

# OUTSIDE IN

Noosa-based home designer Chris Clout believes the outside of a home is as important as the inside.

WORDS: Ann Rickard

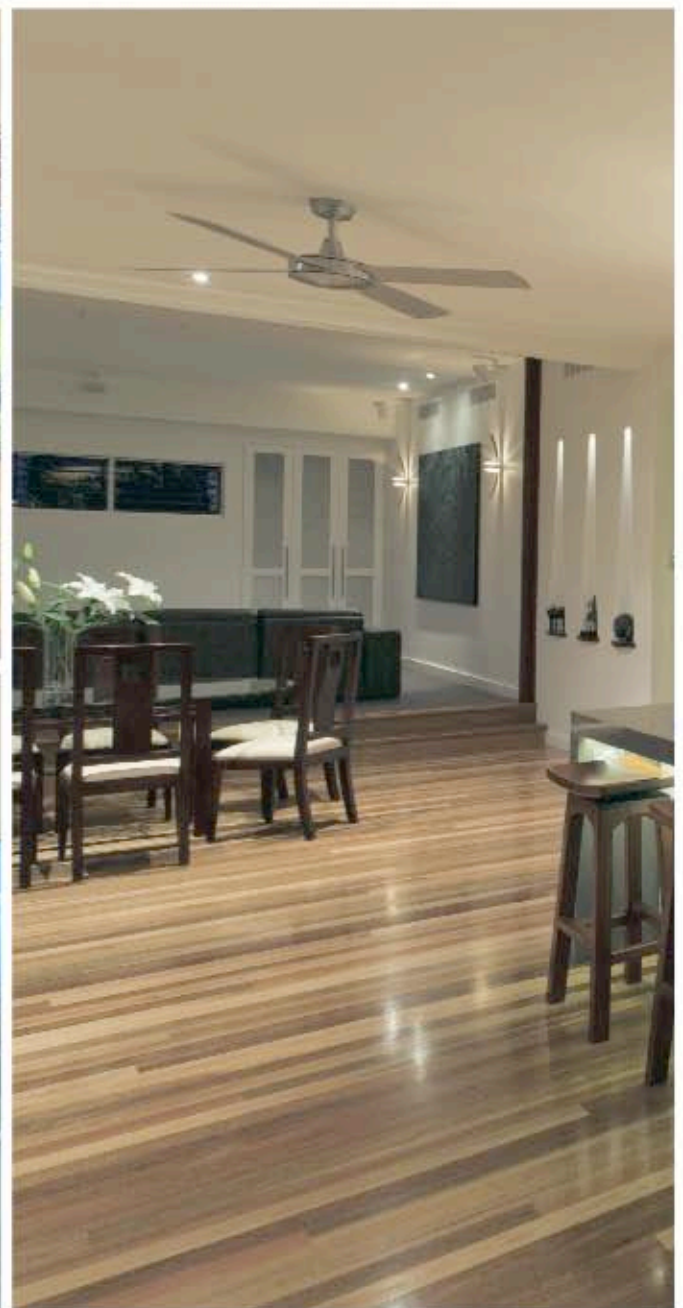
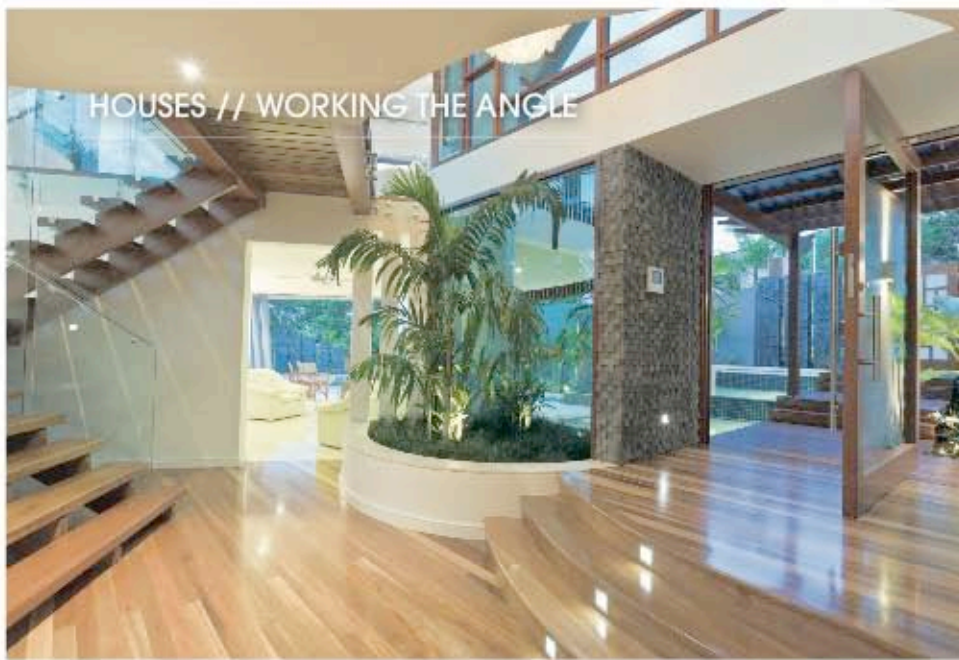


