



Beach Houses 2 Front Cover & Feature 2003

A Deliberate Orchestration

DALE JONES-EVANS ARCHITECTS

Photography by Ashley Jones-Evans and by Stephen Blakerney

22

A generous triangular site overlooking the ocean was the perfect stimulus for a devoted surfer to build his dream home. "My client was looking specifically for the 'Bombie' (a surf term for the premier wave spot)," says architect Dale Jones-Evans who designed this extraordinary new house.

Accessed via a cul-de-sac, the site unfolds over a 25 per cent gradient and has a 360-degree view of the Indian Ocean. While Jones-Evans could have designed a house with views that provided instant gratification, he preferred to set up a journey where the experiences gradually unfolded.

There were a number of significant elements in the landscape. "There's the strong ridge line of the landscape. It's almost like a floral sea. There's literally the sea and the crashing surf and also an intriguing church that was built in the 1950s, which forms an outcrop in the landscape." Each element is slowly discovered.

A small aperture in the home's front elevation (facing the cul-de-sac) is accessed via a banded horizontal path. Tucked in behind rendered walls, which act as a barrier to the prevailing winds, the entrance to the home is cave-like. "It's like entering a citadel. You can't see around the building. It's a bunker that follows the contours of the land." The 'bunker' contains the bedrooms and bathrooms, while the lighter component, the floating copper dome, includes the kitchen, living and outdoor areas. "There are two opposite sensations of 'bunkering into' and 'floating over' the landscape. The building is designed to age and rust, the cement render will soften and leech salt and the copper will oxidise green," says Jones-Evans.

Through a narrow slot in the kitchen wall there is a glimpse of what lies ahead. Standing in the kitchen, the picture unfolds, with the ridge line and sky to one side, views of the church to the other. To ensure that the finishes do not distract from the design, Jones-Evans used concrete for the kitchen floor and for the terraces either side. Even the kitchen bench was designed in concrete. "It's like one giant brushstroke," he says.

The copper roof, which made the house a beacon in the area, was literally pulled down from 2.8 metres at the centre of the living area, to 2.1 metres at the edge. With the lowered ceiling, there's a cave-like experience when either entering the home or moving out onto its expansive patio. At the top of the building, on the cantilevered patio, the entire landscape wraps around the house.



