

A BIT OF

Designed sensitively by a one-time local as though it were an exposed rock shelf, this



PHOTOGRAPHS **JOHN GOLLINGS** WORDS **LETA KEENS**

THESE PAGES At the centre of this house, located on a remote part of the Queensland coast, is a travertine platform. To the right is the main living and guest pavilion; a smaller pavilion containing the owners' bedroom, study, bathroom and outdoor room lies to the left.

A LEDGE

beacon of sustainable design is an abstracted version of the landscape it inhabits.





Captain James Cook's second landing in Australia was in May 1770. The *Endeavour* was anchored off the Queensland coast, north of Bundaberg, while Cook and his party went ashore. Sydney-based architect James Grose grew up in the area. As a teenager, he'd get up before dawn and surf. By 9am, he says, the sun was blisteringly hot – you could either soak it in or take shelter under the low trees that hugged the raw and uninhabited coastline. He remembers a certain tree near Cook's landing spot – a tree harshly sculpted by the wind, leaning at an unnatural angle, its bark stripped bare, spidery branches desperately trying to make their presence felt.

The way he talks about it, you get the sense that this part of the world is deeply ingrained in him – that he understands it instinctively. "It's close to all my memories," he says. "It's a formative time from the age of 14 to 20 – I was an architecture student in the last couple of those years and was very much informed by the strength and ambiguity and poetry of nature. And having grown up in Bundaberg, I know what it's like to live in heat and humidity – I understand how important it is to catch the breeze or block strong winds."

Alinghi, a house built deep in the dunes and eucalypt forest of Rocky Point, close to where James Grose surfed, is his response to the place, abstracted to a poetic degree. He describes it as "equatorial architecture", a style in which ancient materials are used to make accessibly contemporary buildings, and a certain groundedness of form blends with a lightness of structure.

The way down to Alinghi – and linking the various parts of the house, anchoring them to the ground – is via a concrete-covered walkway providing shade, and coolness from the concrete itself. "It's a beautiful material, which stains and gets the patina of rock," says James Grose, national director of architecture firm Grose Bradley BVN. Angled concrete blades along the walkway direct the visitor towards the central part of the house, the point of entry and the most abstracted feature of all – a travertine platform, surrounded by ponds and flanked by two pavilions; one fragile, the other more robust in character. Together these elements form a range of "internal and external places to be, depending on the weather, the sun, the time of day".

From the platform, the view over the coastal scrub is towards the rust-hued rock of Rocky Point and the ocean. Rather than drawing directly on the rock

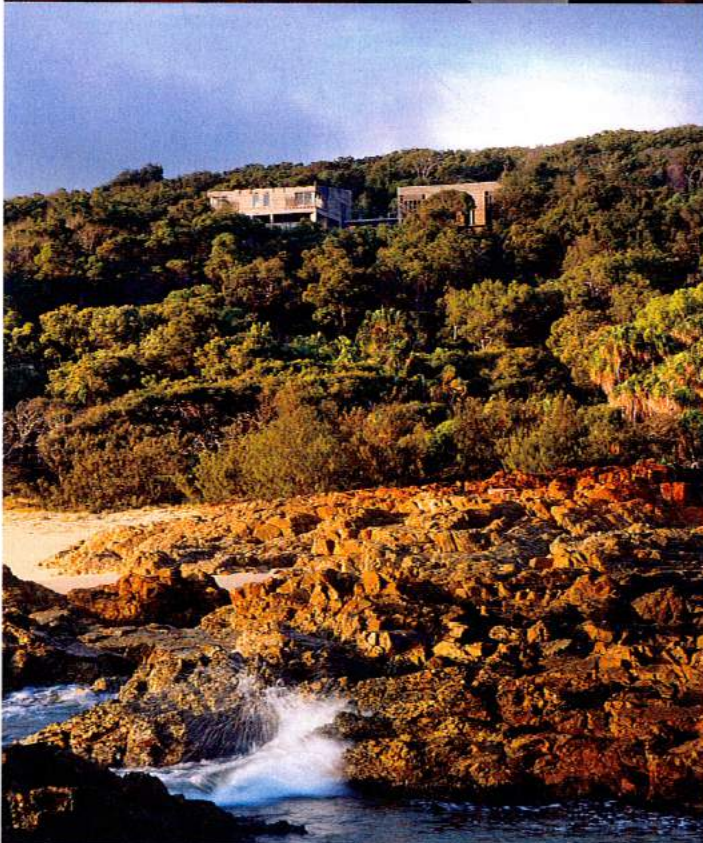
THIS PAGE View across to the smaller pavilion, which is cloaked in a complex net of timber battens, a reference to the windswept coastal scrub.
OPPOSITE PAGE Concrete blades along the walkway direct the visitor towards the house's point of entry.





"THIS HOUSE IS ALL ABOUT PLACE.
THE MATERIALS HAD TO BE A TRUE
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THIS PAGE In the main pavilion, a combination of concrete and timber gives an unexpectedly robust effect. OPPOSITE PAGE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP Whole walls of glass open up to create an almost entirely outdoor living space; a timber-ceilinged deck runs the length of the main pavilion, providing shade from the harsh sunlight; a view of the house from the rocky beach below.