Although he is not a landscaper or pool designer, his philosophy of beginning a home's impact at the front gate with cascading water features, flourishing plants and arresting design features, means his homes take up the entire space on a block, presenting as an opulent resort rather than just a house and garden.

This holistic approach is never more evident than in Brian and Dotty Knott's newly completed four bedroom, three car garage, open plan, Noosa Heads home.

"The block of land was really awkward," Chris said. "It was a corner block, a triangle shape with the sharp end on the corner. But if we built a second level the views over Noosa and Laguna Bay would be spectacular, so there was a lot to take into account. I wanted to design it so it would mimic a ship, making the pointy end the prow."

From the street, the house is all about warm tones and natural materials. Placing the entrance at the wide end of the triangle, with a triple tier timber boardwalk paralleling a layered water feature, gives instant outside impact once through the gate.



Heliconias and spider lilies flourish by the boardwalk; water spurts from basalt pillars and tumbles into ponds which in turn fall into the swimming pool at the sharp end of the block. It's a pleasurable assault on the senses; you feel as though you have arrived in a luxurious tropical retreat and you're ready to holiday.

The home has a distinct Asian feel, something Brian and Dotty requested of Chris. "We lived in Asia for ten years and were inspired by Balinese and Thai Designs so we wanted a definite Asian ambience," Brian said. "We knew that would work well in Noosa."

Inside the entry hall, with its spotted gum floors, a curved timber and glass staircase alludes to something marvellous at the top, and the eye is irresistibly drawn up to the lofty height of the mezzanine level, where an enormous three-tiered white chandelier bought in Bali and comprised of hundreds of tinkling shells, dramatically owns the space.

There is impact and promise here: frameless glass balustrading curves glamorously around the mezzanine level, echoing the curve of an indoor plant feature below.

To the right, a casual living space with cream lounge suite and oval glass dining table leads out to the north facing pool area where more basalt pillars add to the contemporary Asian feel. A large day bed hangs out over the pool, and not only creates a striking feature but covers a water tank. "This was in keeping with Chris' determination to build with sustainability and eco-friendliness in mind," Brian said.

A small kitchen and powder room on this level means this living space is independent of the rest of the house, perfect for an escape if needed.

On this ground level, to the left, a hallway leads to a study and three guest rooms. "I don't like hallways but because of the shape of the block there was no alternative," Chris said. "I compromised by putting a wide space in the hall and floor-to-ceiling louvres to let the light in."

