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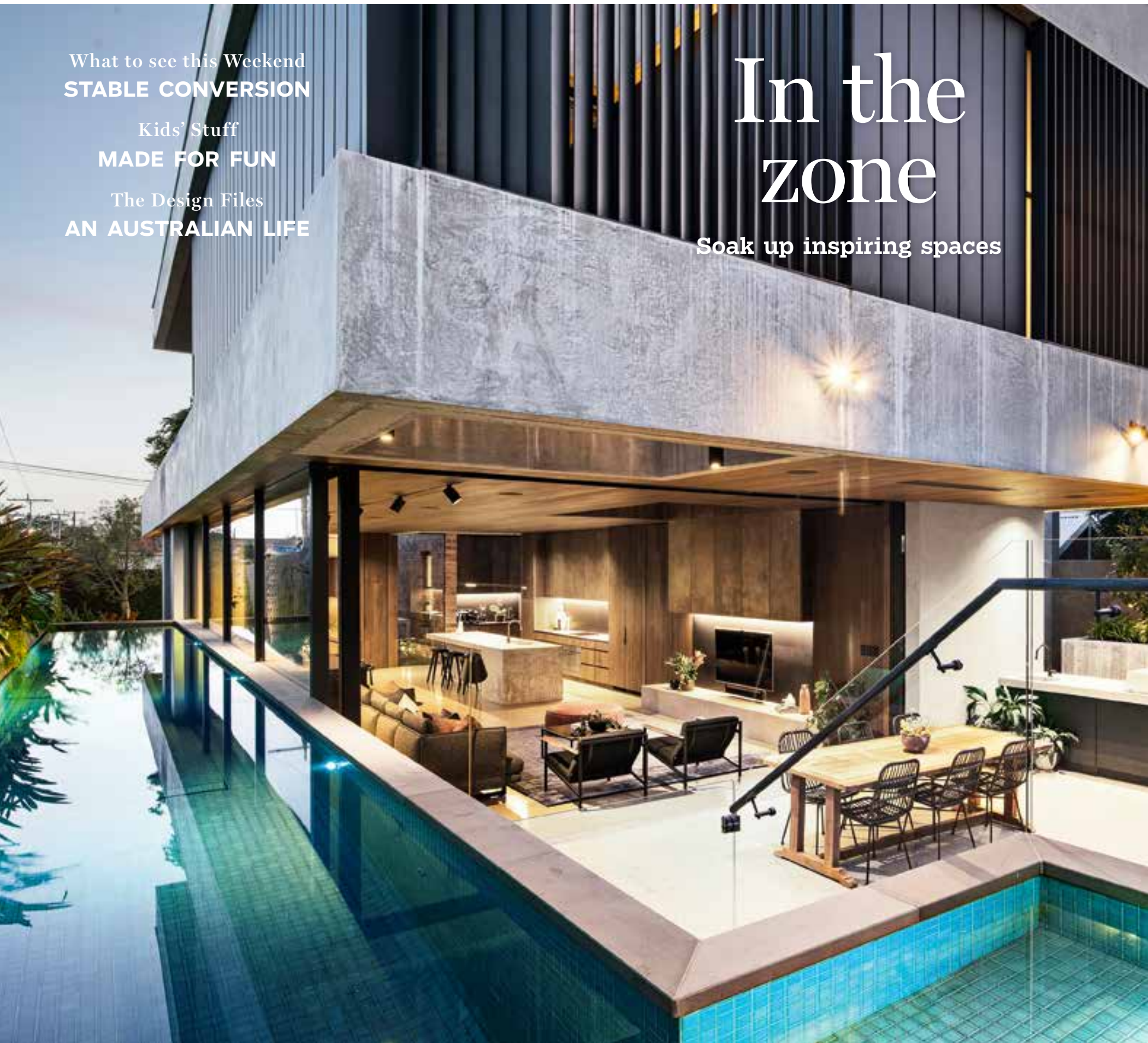
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THE DESIGN FILES AWARDS

By ELIZABETH CLARKE

Concrete, brick, timber, and corrugated iron – all deceptively ordinary materials omnipresent in daily life. Now architects and designers are using these robust mediums to innovate, creating awe-inspiring structures, interiors, and objects.

“They’re decidedly Australian materials with a rawness and honesty to their aesthetic,” Tristan Wong of SJB Architects says. “In 2021, there’s a focus on authenticity, simplicity, robustness and restraint that complements our lifestyle.”

