

CONNECTED WISDOM

Brilliant spatial planning ensures this weekender, situated on Victoria's Great Ocean Road, is as flexible as it is fabulous.

STORY *Stephen Crafti* | PHOTOGRAPHY *Dianna Snape*

DINING AREA & TERRACE The open-plan area and adjacent terrace on the first floor embrace the property's enviable outlook. Scape dining chairs by Grant Featherston and The Prince American-oak dining table, all Grazia & Co. Belt pendant light by Ronan & Erwan Bouroullec, Euroluce. Custom bookcase by Austin Design Associates, in Tesrol LikeWood 2D+. Polished-concrete flooring. Tio outdoor armchairs and low table, In Good Company.

LIVING Nikki armchairs with footstools and Ivy coffee tables by Clare Cousins, all Grazia & Co. Wood-burning fireplace, Cheminées Philippe. 265 wall lamp by Paolo Rizzatta, Euroluce. Rug, Armadillo. The wall behind the fireplace is finished in a concrete render. **KITCHEN** Dita kitchen stools, Grazia & Co. Kitchen joinery finished in LikeWood 2D+ in Genuine Oak from Tesrol. Benchtops in Super White dolomite from CDK Stone. Splashback tiles, Academy Tiles+Surfaces.



For Fiona and her husband, this beach house at Lorne, along Victoria's iconic Great Ocean Road, represents togetherness, providing both a reason and the space for family and friends to meet throughout the year.

Replacing a rather ordinary 1970s beach shack, the new two-storey house by Austin Design Associates is a masterclass in thoughtful spatial planning. Each level is self-contained yet interconnected, allowing the living space to expand to accommodate a crowd and contract to be a cosy pad for a couple as needed. "We wanted a weekendender that would suit us well into our later years," says Fiona. "A retreat that was multigenerational and not at all precious. Somewhere that everyone would feel relaxed from the moment they arrived."

On the first floor - where the property's panoramic coastal views are best enjoyed - the open-plan kitchen, dining and living area flows out to a 12x6-metre terrace, which is a beacon year-round. Its popularity is hardly surprising: the whole first floor is endowed with an idyllic outlook that couldn't place this house anywhere but Lorne. "On a clear day, you can see all the way down the coast to Portsea," says Fiona. The inviting kitchen, at the

rear of the open-plan space, enjoys sea views too thanks to a slot window above the wall-side bench. Fiona loves to cook, so the work surfaces were pivotal. Ultra-practical stainless steel is used on the rear bench, with Super White dolomite topping and wrapping around the generous island that is strategically placed so the meal preppers always remain part of the action.

Also on the upper level is the main bedroom suite, a small study, and a multipurpose room, the latter used as either a guestroom or an extra living area depending on who's staying over. On the ground floor, there are three additional bedrooms and a bunk room, bathroom and powder room, family room and kitchenette - ideal for when the children and grandchildren stay.

The element that unifies upstairs and down is a striking stacked-stone wall, a nod to the home's location. "We wanted to ground the home in its beach-meets-bush setting," says Fiona. The materials palette throughout is deliberately restrained says interior designer Lauren O'Brien, who worked on the project with the homeowners' friend and former director of Austin Design Associates, Fiona Austin. "We wanted to use materials and finishes that invited the touch," ►