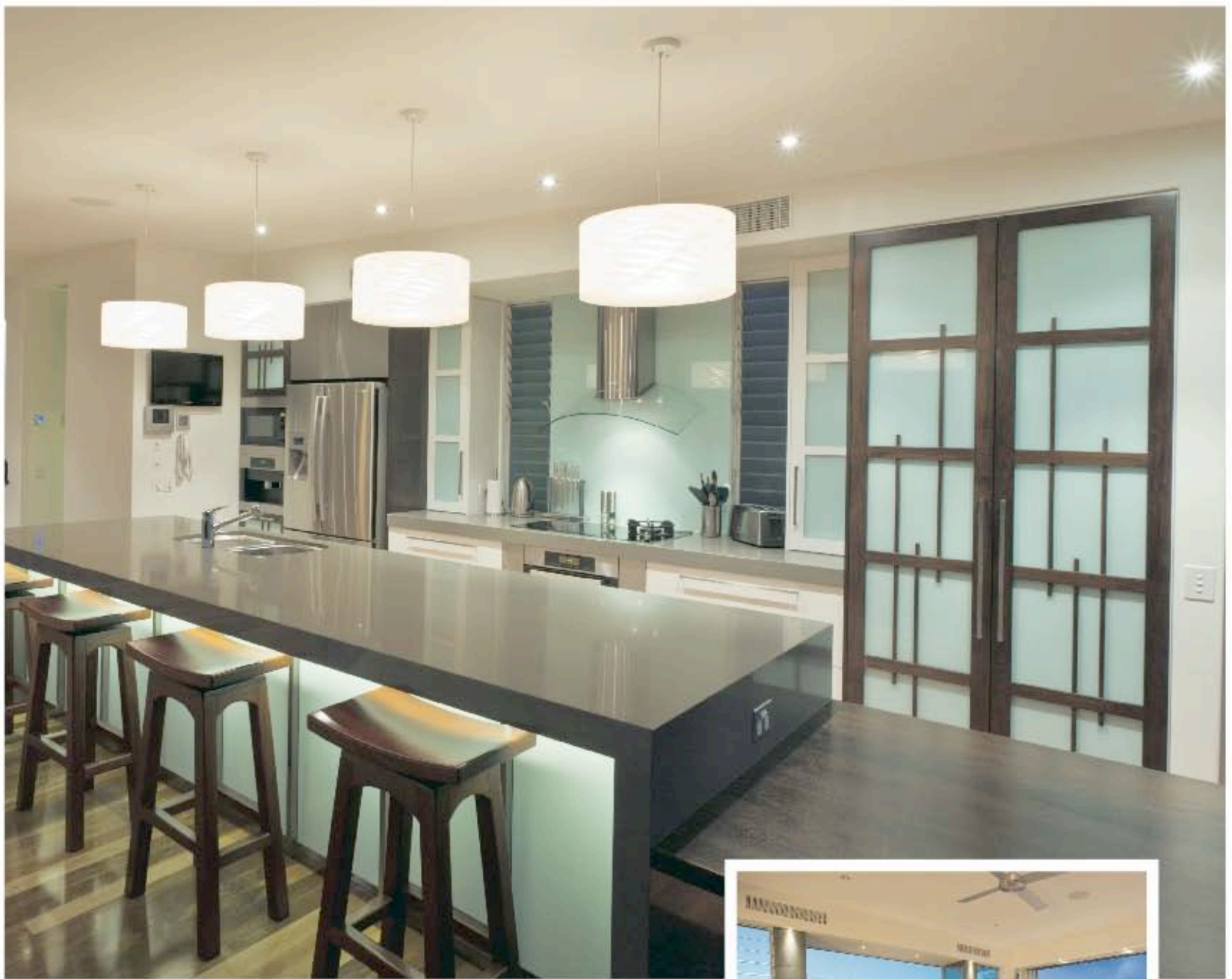
Chinese cabinets and chests brought from Hong Kong work perfectly in the wide hall space. "We lived in such a small space in Hong Kong, we didn't have many pieces, so it worked well to have a relatively empty palette to work with," Dotty said. "We took advice from Chris and his team on the rest of the furnishings."

The light-filled guest rooms with en-suites look out high into the native trees on the sloping fall of the land and to the native reserve next door.

"There were a number of native trees on the block and we wanted to keep them," Chris said. "One is a koala tree so it had to stay even though it is very close to the house."

The tree, and its inhabitants has become an important feature of the property and house-guests are enchanted to be in a room that is on the same level as the birds and offers a chance of koala spotting.

Once up the elegant curved stairway, the breath is inhaled sharply as the extraordinary far-reaching views are revealed.



"The views far exceeded our expectations," Brian said. "We stood on top of our friend's 4WD before building and saw that they would be good, but we had no idea how good."

