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# Turning Japanese gives designer clout

By **GORDON CLARK**

A FUSION of Japanese house design with Queensland's weather and lifestyle won Noosa's Chris Clout the 2009 National Design Excellence award in Perth on Saturday night.

The 25-year-old, who has had his licence for a little more than 12 months, beat 68 of the best designers in the country to win not only two of the four residential design categories, but also the overall award for excellence.

Mr Clout, who left school at 16 to work as an apprentice carpenter with his uncle Paul Clout, said he was

blown away to be just the second Queenslander to win a national Design Excellence Award (the other was fellow Noosa designer Stephen Kidd).

"When you consider I've only had my licence for a year, and the other entrants were a lot older than me, it's unreal," Chris said.

"I kind of thought I might have a chance because they wanted my photo. But at the same time the competition was a lot harder than the state awards so I was really stoked to win."

Mr Clout won the best resi-

dential design in the 251sq m to 350sq m category for "Kestrel House," which was described by the Building Design Association Awards judging panel as a "spectacular beachside residence that takes full advantage of its breathtaking location."

He also took out the award for best residential building in the 351sq m to 450sq m for his "Japan House" design at Castaways Beach.

Mr Clout said while many designs focused on "resort-style" or "beach shack" style, he had decided to combine Japanese elements with

Queensland living.

The result is a stunning creation that includes the innovation use of unique timbers, Shogi screen doors, glass and a granite waterfall down the centre of the house.

The question is, after his extraordinary success at the national awards, what can he come up with next?

The answer – a "futuristic" design based on the cartoon series *The Jetsons*.

"I'm building that for my parents so hopefully we can come up with something amazing," he said.



**WINNING DESIGN:** Noosa's Chris Clout combines Japanese elements with Queensland living.

PHOTO: PATRICK OBEREM