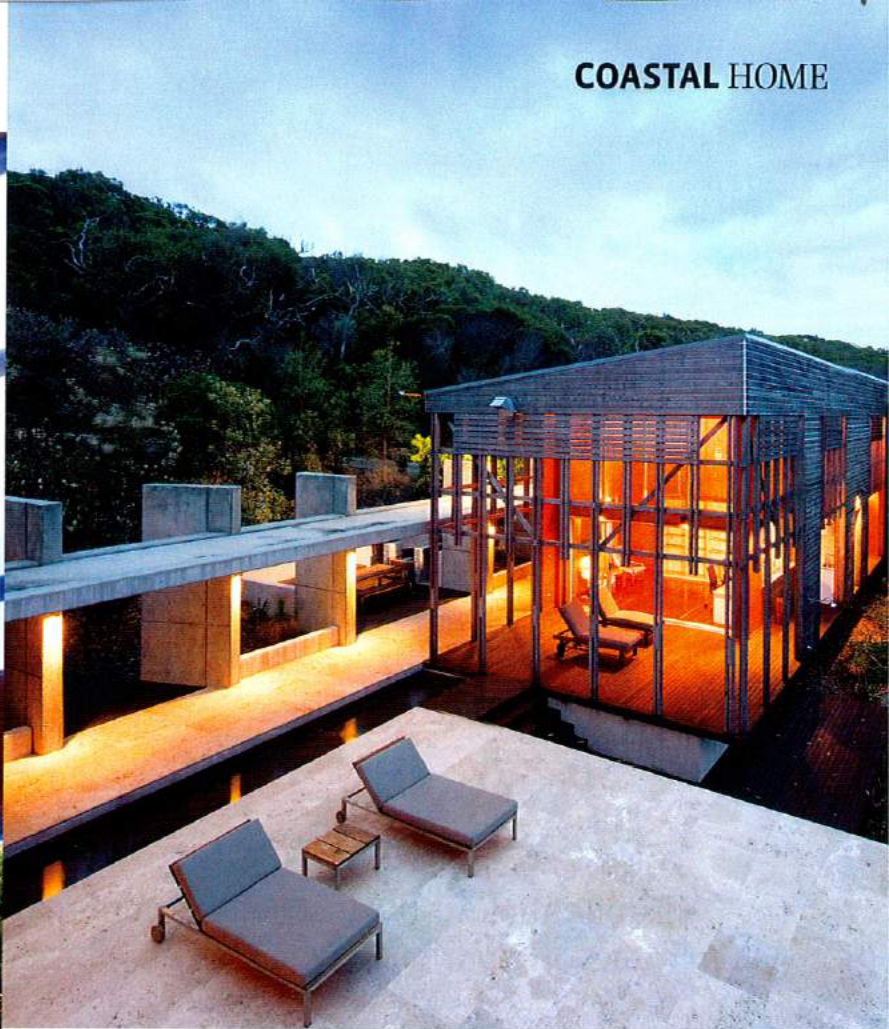


SPEED READ Having grown up in the area, architect James Grose was well-acquainted with the surrounding landscape and climate of this coastal Queensland house. • He used this knowledge as the foundation for the design of a retreat. • His design draws on the language of "equatorial architecture", in which ancient materials are used to make accessibly contemporary buildings.

THIS PAGE The small pavilion houses a bedroom, bathroom, study and a large outdoor room. **OPPOSITE PAGE** View from the main pavilion clearly shows the concrete blades on the walkway, travertine platform, and the batten-framed outdoor room of the small pavilion.

Alinghi, by Grose Bradley BVN with LGI Architects, is available as a holiday rental. For details, visit www.stayz.com.au. For more luxury lodgings, see page 178.





for inspiration, James Grose turned towards the pale sand of the dunes in choosing travertine. But then, on that shifting dune, he planted a solid mass, which mimics the flatness of the horizon and connects with the sky.

Turn right and you're in the main pavilion – the more robust of the two, with its blend of concrete and timber creating “a very rich interior dialogue”. There's no front door to signal the way in – formality is an urban construct not needed in this coastal retreat. On the ground floor, whole walls of glass slide back to create virtually an outdoor living, dining and kitchen area. A wide deck running the length of the pavilion provides shade from the heat and becomes a “star terrace at night when the sky is full of stars”. Upstairs, slatted timber screens and walls of glass in the four guest bedrooms again “open up so there's nothing there” or close down against the weather.

The smaller pavilion, to the left of the travertine platform, is essentially of timber, and cloaked in a delicately complex frame of battens – Grose's abstraction of the wind-beaten coastal scrub. All outside timber has been left to weather to a soft grey, while interior ply maintains its warm hue – another reference to the harshness of the bush. The pavilion itself consists of the owners' bedroom, study and bathroom, with a large outdoor room bounded by the timber battens. “This house is all about place,” says James Grose. “The materials had to be a true expression of the place.”

It's not the first house the architect has done on this stretch of the coast, but Alinghi, he believes, is a more mature version of his work: “It's more grounded – it's really about ‘how do you live on a rock platform?’” When asked if, as a teenager, he could have imagined his houses sitting on this escarpment, his response is emotional. “It's beautiful coastline ... I never would have wanted anyone to build houses on it. But given the fact there are houses there, it's an important gift to do this work. You have a responsibility to put good things on it.” 15