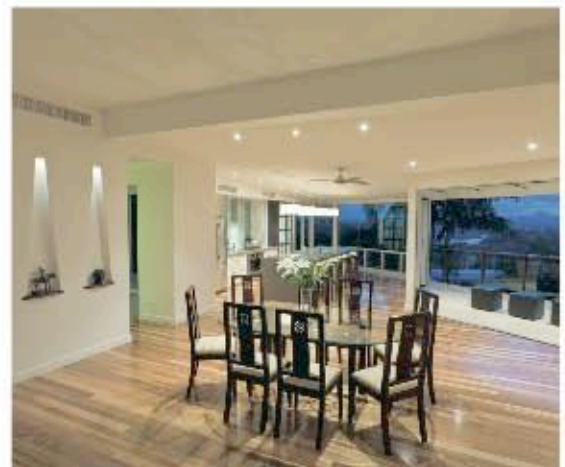
It seems that the whole of Noosa is theirs as Brian and Doty take in the magnificence of Laguna Bay, Weyba Creek, Noosa River, Mount Cooroy and the rolling green spread of controlled development to the horizon.

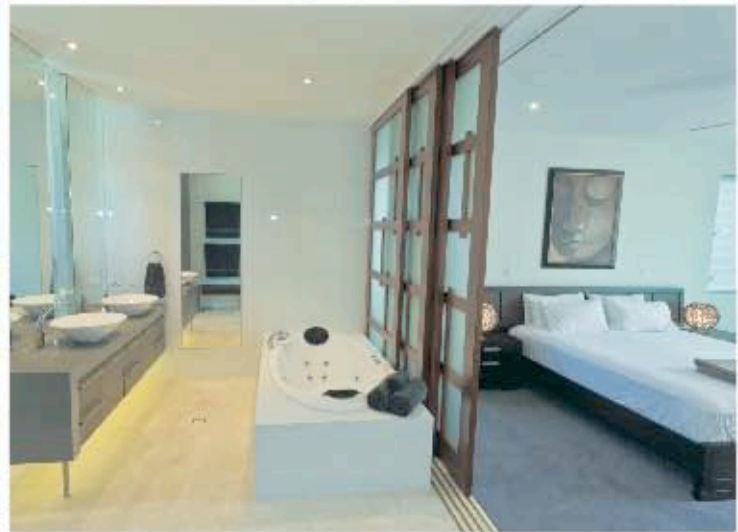
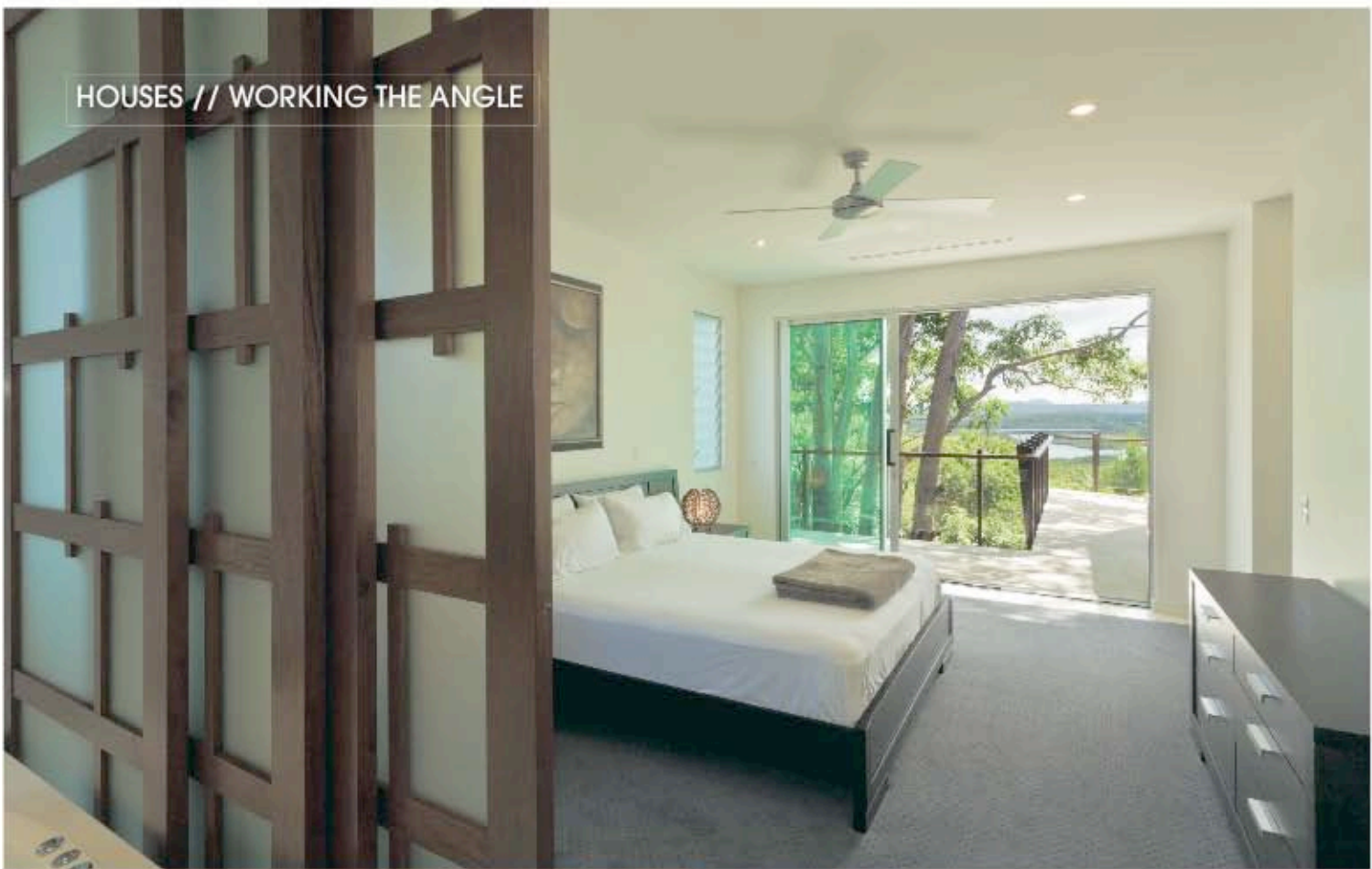
On this upper level, the space flows seamlessly, taking in kitchen, dining, living, media room and spacious verandah.

