

A SHORE THING

A tight budget and a humid climate have produced a beach house in Queensland, Australia, that is light and luxe.

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IT'S HOTTER THAN Hades in Queensland at this time of year. So hot that a house that catches all-day sun can be stifling – and its occupants' tempers frayed – before elevenses.

So it's just as well architect Shaun Lockyer had the climate in mind when he designed a holiday house at Sunrise Beach.

"The idea is a very simple one," says Lockyer, a South African who has lived in Australia since 1999. "There are two really nice sides to the house with great living spaces. The whole living area on the eastern edge opens north to south. When all the north and south doors are open, you migrate through the house to sit in shade. If you go in winter, you chase the sun. It's a very simple idea, but it's flexible."

"It's like a tube: at either end are the outdoor spaces, used depending on the time of the day," adds owner Vince Corry. "You use all of the outdoor areas because the whole place opens up."

The heat wasn't the only thing Lockyer focused on when Corry and his wife Mimi commissioned him to create a beach

house on a 257m² vacant lot two hours north of Brisbane. Aesthetics were also important – and the project had to be affordable.

"The brief was to have a simplicity of design," says Corry. "A façade that worked well with the street, and also we needed to associate and connect with the green environment as best we could: all translated into a cost-efficient design."

Initial drawings were rejected because the project cost too much. Lockyer's second version met the budget – and managed to look luxe too.

"We reduced it in size and details," Lockyer says of the footprint. "Effectively it's a rectangle. On the northern side there's the dramatic ceiling and garage. On the south, the house is well elevated above a national park. The floor plan is designed so you could add another level and connect it with a stair without any structural change."

"We really tried to prioritise the money being spent where it had the most impact. Through the pressures of the budget

Above.

Most of the façade is taken up with the garage door, which was turned into a feature of the house with clever, backlit lighting. The beach is 500 metres from the front door.

Right.

The bedrooms at the back of the house look out over a national park. Floor-to-ceiling louvres maximise the view – and any breeze.







it was rigorous and thought through. It was how flashings were executed, how the doors and exterior cladding were done,” says Lockyer.

Ironically, the cheaper design manifested in a structure more successful than the bigger, more-expensive version might have been. The smaller footprint gave the section a feeling of space in relation to its neighbours and means there is more room around the swimming pool. The single-storeyed design allowed for higher ceilings.

“We had low expectations,” says Lockyer. “When we got to building it, Vince found a guy who had been building units to do it. We thought, ‘this will be an absolute disaster’. But the guys built it to the letter. I’ve never seen a house built so perfectly.”

The use of timber was one place where Corry and Lockyer spent money. Spotted Gum cladding on the inside of the double-height deck at the front of the property was expensive but “really important to create a sense of craft”, Lockyer says.

Blackbutt, another local hardwood, was used inside. And top-end Wye + Craw cabinets were installed in all of the bedrooms and bathrooms, and in the kitchen.

At the street front, the garage adds some drama to the façade, thanks to a door made from polycarbonate panels which are transparent.

“The idea behind it was to turn it into a lantern: to take something that has a practical use, but give it animation,” says Lockyer. “During the day, in the garage you have beautiful natural light. At night, the garage lights are on the outdoor lighting circuit and light up the whole wall. It gives something back to the street. There aren’t 1000 lights, but there’s a theme that is cheap but poetic and lovely.”

We use it as much as we can,” Corry says of the house, which was built on time and on budget in less than a year. “Our family uses it: our son and daughter get their friends up there. We try to get other people to use it, to see what the house has to offer.”

Above.

In the open-plan kitchen and living area, the floors are Blackbutt, a local, sustainable timber.

Right.

The kitchen benchtop is Formica. Timber veneer cabinetry was made to match the floors.



Spaces



“IT’S LIKE A TUBE: AT EITHER END ARE THE OUTDOOR SPACES, USED DEPENDING ON THE TIME OF THE DAY.”



Above and left.
In the bedrooms, there are no balustrades. “You feel like you are in the canopy of the bush,” says Lockyer.

Far left.
High-gloss wall tiles and charcoal floor tiles keep the bathroom clean and minimal.

Facing page.
Timber decking and built-in seating are constructed from Spotted Gum.



Spaces



“AT NIGHT, THE GARAGE LIGHTS... LIGHT UP THE WHOLE WALL. IT GIVES SOMETHING BACK TO THE STREET.”



Above.
The edge of the pool acts as a boundary wall, which was just one of Lockyer's cost-saving measures.

Left.
The milky polycarbonate panels on the garage door give the house a contemporary aesthetic.



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