



Eastern promise

Adelaide [LIAM MUGAVIN]

Though based in the South Australian capital since 2013, furniture designer Liam Mugavin's four years spent living in Japan are the genesis of much of his work. "I slowly absorbed a Japanese way of doing and seeing things," says Mugavin, adding that this sideboard draws on the Machiya lattice-work found in Kyoto's old merchant shops.

Demand for Mugavin's work has spiked after he scooped the prestigious Clarence Prize and the South Australian Emerging Designer Award in 2015. He is now setting up a studio in Sydney, where he will be launching a solo exhibition and crafting interiors for a café and roastery as well as a restaurant. — JWA
liammugavin.com



Naval gazing

Hobart [HERE DESIGN]

Sophia Holmes is inspired by a childhood spent on the Tasman Sea. A trained ocean engineer, her venture Flotsam/Jetsam specialises in nautical-inspired furniture, textiles and lamps such as this Buoy Light. Holmes' studio, Here Design, has recently collaborated with Ashley Woodson Bailey on wallpaper. — JEP
heredesign.com.au

Cinematic appeal

Sydney [THE OFFICE SPACE]

For its second project in Sydney's Surry Hills, The Office Space has converted the art deco former Australian headquarters of Paramount Pictures into a shared office space that celebrates the building's modernist heritage. Inside, the elegant curves of the dark US cherry-wood joinery are the work of master builder Boris Tosic. The scheme, by architecture firm Woods Bagot, creates 22 work booths kitted out with furniture by Bassam Fellows, Walter Knoll and Molteni & C. This moody mid-century interior with an intimate boardroom is a welcome antithesis to the unattractively lit industrial-style communal office. — JEP
theofficespace.com.au



"The country is in desperate need of a new model that offers modern Australians homes to meet their needs"

Making room

With so much space down under, Australia has been careless with its housing. But how is it fixing the issue?

SOPHIE GROVE

When I was a child my family moved from England to the Melburnian seaside suburb of Sandringham. Life was quintessentially Australian. At Half Moon Bay lifesaving club we took to paddle-boarding around the *HMVS Cerberus* – a rusting Australian navy ship. We barbecued in the long grassy backyard of our white single-storey weatherboard house and skipped to school via the milk bar under eucalyptus trees.

When I returned to the house a few years ago, the bosky garden was gone and an ungainly new dwelling was in its place. It's a fate many suburban homes have met in recent years as house prices rocket and cities densify. In a country roughly the same size as the US – and with 0.3 per cent of its territory considered urban – surely there is another solution? Back gardens are diminishing and Supersize McMansions are the scourge of many Aussie neighbourhoods. It is a sorry sight.

One problem is the Australian penchant for roomy detached homes. Census data from 2011 shows that 74 per cent of the nation's homes are detached (with a further 10 per cent classed as "semis"). Meanwhile, apartments make up 14 per cent. It wasn't always so. Pre-1945, some Australian cities were pioneers of medium-density architecture. You only have to look at the deco apartments in Manly with their breezy terraces, awnings and white stucco façades – or indeed the low-rise brick flats in Bondi with curved balconies and leafy surroundings – to see how Mediterranean-style apartment living is suited to Australian life.

Our main design feature (see page 137) is a homage to the ingenuity of the Australian vernacular with its creative use of weatherboard and corrugated metal, and its crucial link to the outdoors. And yet the country is in desperate need of a new model that offers modern Australians homes to meet their needs (and desires) without diminishing the eucalyptus-lined suburbs. Thankfully Australia's wealth of design talent may come to the rescue: the continent's architects have been pioneering new forms of homebuilding. Many Australians are looking to a more compact future as green (and quintessentially Aussie) as my time on Port Phillip Bay. — (M)

Architects and urban thinkers leading the charge:

Andrew Maynard Architects: Maynard is a pioneer of the small home. His prefab houses are stackable and charming. His wooden single-clad house is a benchmark in compact living.

Libby Watson-Brown, design director, Architectus: The iconic Queenslander with its breezy verandas, "sleep-outs" and elevated outlook is a dream to live in. Yet not everyone can do so. Watson-Brown is imitating the local vernacular in high-rise form.

Otherothers: Founded by architectural curator Grace Mortlock and designer David Neustein, the Bondi Junction-based group has put forward a way to retrofit the McMansions springing up in Aussie suburbs by removing brick veneer walls, adding space and installing rainwater tanks to make them ecological.



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