

# Subtle and stupendous

Gail and Brom Morphy's eco-friendly Anglesea weekender evolved into a brilliant result. SARAH BIESKE reports

**G**AIL and Brom Morphy wanted to let their location do the talking when they built their luxury Anglesea beachhouse two years ago.

Nestled in a hill above the Great Ocean Road, the Newtown couple decided the stunning canvas of sweeping coastline and rugged scrubland needed to be appreciated, not added to.

They wanted a home that catered for their children and grandchildren and made the most of their spectacular position, but at the same time one that was low maintenance.

"We didn't want to come down here for weekends and have to worry about doing the garden," Brom says.

"Because it's not our permanent home, we wanted to be able to leave and go back to Geelong without worrying."

With the house designed by James Wilkinson Architects and the garden designed by Peter Shaw of Ocean Road Landscaping, the finished product is spectacular, but unobtrusively so.

With a small space to work with as well as height restrictions, the block was excavated to allow the Morphys to include everything they wanted in the home—not a skerrick of space has gone to waste.

Architect James Wilkinson says the tight design parameters were a blessing in disguise.

"It enabled the building to slip carefully and snugly into the site with minimal intrusion to the neighbours," he says.

The home has a five-star energy rating, with sustainability being the key focus.

Its green cred includes underfloor ventilation, heavily insulated walls and floor, solar hot water, double glazed windows and sustainable timbers, while the native-inspired garden, with rainwater harvesting, is entirely self-sustainable.

A sprawling front deck resembling a pier welcomes you to the home, while a stunning stone feature wall runs along the left side of the house, inside and out, blending the home with Anglesea's terracotta cliff faces and sandy beaches.

The top level is the home's main living space, with floor-to-ceiling windows taking in the ocean views from a dining area, two sitting areas and the kitchen.

The stone wall continues through to the main upstairs bathroom, its sandy tones complementing the earthy colour scheme.

There are two upstairs bedrooms, with the main bedroom and ensuite on the second

level and a fourth bedroom and laundry downstairs—along with Brom's pride and joy, a commercial-style cool room.

"It's my favourite room in the house," he says.

Outside is where landscaper Peter made his mark on the property.

From cushion bush, to flax lily, banksia, dwarf she-oaks, carex, trigger plants, yellow buttons, moonahs, boobialla, running postman whistle, pea grass, knobby club-rush and juncus, Peter and his team handpicked plants that were native to the region's heathland.

White Point Lonsdale shell grit is used in the front yard, as well as rockery from Airey's Inlet.

"From the inside, you can look out the windows and you almost don't notice the road there because the front yard just blends in with the heathland across the road and down to the ocean," Peter says.

"We changed what we were originally going to do with the garden. Our main aim was to make it low-maintenance so all of the plants are drought-tolerant.

"We wanted to create a bit of interest so it wasn't too bland, but we also needed the plants to be tough so it was about finding the right balance."

Out the back, Santa Ana couch grass makes for the perfect play area for Gail and Brom's grandkids, while a retainer wall and an established hedge the length of the block offer privacy.

Gail says the house is everything they had hoped for and, thanks to the environmentally-conscious design and sustainable garden, they've simply been able to move in and enjoy.

"We are thrilled with it and we've had two summers in the house now," Gail says.

"We were really guided by what Peter and the architects thought would work, we didn't have anything specific in mind but we love the end result.

"We've only used the air-conditioner three times this summer because we get the ocean breeze most afternoons and we're also sheltered by the hill.

"Ocean Road Landscaping spends two hours a month maintaining the garden for us but Brom and I haven't had to do anything to it since we moved in which is wonderful."

**'We didn't want to come down here for weekends and have to worry about doing the garden.'**

— BROM MORPHY



Gail and Brom Morphy (left) enjoy green living in their five-star energy rating Anglesea home and drought-tolerant garden, landscaped by Peter Shaw of Ocean Road Landscaping. Point Lonsdale shell grit, local rockery and native plants were used to blend the garden with its natural surrounds.

PHOTOS: Peter Ristovski



## Sustainable living awards entries open

**E**NTRIES for the Geelong Sustainable Living Awards open today, with a prize pool of \$14,000 up for grabs.

Categories for the awards include sustainable home of the year, water wise garden of the year, best sustainable living modification and best sustainable school.

The awards, supported by the Geelong Advertiser, City of Greater Geelong, Barwon Water and Peggy's Mite 10, recognise excellence in sustainable living and are open to homes and schools in the Barwon region.

Entries close on October 23, with winners announced in November. Download your entry form at [geelongadvertiser.com.au](http://geelongadvertiser.com.au).