

Waterside haven

This Central Coast holiday home will sweep you off your feet. Yet the sweeping is done with such warmth, charm and character, it will also put a huge smile on your face. Join us on a journey to beach house heaven.

Story by Cornelia Schulze, photography by Castle and Beatty (opening page) and Mike Bell, Rawlife Studios

A seven bedroom, five bathroom house with generous outdoor spaces, a courtyard entrance, multiple living areas, an infinity pool and direct access to the water is bound to be impressive by any measure. Yet this home is impressive and understated all at the same time. A custom built dream of a children's playground is the first thing you see when walking through the front gate and that's certainly not by accident.

Homeowners Pam and Stephen wanted to create a place where the whole

family could come together; a place that would be enjoyed as much by their two daughters and four grandchildren as it would be by the friends they love to entertain.

Family, friends and more

But while they imagined an entertainer's dream with the perfect combination of communal spaces and privacy to put their guests at ease they also wanted a weekend retreat that wouldn't feel empty if there was only the two of them.

If there is such a thing as a sophisticated yet rustic beach house style then this is it to perfection. Pam and Stephen's home oozes family living, lazy summer afternoons on the deck, relaxed barbecues with friends or cosy evenings in front of the fireplace. And it does so with such grace and style that every visitor instantly feels welcome and at home.

Pam and Stephen had been looking for a holiday house for several years. They had been searching everywhere, from the Southern Highlands to Palm Beach. "We made offers on three other houses but



FAVOURITE PLACES

This living area is one of Pam's and Stephen's favourite places in the house. "There are so many favourite places," they say. The base of the table lamps used to be planting pots in their Point Piper home in Sydney. "We had them for years. They already had a bit of patina when I first bought them and one day I thought they would make the perfect base for table lamps," Pam says.

COOKING AND ENTERTAINING

This kitchen from Woodstock Industries really has it all: there is an indoor grill, a steakhouse grill and plenty of storage. Behind the kitchen is the pantry. "But we don't have a butler's pantry," says Pam. "After all, we don't have a butler either." The dining table easily seats eight people.



Nicco Timber Windows & Doors custom built the distinct internal doors.

The kids' indoor playroom next to the kitchen.

Another living area with its own fireplace and a second barbecue.

This cosy space is used as both a TV room and study.

luckily we were knocked back every time. They actually all ended up selling for less than our offer," chuckles Stephen.

Good things happen quickly

One day fate intervened. While reading the Sunday papers, Stephen noticed an ad for a plot of land in Wagstaffe. Not really knowing anything about the area, he started asking around. "As it happens, the guy who has the locker next to me at the golf club was a gentleman who had a holiday house in Wagstaffe that he

shared with an architect. I asked them about the piece of land and they told me it was probably one of the best positions you could buy on the Central Coast. So we had a look and instantly fell in love. We ended up buying it within a week of first laying eyes upon it," he says.

But fate wasn't quite done with them yet. They ended up hiring Dennis Rabinowitz, the architect who shared the holiday home with Stephen's golf buddy. What's more, Daniel Syddall from Construct Central Coast who had built Dennis' holiday home also built Pam and

Stephen's house. "We interviewed five different builders, but Dan was definitely our first choice," says Stephen. "He has a great reputation for the quality of his work, but he is also such a nice guy and he really understood what we were after. We completely trust him and to this day he still has a key to the house."

"Both Dan and Dennis had to be very patient with us as we wanted to be across every detail of the design and build," remarks Stephen. "It really was quite a journey and the plans changed significantly from where we began to the actual build.

We enjoyed the whole process so much, we are already planning our next project and will work with them both again."

Loving the space

There are three different living spaces on the ground floor, all of them flooded with daylight courtesy of the generous floor to ceiling windows. There are two separate lounge areas, each with its own fireplace. To the left is a separate study/TV area.

The kitchen (Woodstock Industries) with its gorgeous stone benchtop

features completely integrated top range appliances. Next to the kitchen is an indoor play area for the grandchildren. "This is where they go first when they come here. There is lots of storage in the built-in cupboards, and all of it is filled with the kids' toys," laughs Pam.

Style runs in the family

Well chosen fabrics in different shades of white and the use of reclaimed timber all add to the coastal vibe of the house. Stephen says, "With the exception of the

dining room table, we have designed all the tables in the house." Much of the timber was sourced from old dockyards in Rozelle and handcrafted to Stephen and Pam's specifications.

But they didn't stop at the tables. With one daughter an interior designer and the other a stylist, they had plenty of help to get it all just right. As much as Pam loves shopping for interior decorating items, her purchases are always considered. "I love collecting old things, different things, interesting things," she says. "I love, love, love those woven baskets for example. I▷

The main bedroom opens to the deck yet provides for complete privacy.



There are four self-contained suites upstairs. And they even come with stunning views.



The bathrooms share tiles in the similar colours yet with different patterns.



Wooden tools from Water Tiger, straw baskets from Cape Town.



knew I wanted them for this house and had worked out how many I would need for the wall by the staircase. So I bought the exact quantity plus one extra from a merchant in Cape Town during a trip to South Africa. We ended up needing that extra one too!" she smiles.

Sleeping with the doors open

The main bedroom, with its walk in robe and ensuite bathroom is on the other side of the house, close to the water.

The floor-to-ceiling windows open up to the deck and waterfront, making for the ultimate indoor/outdoor connection. A skylight in their award-winning bathroom makes you feel as if you are bathing in pure sunlight. The tiles in all bathrooms and the courtyard have been imported from Morocco. There are subtle variations in colours and patterns, creating a sense of consistency without ever becoming boring or monotonous.

The outdoor deck is enclosed by the master bedroom, the main living spaces and a wall, that also keeps the

northeasterly wind at bay. "We wanted to be able to just live outdoors if we wanted. There is a fireplace outside and heaters. So even in the middle of winter it's protected and cosy," says Stephen. Also outside, they have converted what used to be a one-bedroom boathouse into a teenager's retreat.

What a grand design

Stephen says, "We love that the house is big; when it's just the two of us here we never even have to go upstairs. And when ▷



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“One of our daughters saw a picture of a courtyard like this and forwarded it to us.”



Carefully selected plants add to the welcoming atmosphere.



Mature trees have been inserted in the deck.

we have family and friends we are not on top of each other.”

Architect Dennis likes the idea of pavilions. Essentially, the four bedrooms upstairs are self-contained suites with their own walk in robes and bathrooms that can be closed off from the rest of the house. Pam explains, “In the centre is the children’s space and they absolutely love the bunk beds and the play area here.”

The landscaping was completed by Next Level Landscapes based on designs by landscape designer Marcia Hosking. It beautifully complements the beach

aesthetic. Mature trees were craned in and have been planted all around the property including in the courtyard by the entrance and the pool area. Together with white bougainvilleas, sticky figs along the fences, magnolias and native plants they create the perfect Palm Beach feeling.

Pam and Stephen are certainly happy that their holiday home as been awarded 2018 HIA Home of the Year as well as 2018 HIA Hunter Bathroom of the Year. But most importantly, they bask in the pure joy of sharing their waterside haven with family and friends. ◊

Trade secrets

Daniel Syddall from **Construct Central Coast** is a builder with a passion for perfection: 0412 503 233, constructcentralcoast.com.au

The luscious greenery was planted by **Next Level Landscapes**, 0435 863 849,

Nicco Timber Windows & Doors, a traditional Australian family business, have custom built the internal doors. 02 9758 0898, www.nicco.com.au

Woodstock Industries have custom designed and installed the kitchen and custom joinery throughout the house. (02) 4389 3118, www.woodstockind.com

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