

# GLENMAURIE STATION SHAUN LOCKYER ARCHITECTS

Words by Millie Thwaites • Photography by Christopher Frederick Jones • Architecture by Shaun Lockyer Architects • Build by Envisage Building • Engineering by Westera Partners





Glenmaurie Station lies on one of the largest parcels of privately owned land in Queensland's Somerset region, about two hours north-west of Brisbane. As a reflection of the clients' Danish and Australian heritage, Shaun Lockyer and Matthew Napper of Shaun Lockyer Architects interpret local and European sensibilities in both plan and experience, resulting in an architecture that feels as formidable as the landscape within which it exists.

Set deep into the expansive property, the house rests along a spur that runs from north to south, allowing for exceptional views to the east and west. The rudimentary plan sees two near-symmetrical wings – each with three bedrooms and two bathrooms – separated by a central pod that houses the shared living spaces. Whilst the form is elemental and the materials robust, this project is unapologetically dignified. “People who’ve seen the house are quite surprised by how luxurious it is, but we’re not making any pretence to call it a hut or a cabin,” Shaun Lockyer says. “It is a luxury home in a truly unique and wonderful landscape, and that’s what the clients wanted – to be able to go there and escape from the rest of the world and do it in comfort.”

In the main living space, a pitched roof with exposed timber beams and fine steel tie rods amplifies the sense of proportion, and floor-to-ceiling glass doors slide away, revealing uninterrupted views of the surrounding landscape. “The roof form through the middle – the barn shape, we like to call it – is a lovely, big volume without too much structural clutter,” Shaun notes. “It’s a simple idea, but that transparency through the east-west axis has created a very special and engaging space.” From here, two separate decks protrude into the landscape and form the crucifix shape

that defines the plan. To the east, there is an outdoor living area and a swimming pool with “big, heroic views” over an escarpment, and to the west, there is another outdoor area and firepit. As Shaun says, “the idea is that you can migrate through the house from the east to the west throughout the course of the day and benefit from both views.”

The experience of this building has been thoughtfully conceived as a sequence of events that is effortless in its realisation yet conceptually nuanced. Informed once again by the coalescence of European and Australian influences, it speaks back to the clients’ desire for the home to “feel luxurious in the context of what is a reasonably harsh environment.” Shaun says they “love the idea that foreign guests will come out here and feel the warmth, intensity and engagement of the Australian bush, then transition into the central space of the home and feel its comfort and familiarity as it becomes progressively more European.” The open plan living area provides initial relief from the outdoors, and beyond this, each room offers further repose. In the bedrooms, large windows frame impressive easterly views, custom timber wardrobes evoke a personal touch, and a consistent and inviting palette of materials results in spaces at once elevated and enveloping.



Influenced by European and Australian architecture, the home feels luxurious in its reasonably harsh environment.

