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Shadow Play

Designed by Mark and Angela Jamison of Jamison Architects, Bird House places its owners amongst the tree canopy in an idyllic Gold Coast location.





1. Central grassed courtyard 2. Open plan living
3. Exterior 4. Outdoor cinema Images by Scott
Burrows. More images can be viewed at our online
magazine – www.indulgemagazine.net



Described as ‘two pavilions connected by a central grassed courtyard’, the design focuses on bringing the natural world into the home. Visually, beautiful views can be enjoyed from various points in the home. Experientially, breezes and sunlight move through the house, creating a comfortable living environment through the seasons. The clients are a family of four, and the architects worked a modest budget to create a high level of architecture to provide enjoyable living for years to come.

Although the home commands a strong presence, the architects’ clever use of negative space gives the building lightness and a feeling of connection with its immediate surrounds. “We wanted the house to sit softly in the landscape and chose a refined palette of materials and colours in earthy tones to reflect this,” says Mark. “In terms of atmosphere the aim was a light, airy open home that enabled the family to connect with and appreciate the beautiful landscape and

wonderful climate they were to live in.”

The courtyard is the green heart of the home, separating and connecting two pavilions. The large screened panels that enclose this space provide privacy, allow breezes to move about freely and bring inherent decoration to the home. “We love how the areas of full shade and the dappled decorative shadows from the screens change over the course of the day and even night when the shadows are created by the moonlight,” says Angela.

Family life takes place in a two-storey pavilion, and it is the upper level that gives Bird House its name. The upper storey houses the living, cooking and dining, and an outdoor living area. This functional space includes the DAC (domestic administration centre) off the kitchen.

“With minimal walls in the upper living areas, a strong visual connection to the tree canopy and the layering of the transparent screened facade, one really feels like they are up in the trees living with the birds,” says Angela.

Three bedrooms are found on the ground level along with the bathroom, ensuite, powder room, laundry and a multi-purpose room (acting as a guest bedroom as needed) that opens onto the courtyard.

At the opposite end of the courtyard is the owners’ workspace and studio in the second (single level) pavilion. The luxury of being able to work at home, while being physically removed from the main house, was crucial to the brief.

Fundamentally, the design is as much about the voids as the built, namely the courtyard and its perimeter of large, movable screens. The large laser-cut panels gently enclose part of the landscape; in doing so the courtyard is not totally cut off from the greater surrounds, and allows a safe, yet open space for children to play. The simple design opens up endless possibilities for play, socialising, star gazing, open-air theatre, and many more opportunities for enjoyment for years to come.

BY ALICE THOMPSON