

US is amazed by Clout's designs



COASTAL HIDEAWAY: Chris Clout, pictured with wife Dani and their six-month-old son, always impresses with his home designs, including the Tropical House, right.

PHOTO: CONTRIBUTED



COVER STORY

Ann Rickard talks to a young local designer with global ambitions.

HE'S NOT an architect, yet his home designs have won 51 awards at regional, state and national level.

He has just turned 30, yet he has designed about 150 homes in Queensland, NSW, Melbourne, Perth, Far North Queensland, Vanuatu and Bali.

Chris Clout has achieved a lot in his 30 years. But then, he did start at the age of six, when he designed a rickety cubby house. Soon after, he upgraded to a string of "sophisticated" tree houses. At age 16, he became serious and designed his parents' home in Jervis Bay.

After an apprenticeship in carpentry and five years working with his uncle, Noosa designer Paul Clout, Chris founded his own company in 2008, Chris Clout Design.

His ground-breaking designs, featuring seamless indoor/outdoor living, resort-style pools and dramatic water features, have caught the eye of television producers in the US and he has just finished filming a program entitled *Amazing Water Homes* to air in America on cable channel HGTV (Home and Garden TV.)

"The show will feature three of my designs: River House, Saltwater House and Tropical House," Chris said.

"It's a very popular channel in America and they mostly feature big Hollywood and Vegas homes. The research team found me, contacted me, said they had never filmed outside America before but wanted to include me."

The US filming was followed by the filming of *Sandcastles*, a

property program for Australian television to feature on Channel 7Two this month.

"*Sandcastles* is an architect-based show and when the people contacted me I told them I was not an architect but a building designer.

"They said they didn't care; they loved my work and wanted to feature it. Both the Australian and US shows will also feature Noosa so it will be good for tourism and local businesses."

The Tropical House at Noosa Waters (to feature on both programs) is one of Chris' latest and most ambitious designs.

With its street presence resembling a grand ocean liner sailing majestically through the sea, it has instant impact and looks more like a luxurious island retreat than a Noosa house.

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STEP RIGHT IN: The Tropical House has an imposing street impact.

"I'm doing some of the best houses in the country; I want to be doing it around the world."

— CHRIS CLOUT



Chris Clout's designs have attracted global interest.

Plans to build HOME

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THE wow factors are countless, and they begin at the gate (there is no door), with a man-made rainforest and pebbled rivers opening into a central courtyard, which leads to a circular pavilion area with outdoor kitchen, lounge and dining, all jutting over the infinity pool that dips into the canal.

"The house has two separate wings and wraps around the resort pool," Chris said.

"It is a design that could be plonked on any island around the world, or on a river.

"With a triangular shaped block, I was able to give privacy (from neighbours) on either side

by creating an open courtyard garden in the middle. When you walk through the gate you are in a retreat."

The Melbourne clients gave Chris carte blanche to design a holiday home they could escape to and immediately immerse themselves in Noosa living.

"They didn't give me any restrictions on design, and they didn't change a thing," Chris said.

Bridges, voids, connecting timber boardwalks, Japanese-style cabinetry, louvres, stacking doors and slash windows, suspended

bathroom mirrors, a curved glass floor on the upper level, abundant mood lighting ... the striking features are evident in every area of the house – yet there is an air of uncluttered restraint, which allows the tropical design and outside elements to star.

The pool is a showstopper from both the house and the canal. With its central raised, circular Perspex spa and round timber platforms built into the water to house sunlounges, it is the focus from every area of the house.

It is obvious Chris has pushed all the boundaries on this project to create a jaw-dropping design that is sure to win a swag of future awards.

Chris' success at such a young



WORK ON SHOW: Chris Clout being interviewed on site. His designs will feature in two television programs, one to air on Australian channel 7Two and the other to air in America on cable channel HGTV.

on early success

age is exceptional, but he believes it is just the beginning.

"I want to build resorts all over the world," he said.

"I'm doing some of the best houses in the country; I want to be doing it around the world: resorts in Bali, Fiji and Thailand."

Such global ambitions do not include a move away from Noosa, where Chris, his wife Dani and their six-month-old son live.

"All my clients love it that I am based in Noosa," Chris said.

"They use it as an excuse to visit for a holiday. I am lucky, I can get to work all over the country and still live in Noosa."

DESIGN IN MIND

- Some of Chris Clout's signature touches include Japanese-style timber slats on doors and in-built into kitchen benches.
- Water has always been a strong element in all Chris' designs. "I believe water should start at the front door and flow through the house to the pool."
- One of Chris' designs in Far North Queensland is centred around a helipad. It was a challenging assignment he took on for a client who wanted his helicopter to be part of the house.
- He is now working on a number of projects, including a \$4 million home in Cronulla, a resort in Cairns and a prestigious property in Wagga.
- Some of Chris Clout's unique homes are featured in a beautifully photographed coffee table book entitled Resort Houses, published last year and available in good bookshops.
- Visit: chriscloutdesigns.com.au for more properties and photos.