk of discovery. A pantry, the biggest that I have seen in years, is also a food preparation area, and the generous laundry is such a well-equipped utility space, even including an ablution area for cleaning up after a day in the gardens.

The structure is traditional enough with its brick walls and corrugated-iron roofs. There are distinctive touches such as the curved walls of tumbled, half-bricks sweeping in to double doors in shiplap boarding.

