



Inside Out : Design Trends  
Feature Article  
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# surfer's paradise

A passion for surfing and the marine environment inspired  
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a striking home designed to be weathered by the elements



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It was Ben's passion for surfing that brought him to WA where he found a block with a panoramic view of the biggest break in the south-west - The Bussells. It took him nearly 10 years to convince his friend and architect Dale Anderson (see info page) to design a house that would embrace the west of the coast and the environment. The main living area juts out over the ocean like a surfboard on the crest of a wave. A generous canopy protects the west-facing living area from the summer sun. Ben loves the industrial look and durability of the polished concrete floors (see info page). The floor door of the house is approached from the rear via a striking series of concrete steps set in a piano-key pattern (see info page). Ben and Chelsey relax on a Point rug. Ben's surfing trips to South-East Asia have engendered an appreciation for Asian furniture. Fortunately, he was able to source most of it locally. The Red water hyacinth chair and stool, \$990, antique African leather cushions, \$40 each, antique Indonesian weaving table, \$1275, and seagulls Rice cushions, \$25 each, are all from Cloyds of Margaret River (see opposite). The antique Chinese drum stools circa 1850, \$220 each, are from Giovanni Di Margaret River, Margaret River WA (08) 9758 7889. A piggy bank in the kitchen displays memories of surfing trips past. **\$\$\$** All artwork created by Clark Pollock adds movement and texture to Ben's simply furnished interior. Clark is represented by Martin Art Sydney, Waterloo NSW (02) 9688 2000. An antique rattan side stool, \$190, from Cloyds of Margaret River, Margaret River WA (08) 9757 7074, provides rustic shelving space.





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# “Surfing is what I've lived for my whole life. I've chosen every job or home on its proximity to the ocean.”

**S**et into sage-coloured scrub that rolls back from the surf at *Pervelly* on WA's south-west coast, Ron Roozen's home is a dedication to surfing and the elements.

"I bought this block in 1991 because there's no better aspect from a surfer's point of view," Ron says, gesturing towards the ocean views, with *The Bomble* – the Margaret River region's biggest break – providing a hypnotic focal point.

In fact, more than any other element, the sea has shaped this striking building.

"Surfing is what I've lived for my whole life. I've chosen every job or home on its proximity to the ocean. I've never really worked nine to five. I've always had jobs that allow large chunks of time off to spend in the water," says Ron.

"That's how I ended up in Margaret River – it has the best surf in WA," he explains. The west-facing block he's called home since February this year drops away steeply towards the water and was always going to require an unusual construction. Fortunately, Ron knew a man who shared his passion for surfing and was equally passionate about architecture. Dale Jones-Evans, a Sydney-based architect, had surfed with Ron since they were teenagers and knew his client and the site well.

"I'd spoken to other architects and asked them to show me a design they were passionate about," recalls Ron, "but they always said, 'We'll design what you want'. Dale had been here for surfing holidays, so in the end I asked him to design it. We went surfing for two days, then got

the basic shape, dimensions and materials down in two hours," he says. "Of course, building it wasn't as easy ..."

The layout of the single-level house resembles a T. Running across at ground level is a rectangular block containing three bedrooms, two bathrooms and a laundry. Another rectangular block juts out towards the surf at a right angle and sits suspended above the scrub on a slender steel frame. Containing an open-plan kitchen and living area, this section is clad in copper – a material Ron fell in love with when he saw it used on the roofs of traditional Parisian buildings. "Copper is a beautiful material and I've never understood why we don't use a lot more of it, especially in a marine environment where you can see the effects of weathering."

Currently, the copper on Ron's house is a deep red-brown but it's already beginning to weather, with tinges of turquoise appearing around the edges. Watching it progress from burnished brown to green is something Ron is anticipating with pleasure. "It took about 30 years for the Statue of Liberty to turn green, so in 50 years my house is going to be beautiful."

Stepping into the house, a long, narrow, horizontal slit in the opposite wall reveals a tantalising glimpse of the view, drawing you through to the living area.

Here, Dale has framed the lesser views of the ridge with long, rectangular windows in the side walls, while the house's raison d'être – the surf break in the distance – is viewed through floor-to-ceiling glass doors at the end. Outside is a generous deck

sheltered by a copper-clad canopy that extends the roofline beyond the house.

Finishes have deliberately been kept simple: sealed, polished teakwood flooring runs along the hallway and throughout the bedrooms in the "grounded" section of the house, while the suspended kitchen and living area has light but durable bamboo flooring. Ron is particularly proud of the polished terrazzo island bench in the kitchen. "It's an amazing piece of engineering. The formwork that supported it while it set was a piece of art in itself," he says. "I wanted it to be strong enough to dance on – and it's passed that test!"

At first glance, the narrow, horizontal windows that cut slots through the southern and western walls of Ron's bedroom appear to be too low, but again, the surf has shaped the room. "All I have to do is lift my head off the pillow to see if *The Bomble* is working – I'm happy to get up if it is, otherwise I'll sleep in," Ron says with a grin. "The only problem is that my mates call to ask what the surf's like. I always say, 'It's flat and offshore' – you don't want too many other buggers out there."

Ron's last house was a shack hidden behind peppermint trees, so it's a big change living in a house which is rapidly becoming an architectural icon (it won the 2001 Royal Australian Institute of Architects WA Chapter Single Residence Award). Ron, however, is just happy that the house has met his needs. "Surfers get it straightaway. Other places have a view, but this house has a purpose that only a surfer would truly understand." ■