

THE  
GLASS  
HOUSE

Embracing its stunning natural surrounds, an extended family's incredible 'treehouse' has been crafted with future generations in mind

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The owners of this holiday home adore the unobtrusive Colorbond steel roofing, and the glass features which make the most of a narrow block of land. **OPPOSITE PAGE** A downstairs sleeping zone provides privacy for the families away from the communal entertaining areas.







**Beyond the bluegums,** one can spy the sparkling surf and untouched national park. The only sounds are the roar of the sea, a morning chorus of kookaburras and the song of other bush birds. A long way from city life, this smart, steel-framed home perched above a beach on the NSW Central Coast offers all the comfort and calm that a holiday retreat should.

But for the two Sydney families who built it, this place is so much more. It's the latest incarnation of a holiday home they've shared for many years, where they've spent many Christmases, watching their children grow with each long summer break.

Libby and Andrew King, together with Libby's sister, Wendy Carver, and her husband, Malcolm, bought their first holiday home together about 15 years ago – a timber, pole-framed house blending into the bush on the block right next door to their new abode. It was perfect for the two families, each with three young children.

Over the years, the families kept their eye on the adjacent block and its original fibro shack, wary that new owners might build a something larger and obscure their ocean views. When the block was put on the market, the two families snapped it up.

As an architect, Malcolm took charge of designing a new home, with input from Libby, Wendy and Andrew. Top priority was ensuring the new house didn't steal views from neighbouring homes. To make it easier to build on the sloping block, a Lysaght Bondek structural framework from BlueScope Steel was used. This meant that all three levels of concrete slabs could be poured at the same time.

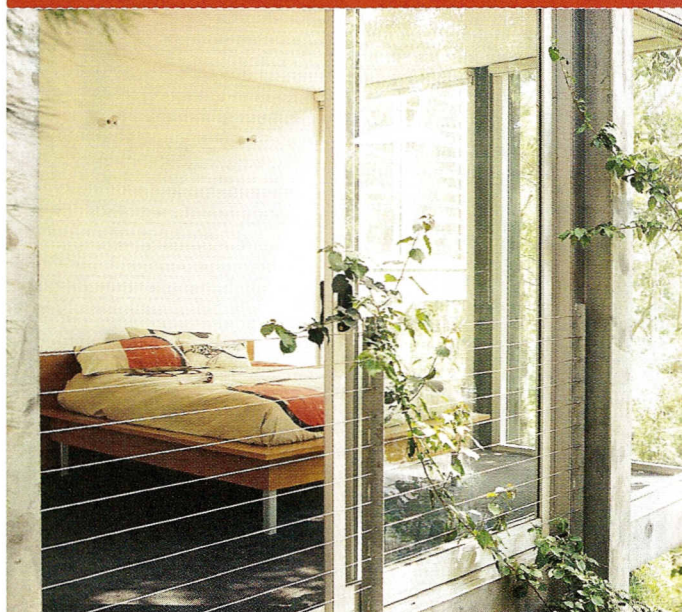
"We wanted to maximise the view, and we wanted an easy-maintenance place – something stylish but durable," says Libby. The simple, square steel frame also provided a strong barrier against environmental factors such as salt erosion, as well as termites. >

### *the facts*

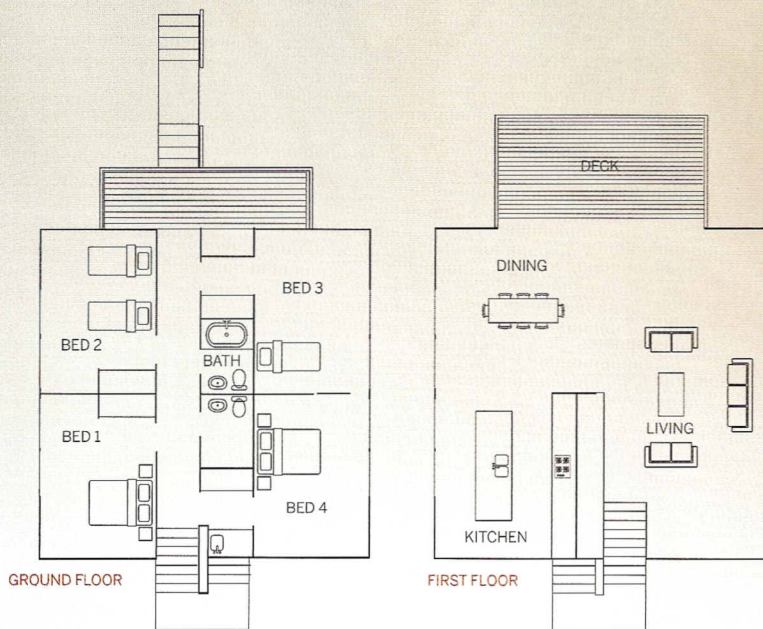
**Who stays here?** Libby and Andrew King share this holiday home with Libby's sister, Wendy, and her husband, Malcolm Carver. Each couple has three grown-up children.

