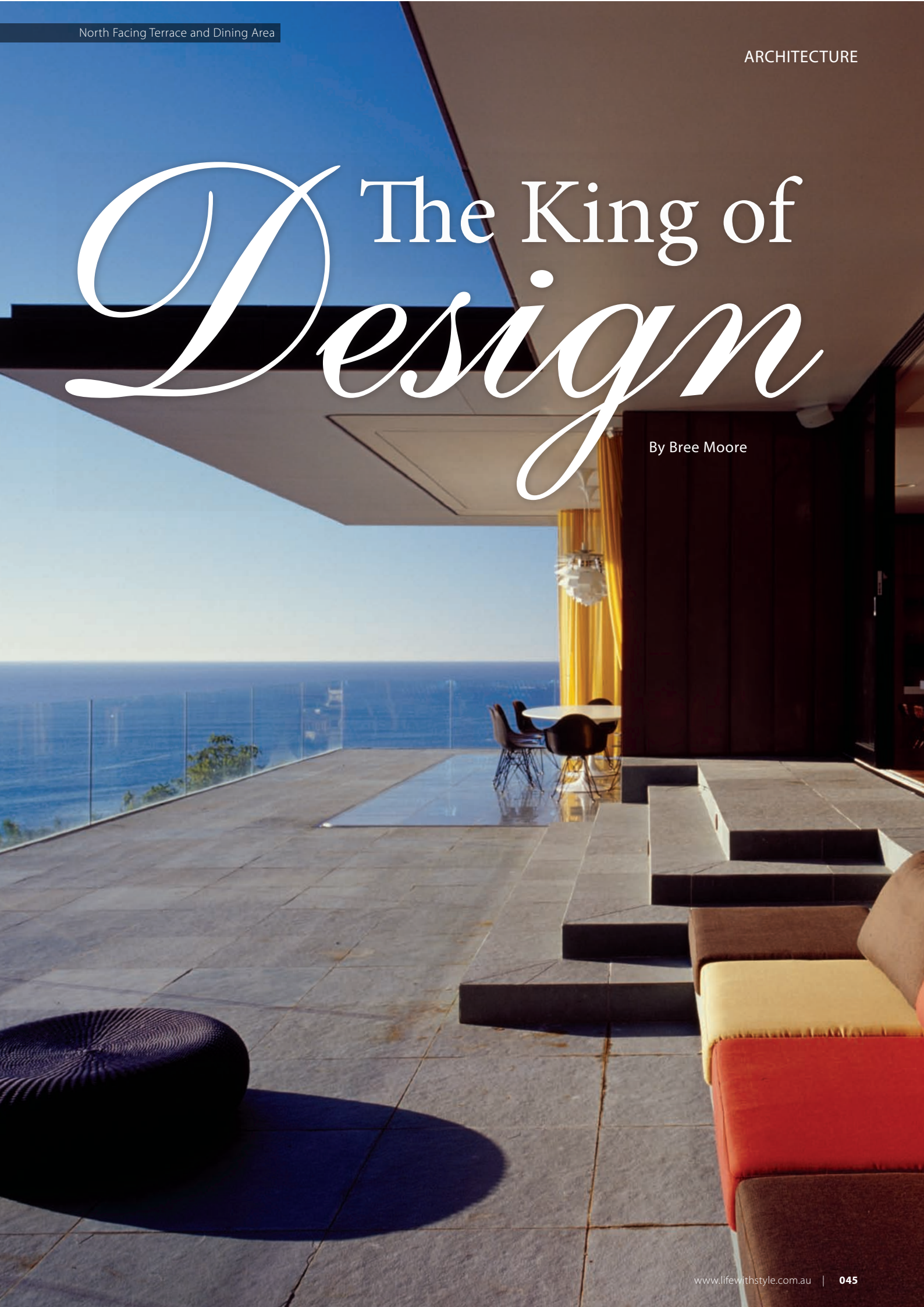


The King of *Design*

By Bree Moore





Ground Level Theatre Room

The Palm Beach House

With breathtaking panoramic views of the Pacific Ocean as far as the eye can see, this distinctly modern yet timeless house sits atop a ridge of Palm Beach, Sydney's northernmost suburb. Adding character to the area, the Palm Beach House achieves complete transparency, with large operable glazed openings and dramatic cantilevered roofs, creating a blurred connection between inside and out. This amazing home was designed to be comfortable to live in and add character to the area, rather than work against it. The area of Palm Beach is that of sandstone, eucalyptus and water's edge - an area with a tradition of great modern homes.

At one with the environment, this estimated 5,200 square-foot home fantastically surpasses the 1950s brick holiday house that previously occupied the site. Building a house from scratch, the owners were exceptionally trusting in briefing architect Jon King, of Australian firm Design King, to simply create a conventional space of five bedrooms, guest accommodation, a large kitchen and a certain number of parking spaces, but beyond that, it was up to Jon as an architect to create the right approach. As people who love to have guests staying at the house over summer, Jon's clients take pleasure in sharing the sense of how special the site and location are, while enjoying cooking and entertaining in a very casual and relaxed way. As an insider, Jon believes that "good clients push architects to consider things much deeper and to transcend the ordinary", and knows the importance of seeking good architectural advice when building. As the process can be long, it is not worth doing unless there is "passion, mutual respect and stamina". The house is akin with the client's strong and outgoing personalities, making a bold, adventurous and strong statement, despite a seemingly contradictory sense of calm and relaxation. This is created by being at one with the environment and embracing relaxing ocean views from almost every room.