This optimism dominated the winning projects in The Design Files + Laminex Awards, announced in a live-streamed, online ceremony on October 21. The program champions Australia’s most innovative creatives, from handcrafted practices and residential architecture to interior and landscape design.

“We received 384 entries, which is especially encouraging given the challenges creative businesses are facing,” Lucy Feagins, founder and editor of The Design Files, says. “It’s testament to our industry’s resilience and enduring excellence.”



PRUE RUSCOE

An Australian way of living

Although the extravagant and big-budget projects have always garnered attention, this year, the smaller projects and more utilitarian responses caught the judges’ eye.

“Across all 10 categories, there was an emphasis on meaningful elements with a positive impact,” Feagins says.

“Through the lens of 2021, the judges responded to meaning, stories and substance beyond aesthetic outcomes; not just beauty for beauty’s sake.”

A case in point, Alex Earl’s winning sculptural lighting piece made from recycled and waste glass, each shade

unique due to the glass moulding process. Also, the collaboration between saddler Johnny Nargoodah and furniture designer Trent Jansen, who won the Furniture Design and Collaboration awards for their chair of scrap metal and beaten leather.

“It’s an important vernacular body of work that is innovative and steeped in historical tradition,” judge and revered furniture designer Khai Liew says. “It embodies bridged cultural values that are so optimistic and necessary.”

The Residential Architecture category attracted a concentration of elegant linear proportions and sturdy materials that draw in the outdoors, for warmth.

Mt Coot-Tha House by Nielsen Jenkins, left; Soft Serve by YSG Studio, above.



TOM ROSS

Winners & commendations

RESIDENTIAL ARCHITECTURE

Winner: Nielsen Jenkins, Mt Coot-Tha House
Commendation: Edition Office, Kyneton House
Commendation: Curious Practice, Lambton House
Commendation: Archier, Corner House

INTERIOR DESIGN

Winner: YSG Studio, Dream Weaver
Commendation: YSG Studio, Soft Serve
Commendation: Edition Office, Melburnian Apartment
Commendation: Rosanna Ceravolo Design, South Yarra Apartment

LANDSCAPE DESIGN

Winner: Rush Wright Associates, Victorian Emergency Services Memorial
Commendation: Bethany Williamson Landscape Architecture, Prospect Hill
Commendation: Ian Barker Gardens, Blairgowrie

LIGHTING DESIGN

Winner: Alex Earl Lighting, Alex Earl
Commendation: Articolo Lighting, Loopi Wall Sconce
Commendation: Figgoscope, STARDUST Lamp

HANDCRAFTED

Winner: Alycia Marrday of Marrawuddi Arts & Culture, Baladjji (Backpack)
Commendation: Other Matter, Algae Bioplastic Vessels
Commendation: Rona Rubuntja of Hermannsburg Potters, Selected Works

FURNITURE DESIGN

Winner: Johnny Nargoodah and Trent Jansen, Ngumu Janka Warnti Collection
Commendation: Adam Cornish Design, MAKI Chair
Commendation: Like Butter, Kittaparts

TEXTILE DESIGN

Winner: Nobody Denim and GEORGE, Woven Bag
Commendation: Amber Days, Wanala Collection
Commendation: Badaam, The Meeting Place

SUSTAINABLE DESIGN OR INITIATIVE

Winner: Great Wrap, Australian-Made Compostable Cling Wrap
Commendation: Revival Projects, Zero Footprint Repurposing initiative
Commendation: Ettitude, CleanBamboo

COLLABORATION

Winner: Trent Jansen Studio and Johnny Nargoodah, Ngumu Janka Warnti Collection
Commendation: John Wardle Architects and Ash Keating Studio, Solar Pavilion
Commendation: Ikuntji Artists and Publisher Textiles, Clothing Collection

EMERGING DESIGNER

Winner: Nicole Lawrence Studio, Industrial Design

Where the beach meets the village



The winning project, Mt Coot-Tha House by Nielsen Jenkins, leans into a steep slope on a bushfire-prone plot in Brisbane. Its vulnerability informs its composition of blockwork, timber, concrete and corrugated metal.

“It demonstrates a deep consideration of context and landscape,” says Wong, one of the judges. “Wild weather necessitates our homes are designed as robust sanctuaries that wear in, not wear out, and age gracefully. These materials have natural patinas and inconsistencies that are forgiving.”



RORY GARDINER

Archier's Corner House.