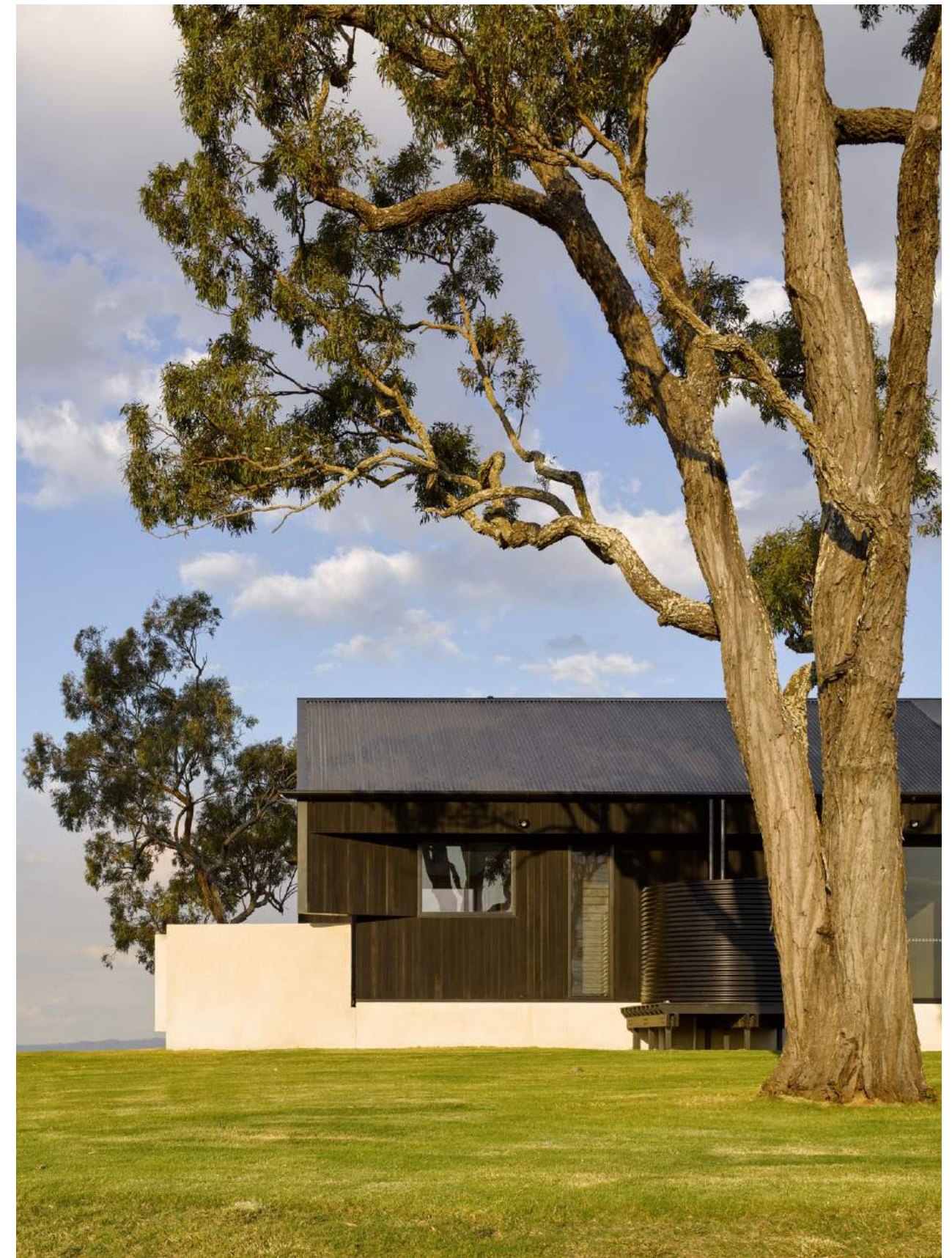


Though the architecture is striking in its somewhat simple geometry, it sits well within its surrounds. This is largely due to the restrained materiality of polished concrete, stone, roughcast render and shou sugi ban charred timber cladding. Robust, low-maintenance and honest, these materials are a fitting interpretation of the site's conditions, as well as of Shaun Lockyer Architects's guiding architectural principles. "Our aspiration is to always use materials whose qualities and finishes are embodied in the nature of the material itself," Shaun offers, adding "the stone grounds the house and gives it weight and a sense of gravity, and then the charred timber is not only bushfire resistant but it's also a metaphor for the harshness of the landscape."

These materials also reflect the practice's enduring commitment to sustainable design. "We feel that within the realm of creating luxury homes, we have a responsibility to do them as appropriately, robustly and sustainably as such that they can endure. Because, ultimately, if we can create

homes that last then people will continue to maintain them in such a way that they go on in perpetuity." The project's builder, Gareth Dunwoodie from Envisage Building, was essential in this pursuit. He ensured the outcome exceeded the architects' aspirations and, as such, the hope is that Glenmaurie Station will endure for well over 50 years, withstanding the elements of its context and providing its owners and guests with the experience of a poetic yet rational retreat amid the Australian bush.

As Shaun says, the project represents a fusion of "the north Queensland spirit of place and European sensibilities." This has been interpreted in myriad ways; however, channelling the simplistic beauty of Nordic summer houses and the conviviality of Danish culture are where the latter comes heavily into play. Set among the remarkable topography of rural Australia, this strong referential overlap gives Glenmaurie Station an unmatched identity, enjoyed with both ease and intensity from sun-up to sundown.



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