“ [The house] needed to make a strong statement: it is bold and adventurous in spirit ”


View From the Street of the House

The central concern for the architect was to make the most of those spectacular views and to utilise the north-facing double block that slopes away from the street. Jon believes that finding the essence of the context and site is most important in driving the solution of a design. Most important for this site: “The ocean, the great horizontal horizon, the wonderful flora of coastal New South Wales, and the sense that the building should be partially hidden, discrete, yet share some of the view and outlook with the street,” says Jon. Passing along Pacific Road, the house appears to grow out of the site, as it is embedded by the use of sandstone walls, native grasses and other plantings. In order to resist the occasionally hostile coastal environment of the area, and to have a recessive and compatible relationship to the natural coast setting, the materials were chosen very carefully. Jon considers the house to have a “great sense of material with the sandstone, copper and timber element working perfectly on this headland site.”

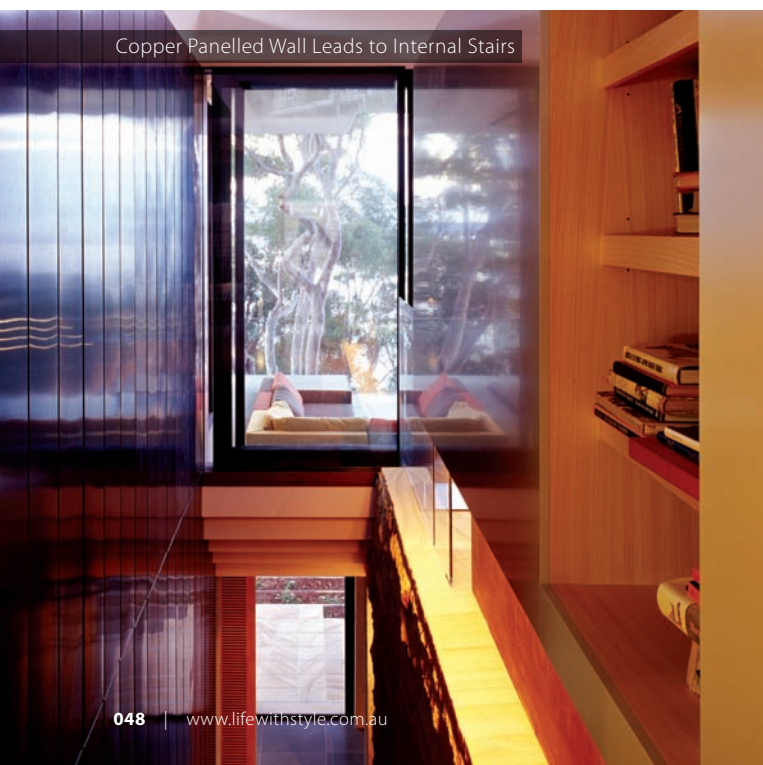
As the house needed to work on both a communal and personal level - allowing for privacy and independence for those occupying it - the lower level was designed as a solid space, described as ‘almost cave-like’. This space is created with use of sandblasted off-form concrete with sandstone for the structure and finish. A simple yet strong palette is created by way of coupling of the timber and the black anodized-aluminum window sections, with the limestone floor - a palette that correlates to the natural sandstone bedrock and tough coastal flora. The upper level is a naturally light and fresh space that effortlessly creates an indoor-outdoor coexistence and is externally clad in copper - a non-reflective material that ages with dignity - a material that Jon describes as “reminiscent of the rich colours in the bark of the angophora trees that are emblematic of this coastal sandstone country”. The base palette

is again offset by the window frames and elements of stone and timber are produced throughout the lower level. Furthermore, an intimate connection to the site is developed with a rear courtyard and a partially wooded area of remnant bushland on the ground floor. Jon believes the form, textures and materials of the house to be at one with the environment. And in a particularly humble admittance, it is “100% right”.

This magnificent creation was fashioned in close collaboration with interior designer Stephen Collins. Stephen and Jon, having worked closely together for a number of years on a myriad of projects, found the collaboration quite natural as the interior and exterior were so intertwined. Jon says, “I enjoy designing the details of the interior. I find that the final fit and feel of the project ultimately depends on completing the interior.” With clients confident enough, this stunningly creative team will often design everything in a house “down to the last lock in a jewellery draw.” Fabrics and furniture were selected to live up the strong but recessive palette of the design, providing warmth to the home and colour not unlike the seasonal flowering of the local foliage.

There is strong confidence that we have such a unique country and lifestyles, and Jon believes architecture should respond “to a strongly held belief that a regional approach is important.” As a self-described traditional architect, Jon fundamentally cares about what a building is made of, how it goes together and how it contains the lives of its occupants. All Design King homes are unique and individually respond to each of their contexts, but Jon aims for architecture that is timeless and not based on the latest fashions. This has been successfully achieved at this site, with incredibly thoughtful detail from the hand-finished stonework down to the hand-turned copper panelling. 

Copper Panelled Wall Leads to Internal Stairs



View From Kitchen Through to Dining Area