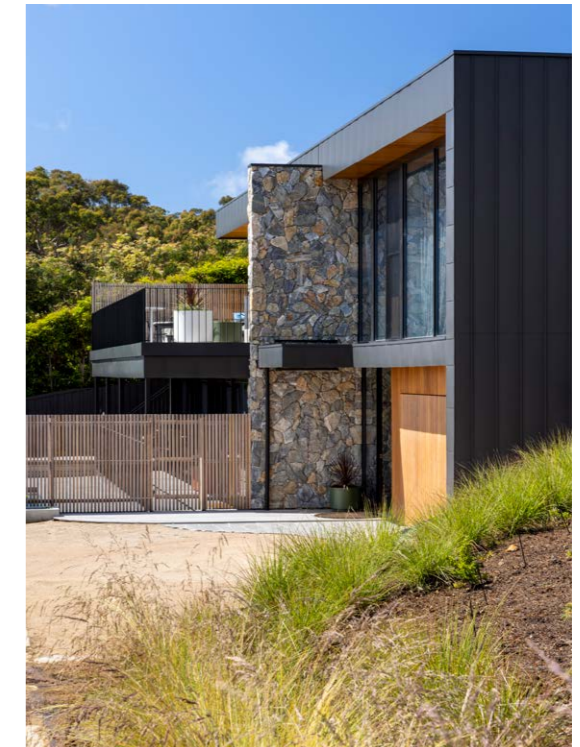
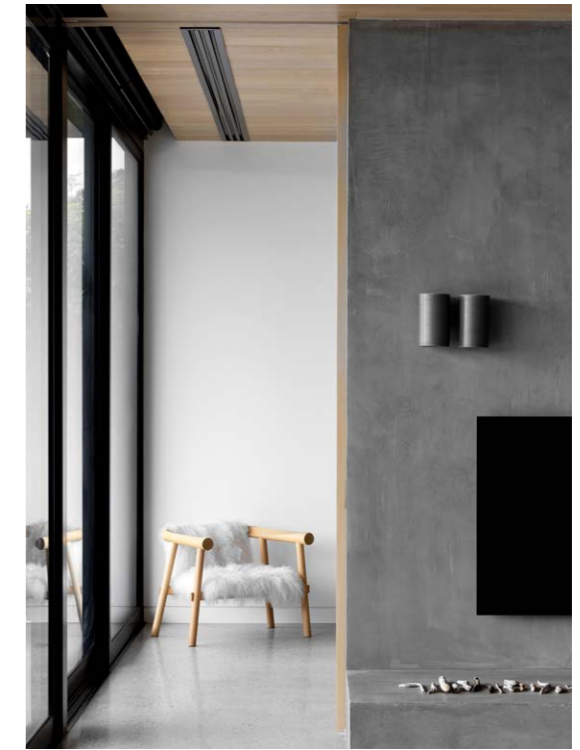
“We wanted to ground the home in its bush-meets-beach setting.” FIONA, OWNER



KITCHEN/DINING/LIVING Artworks by Fiona Austin (left) and Nils Gunnar Zander. 265 wall lamp by Paolo Rizzatta, Euroluce. Harvey straight-arm sofa and ottoman, Nikki armchairs with footstools, Ivy coffee tables, Scape dining chairs, The Prince dining table and Dita kitchen stools, all Grazia & Co. Rug, Armadillo. Walls and ceiling clad in silvertop ash. ▶

THIS IS THE LIFE

From their first visit to the site, designers Lauren O'Brien and Fiona Austin could envisage the spectacular views that could be achieved here. But since the plan was for a multigenerational house that would suit the owners into their later years, accessibility was also important. The 'self-contained' layout meets all aspects of that brief beautifully.



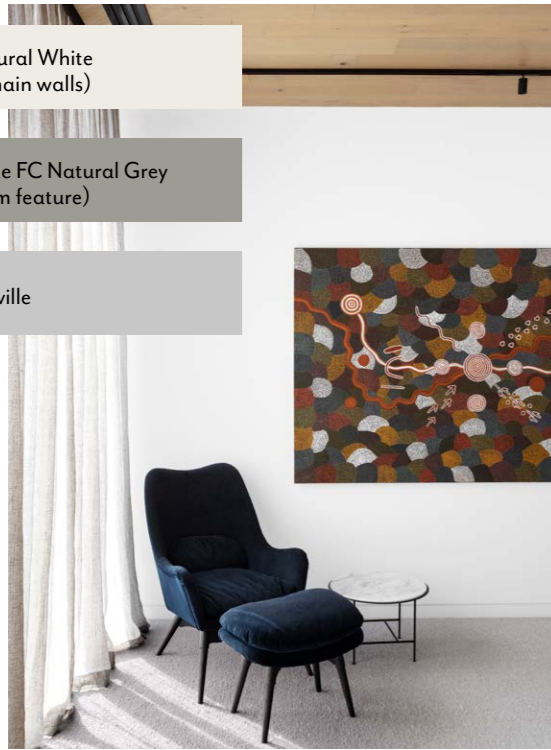
STAIRWELL *Top left and opposite* The feature stacked-stone wall, made from Eco Outdoor's Dry Stone Walling product, acts as the spine of the home. **LIVING/MULTIPURPOSE** *Top right* Earth wall lights, Anchor Ceramics. Altay armchair by Patricia Urquiola for Coedition, Hub Furniture. **STUDY** Eames 'Soft Pad Management Chair', available from Living Edge. Paul Smith Edition Type 75 Anglepoise desk lamp, Cult Design. Outback wool carpet in Cloud, Chaparral Carpets. **EXTERIOR** The exterior of the home is clad in zinc to withstand the elements. ▶

THE PALETTE

Dulux Natural White
(interior, main walls)

MAC Suede FC Natural Grey
(living room feature)

Dulux Ashville



says Lauren of the choice to use predominantly natural and natural-look materials.