Corner House, a solid fibre cement-clad home in Flinders, Victoria, earned design firm Archier a commendation. Its dark facade features board and batten detailing, an ode to the area's fishing cottages.

“Its rooms and short corridors, hinging around a beautifully considered courtyard, look across to one another separated by vegetation and trees,” Wong says. “It's clever and a sanctuary to come home to.”

Feagins says the entries offer a new idea of what “the quintessential Australian house looks like”.

“Traditionally, we've looked to revered international designers and European sensibility,” she says. “Now, we're witnessing a distinctly Australian way of living. There's huge bravery from our creatives delivering robust functional homes, devoid of decoration, that are still beautiful and serve as a backdrop for innovative interiors.”

Designer and judge Mardi Doherty agrees and notes a renewed “joyfulness” in this year's Interior Design category.

“There's a departure from classic restrained spaces and instead, a renewed sense of optimism,” she says. “Each entry was vastly different. The judging panel (including Kennedy Nolan's Adriana Hanna and landscape designer Paul Bangay) is diverse, so there were rigorous discussions and huge respect for the designers and what they achieved in the current climate.”

Three out of the four projects were apartments and Doherty says the great Australian dream of owning a home could be changing.

“We see the rise of the apartment as the place to renovate, and it's a first,” she says. “It's not all about big Edwardian homes ... there's value to renovating interesting neglected spaces and engaging great designers to do them beautifully.”


The winning project, Dream Weaver by YSG Studio, is a canvas for self-expression. Brimful of character and surprising colour pairings, Doherty says “it's a stimulating place to be”.

Feagins says the firm's principal and designer Yasmine Saleh Ghoniem is a “zeitgeist this year in terms of interiors”.

“Her global background is evident in her work,” she says. “Yasmine's interiors look like they could be in Morocco or LA, but they're in Sydney. They never unfold in obvious ways. You have to really explore them.”

YSG Studio also received a commendation for Soft Serve, a 19th-century corner shop in Rozelle, now a delightful family abode. Its reimaged interiors are a contemporary melange with a fresh nude palette animated by colour, texture and form.

“Narrative-driven with cinematic references and many layers, it manages to remain beautifully pared back,” Feagins says.

“Yasmine's a wonderful storyteller, providing a new take on what an Australian home can look like. It's that element of depth and sense of story that's so much more important than simply a beautiful outcome.” 

tdfdesignawards.com

The bayside suburb of Hampton will soon welcome a new development in the shape of four separate buildings. Hampton Quarter will take up residence in a prize position, just 200 metres from Hampton Beach and adjacent to the Hampton train station.


The village-style atmosphere of Hampton will appeal to many downsizing locals and beach-lovers.

Hampton Quarter is just 100 metres from the Hampton Street shops and cafes and a two-minute walk from Woolworths.

The development – a joint venture between epc.Pacific and Pace Development Group – will be home to 159 new residences.

At four levels, the Cape building will contain 28 apartments, three townhouses and a rooftop garden with a pool. The Cove is a five-storey building with 33 apartments, two townhouses, rooftop garden and an on-site concierge.

Both the Bluff and Dune buildings are seven levels high with a rooftop garden. The Dune has 46 apartments, and the Bluff has 47.

The entrance lobbies have vaulted ceilings and the apartment feature light washed timbers and warm stone. Construction has started and is due for completion in late 2023. 

KATE JONES

At a glance

Hampton Quarter

1-25 Koolkuna Lane,
Hampton

Architect: ARM & JAM
Architects

Developer: epc.Pacific and
Pace Development Group

Interior designer:
Carr Design

Number of residences:
159 across the Cape, Cove,
Bluff and Dune buildings –
30 one-bed; 91 two-bed; 32
three-beds; one four-bed;
five townhouses

Internal sizes (sqm): One-
bed 50-55; two-bed 65-90;
three-bed 95-175; four-bed
170; townhouses 80-125

External areas (sqm):
One-bed 8-29; two-bed
8-114; three-bed 12-152;
four-bed 130; townhouses
10-12

Prices: One-bed \$475,000;
two-bed \$795,000-
\$1.195m; three-bed
\$995,000-\$1.195m,
townhouses \$850,000-
\$1.4 million

Car parking: One-beds
and two-beds have at least
one space; three and four-
beds have at least two

Agent: Three-Sixty
Property Group, Nihal Peter
0405 556 727 and
Sarah Stock 0418 584 047



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