"I wanted Brian and Doty to enjoy the views from every part of the living space," Chris said. "We elevated the media room so even when they are up there they can see the views."

The custom designed two-pack kitchen with long Quantum Quartz bench and overhead pendant lights, has an add-on timber section at one end, perfect for working at laptops. Stainless steel, satina glass and New Guinea Rosewood enhance the luxury of the kitchen. All the accoutrements required for easy cooking and entertaining are there: Miele appliances, steam oven, induction cooktop, giant gas wok burner, soft closing drawers and cupboards.

The dining space is home to a glass table brought from Hong Kong with the chairs recovered in a luxurious cream fabric. "It came up brand new," Doty said. "And it works in this house. We weren't sure if it would. Coming from Hong Kong with such small space into this large space took getting used to. We used to call out to each other at first, wondering which part of the house we were in."





A slatted bridge, past the free-falling shell chandelier, you are taken into another zone, yet still on the same level. This is the main lounge area where the views are just as spectacular, and framed by an enormous picture window over a triple burner Eco-Smart fireplace. "We didn't want to put a chimney in to take away from the views so we put in the ethanol fire which not only looks good but surprisingly gives out a lot of heat," Brian said.

A mirror behind the fire doubles the flame appeal and reflects the elegant white leather lounge suite and oval coffee table. A white leather swivel chair lets the occupier move in a complete circle to take in a 360 degree view of the surroundings. Louvres on either side of the picture window give cross-flow ventilation. Although the property is fully air-conditioned, Brian and Dotty rarely need to use it.

The modern feel of this space is enhanced by the use of anodised aluminium for door and window frames.

"We were married in front of this fireplace and this view when we moved in," Dotty said. "It was a small family event, and the ambience of the house made for a magical day."

Although this space faces west, the weather is controlled by electronic blinds which can be lowered in the afternoon to filter the sun yet still retain the views.

The master suite on this level is a sanctuary of style and grace. The open ensuite bathroom, as with the other two bathrooms in the house, has a distinct Asian feel with a double vanity, separate toilet and free standing spa bath. It can all be shut off by sliding shoji doors, or as is mostly the case, left open to enjoy a leisurely bath with the views over the bedroom and the top of the koala tree to all of Noosa beyond.

Brian and Dotty chose a consistent colour palette throughout, with a mix of rich timber, warm dark greys and soft warm whites such as Resene half Rice Cake for the walls. It all adds to the warmth, comfort and luxury complementing its surroundings.

Chris Clout worked with builder Braeden Constructions to complete this stunning home which, although only months old, has already notched up several awards including the prestigious ABODE Award for Best Bathroom.

But perhaps the best accolade comes from the mouth of Dotty. "It's an easy care house, great for living."