Since this is a weekender, and designed to be enjoyed by all ages, it was important that the finishes be easy-care too, hence the use of LikeWood 2D+, a UV-stable, wood-look laminate, for all the built-in joinery. For consistency, the same materials were used upstairs and down, sometimes in different hues to create slightly different moods.

Lauren and Fiona Austin looked to the classics when it came to furniture selection. Pieces are clean-lined, with a Mid-Century feel that ties in with the stacked-stone feature wall. The timber finishes and leather upholstery take their colour cues from the stone, adding to the richness and layered tactility of the spaces. “The shelving unit in the dining area was deliberately designed to allow the wall behind to show through,” says Lauren. Handmade ceramic lighting by local firm Anchor Ceramics, handmade Japanese wall tiles in the kitchen and bathrooms, and custom-made soft furnishings in the bedrooms deliver an artisan touch.

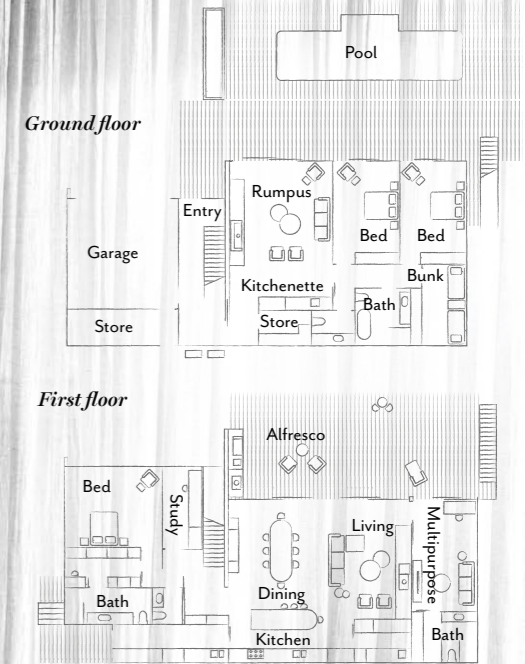
MAIN BEDROOM Above left and opposite Artwork by Pansy Napangati. Nikki armchair with footstool, Orbit side table, Lunar mirror by Mardi Doherty and Reeno bench, all Grazia & Co. Linen curtains, Inside Edge. Outback wool carpet in Cloud, Chaparral Carpets. Haiku ceiling fan, Big Ass Fans. **POWDER ROOM** Inax ‘Yohen Border’ wall tiles, Artedomus. Sfera 55 basin and Eccentric tapware, Rogerseller. Custom wall mirror. Benchtop in Quantum Quartz Graphite Matte.

While this weekender is a world away from the beach shack that once stood on the site, there’s a palpable holiday feel throughout. That feeling is in part due to the restrained materiality, but it’s also due to thoughtful inclusions that make the home more liveable. There’s the mudroom that flows into a laundry, neatly tucked into space by the rear entry and kitchen, which negates the need to traipse wet swimmers, sandy towels or muddy boots through the house. That generous terrace connected to the open-plan area functions as an additional living space - and thanks to the outdoor fireplace, the homeowners and their guests can enjoy the terrace for most of the year.

“The last thing we wanted was a ‘squeaky clean’ house or somewhere that felt like a city pad. This home was always designed to be a getaway for us, but also something to share with friends and family,” says Fiona. “And that’s exactly what we got.” ▶ *Austin Design Associates, Brighton, Victoria; (03) 9592 6411 or austindesign.com.au. John Orr & Sons, Newtown, Victoria; @johnorrandson.*

Paint colours are reproduced as accurately as printing processes allow.

THE LAYOUT





TERRACE Palm Springs sunlounger and Pillar high table, both Grazia & Co. Tio easy chairs, low table and stools, all In Good Company. Fireplace, Cheminées Philippe. Planters, Tait. BeefEater barbecue from Winning Appliances.



THE SOURCE

A weekender is made all the more wonderful with pieces in tones that reference the views from its windows.



Produced by Saffron Sylvester.

1 Anglepoise 'Type 75' desk lamp, \$415, Cult Design. 2 *Two Women Dreaming* artwork by William Sandy, \$4950, Art Mob. 3 Ivy coffee tables by Clare Cousins, POA, Grazia & Co. 4 Asven polyester outdoor cushion, \$34.95, Freedom. 5 Robert Gordon Australia 'Poet's Dream' 1L jug, \$59, Domayne. 6 Luna outdoor chair, from \$1300, King. 7 B5 planter by Studio Ciao, from \$1195, SBW Australia. 8 Agra wool rug in Artichoke (2.4x3m), \$4900, Armadillo. 9 Scape dining chair by Grant Featherston, POA, Grazia & Co. *For Where to Buy, see page 190.* H&G