**Style of house?** A modern, steel-framed, timber and glass home, built two years ago.

**Where is it?** The NSW Central Coast.








With large family gatherings on the calendar every Christmas and Easter, a quality kitchen is a must – especially for Libby, one of the group's keener chefs. "A lot of cooking goes on," she says. "The big island bench is a really nice feature when you're preparing food." The granite benchtop adds texture and the cabinetwork in aubergine lends the kitchen a sophisticated feel. Furnishings have been kept modern and minimal (opposite, top), to complement the structure of the home. The red sofa from King Furniture adds depth to the home's cool grey palette.



## *we love ...*

### DOUBLE-DUTY DINING TABLES

Lots of dining space is essential in this holiday home, where big family get-togethers are a regular event. The solution here is a pair of matching glass-topped dining tables, which can be set up within the house or outside on the deck. "If there are a lot of people, we can have both tables inside or out, and they each seat about 10," says Libby. The rest of the time, the elegant tables help link the outdoor deck with the indoor dining area.



A large entertaining deck makes a spectacular setting for gatherings. **OPPOSITE PAGE** A smooth transition from the breathtaking coastal bush setting to the modern home was essential. Timber and steel finishes, combined with a subtle interior colour scheme, ensure nothing detracts from the surrounds. Large glass sliding doors, walls and oversized windows make nature the star attraction.





## inside story

**What is the most magical time of day in your new house?** Libby: "When the weather is rough and the trees are blowing or thrashing around. We can look out the windows or go onto the deck to be right among nature."

**What is the best feature of your home?** "The layout. The whole house works so well: it's easy to maintain and open, yet we all still have privacy."

**Your biggest extravagance?** "The granite top on the kitchen island. It's large and thick, but it makes a wonderful workspace."

**What do you see as the essential ingredient for a holiday beach house?** "Plenty of room for when friends visit and places for relaxation."

**Your favourite piece of furniture?** "The red chairs in the living area. They are so bright and seem to stay looking new. Maybe I'll realise that's not so when the first Carver grandchild is born!"

**What would you do to the house if you had unlimited funds?** "I wouldn't change much. I'd probably get the garden landscaped and maintained monthly, and aircondition and heat the house."

**Where is your favourite place to read?** "Upstairs in the living room, looking out at the view."

## A well-designed layout ENSURES PLENTY OF ROOM FOR THE TWO FAMILIES

< The glass walls that give this house its real glamour also offer function, flooding the house with light, summer breezes, and views of the ocean and surrounding bush. "Malcolm loves glass, and he had this idea of a glass treehouse," explains Libby.

The house is quite compact – "a square, two-storey box", as Libby describes it – but a well-designed layout ensures plenty of room for the two families and their friends. A timber boardwalk leads from the driveway to the downstairs balcony and first level, which features a sleeping and washing zone comprising four bedrooms, two bathrooms – one with a shower, the other a bath – and a laundry. Floor-to-ceiling glass sliding doors open off each bedroom to let in the breeze and views.

At the end of the central hall, a glass-encased stairway juts out from the building and leads to the second level, which boasts an open-plan living, dining and kitchen area, craftily divided by a wall of cabinetry that offers a lot of storage. A large timber deck extends the living area in the summer months and offers the home's best views.

The interior colour scheme is minimal and muted, providing an ideal background for the overarching views of bush, sky and sea; while clean lines and finishes complement the modern structure and the practical needs of a holiday house. "Upstairs has wooden floors, so it's easy to sweep out," says Libby. The oversized windows and sliding doors that frame the house are made using a specially treated glass that resists dirt build-up, so only minimal cleaning is required.

Finding an interior look that suited everyone's taste was quite a design challenge, but everyone was thrilled with the compromises. "Three of us liked red for the sofa, so we chose that," says Libby, "but my sister Wendy wanted grey, so she got a grey armchair."

With the home's smart design in order, the house now works perfectly for the two families and their grown-up children. One day, Libby hopes, it will work just as well for the next generation. "In years to come, there might be some little ones too," she says. ■

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