



An award winning Hunter Valley home has set the benchmark for the perfect, idyllic and functional rural homestead for the Australian environment.

In Keeping With Tradition

STORY BY MARILYN COLLINS

Winner of the 2003 Newcastle Master Builders' Association Custom Built Home (\$500,000 to \$800,000 category), the home is a tribute to the ingenuity of its owners, the designer and builder and the craftsmanship of trades within the Hunter Region.

Builders Stibbard Homes of Singleton were commissioned by the owners to design and build their dream home. This commenced the start of the challenge to source materials in keeping with the owner's committed philosophy to use recycled and/or plantation timbers.

After owning their 4,500 acre beef breeding property at Allynbrook, for thirty years the owners used their local knowledge to set parameters for the design of a homestead to emulate early Australian rural architecture.

The site had obvious challenges being on the old river bed which called for new technology to stabilise the concrete raft slab construction.

Facing the river, the home has the perfect vista sited on the valley floor and

surrounded by timbered high mountain ranges.

Interesting corrugated roof lines give the appearance that the home has evolved over time, hence the three defined pavilions linked by breezeways and connecting verandahs.

The exterior walls are cavity brick with sandwich insulation and are coated with a Murabond finish. With no air-conditioning, the house stays extra cool in summer and warm in winter.

The owners opted for zincalume roofing iron, timber fascia boards and timber eaves lining boards. Other eco friendly materials such as certified plantation timbers were used and absolutely no particleboard was included.

The double hung and weight balanced windows, doors and timber screens were created out of sustainably harvested Kwila timber from Papua New Guinea by Singleton based firm of Gould Bros.

All the door and window furniture was hand-stripped of its protective coating to accelerate the ageing process. >





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Spectacular brass hinges now add the final touch to the custom design.

The floor plan provides three distinct living areas for use as living and entertaining, sleeping and home study, and visitor's quarters.

The main living area is surrounded by high and wide timber lined and screened verandahs on two sides.

A breezeway adjacent to this living area connects to the owner's sleeping and study areas.

Entry is along the main verandah through an old cedar door.

The living area includes an entry, sitting room, dining room and an open plan kitchen / breakfast room. Tung oiled red iron bark timber floors throughout enhance the old and new cedar furniture and paintings.

A local furniture maker was engaged to create timber furniture with a timeless traditional feel, from fallen aged cedar

trees grown on the property. This includes superb cedar bookcases and mantelpiece in the formal sitting room, a coat rack and several beds and benches. The end result is a tribute to his craftsmanship and the beauty of the natural grain of this rare timber.

He also created unique kitchen cupboard doors made of recycled and lime washed floorboards topped with red ironbark bench tops. A centre piece work station made from a converted kauri pine ironing table provides a valuable work area.

The owner requested a walk-in pantry and cool room for when entertaining extended family and guests at weekends and holidays.

"This is a real luxury and allows me to store all my fresh vegetables, eggs, beef and fruit grown on the property," said the owner. >



Pictured: Top left custom made cedar bookcases and mantle piece over the fireplace in the formal lounge room add to the authentic appeal of the home.

Recycled timbers throughout were used in construction and designed to blend with the owner's cherished heritage-style furniture.

Pictured above: The informal dining area which opens onto the breezeway linking the owner's private pavilion with the main living area.

Far right: The main entrance door is covered with protective verandah from sun and rain and features custom made timber screen doors.



Pictured far right: Extra wide shady verandahs makes the side of the home perfect for entertaining anytime of day. Below: Grandchildren enjoy riding the family rocking horse on weekend visits and a game of cricket.

Below: Easy care hand made tuscan floor tiles makes for easy care living and cleaning throughout the wet areas of the home. The innovative design of the bathroom with walls defines the separate areas for bathing and showering, eliminating the need for dooways and shower screens.



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Across the breezeway is the second pavilion, tiled with Mexican Saltillo terracotta handmade tiles. A central hallway separates the two his and hers studies.

The master bedroom suite features a walk-in wardrobe and bathroom of generous proportions with three tiled walled sections for full bath, shower and toilet.

The laundry of cypress pine cupboards has pull-out basket shelving for laundry and a built-in ironing board and internal clothes line above for airing (a must for country living).

This section was designed to allow easy access for the owner to remove work boots after a working day on the property and wash-up or shower in a nearby ensuite.

Family and friends are accommodated in a four-bedroom pavilion across from the main verandah, which has the perfect aspect of the hills beyond. For added convenience, there is a sitting room with fireplace and full bathroom, yet they are in close proximity to the main house, kitchen and living areas.

Throughout the home are nostalgic pieces of memorabilia. A cypress pine door originating from an old cottage in western NSW was stripped back and given new life as the workshop entrance door. This item, like many others used,

had been stored away for many years, with an eventual plan to incorporate them in the creation of the new home.

No curtains have been used, and window furnishings are limited to simple see through blinds to reduce glare and for privacy. Every attention to detail has been considered even down to being able to see the moon from the bedroom window and having a sunny spot to enjoy morning tea.

The end result is a simply perfect lifestyle home, for the present and future generations of the family to enjoy.

As the gentle afternoon breezes waft through the home, it was evident why the judges had given a prestigious award to this home of distinction. 🏡