



J. WALLACE CONSTRUCTIONS PTY. LTD.

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Homes

HIA Housing Awards Special



Scaling the heights ... the Freshwater Beach house renovated by J. Wallace Constructions. Cover picture: interior of the house

picture: BRETT BOARDMAN

Creativity on show

And the finalists are....



COVER STORY

From the humble extension to the ultimate dream house, the best of NSW building is under the spotlight tonight

Perched high on a cliff overlooking Freshwater Beach, it is poised like a seagull ready for flight. Only the sandstone walls at the base of the weatherboard cottage seem to prevent it from taking off over the waves.

The breathtaking house, renovated and extended by Balgowlah builder J. Wallace Constructions, is a finalist in the 2001 NRMA Insurance Housing Industry Association (HIA) Awards and lines up tonight against some of NSW's most exciting and expensive homes.

The gala occasion, at Darling Harbour, sees builders from all over NSW competing for the title of the state's best.

But the sought-after awards are not confined to the spectacular. "They also recognise achievement on a smaller scale in categories ranging from renovations under \$80,000 to display homes under \$116,000.

More than 230 builders have entered for the awards. Some builders have more than one finalist in a category and the winners of the renovation, display, custom built and spec home categories go on to contest the ultimate title of Home of the Year.

Today's special edition of *Homes* features a selection of finalists, all projects displaying innovation and a commitment to excellence.

The variety of entries is a sign of healthy competition within a vibrant building industry, according to NSW

HIA director Elizabeth Crouch. Of particular note this year, she says, is the number and quality of entries from regional builders.

"Regional builders can be a bit more innovative. This is partly driven by geography and partly by local government requirements." Crouch also pointed to the continuing growth of environmental awareness and preference for natural materials.

"It's almost back to the future for some builders as they use tried-and-true materials such as corrugated iron," she says. "Builders are used to dealing with more discerning homebuyers who want far more than a box."

While each category has its strengths, the innovation shown by builders working within the constraints of a small budget is particularly exciting, Crouch says.

"The custom built categories are always exciting in terms of their finishes and scope, but some of the most creative work is being done by builders at the other end of the scale," she says.

The Freshwater house was a huge undertaking for the team of J. Wallace Constructions. Designed by Valdis Macens Architects, the project was carried out in two stages.

First the heritage-listed cottage was restored and extended, then a stunning new structure was added to the front. The steep terrain and restricted access created an opportunity to reuse excavated sandstone in both the renovation and the new work.

The renovated cottage now contains two bunkrooms, a study, a wide verandah and bathroom. Stepping down the steep cliff, the two-level addition contains an entry and courtyard, open-plan lounge/dining area with breathtaking views and the kitchen upstairs and a large bedroom suite with dressing room and ensuite downstairs.

The addition was clad with weatherboard in keeping with the original structure. A spectacular corrugated metal roof combining curves and angles catches the eye.

The winners of the HIA-NKBA Kitchen and Bathroom Awards will also be announced tonight.

Reports compiled by:
**CLARE McDONALD and
CECILY RYAN**

Specialised Accommodation: Tea Gardens Grange, Tea Gardens; Destech, Strathfield; Destech, Strathfield; Colys Developments, Lill Pili.

Small Lot Housing: Chris Robson Property Developments, Hyams Beach; Tisdell Homes, Sawtell; AV Jennings, Wentworthville; Tea Gardens Grange Lifestyle Resort, Tea Gardens.

Medium Density Project (2-10 dwellings): Steve Kerr Homes, Cabarita Beach; Huxley Homes, Parramatta; Cooks Hills Constructions, Broadmeadow; Sammut Developments, Caringbah.

Medium Density Project (more than 10 dwellings): Burnaneer Developments, Sutherland; Landcom-Kings Bay Developments, Waterloo; Tea Gardens Grange Lifestyle Resort, Tea Gardens; Mirvac Homes, Parramatta.

Medium Density Project: Steve Kerr Homes, Cabarita Beach; Burnaneer Developments, Sutherland.

High Density Project: The Altair (Australand Holdings), Broadway; Winton Property Grp, Misons Pt; Winton Property Grp, Misons Pt; The Eclipse (Australand Holdings), Broadway.

Renovations/Additions Project Under \$80,000: PL and RM Taylor, Inverell; Terry Dwyer T/A St Clair Constructions, St Clair; Amack Building Services, Baukham Hills; Adam's Awnings, Riverstone.

Renovations/Additions Project Under \$120,000: EBRA Constructions, Pendle Hill; MCH Building, Forestville; EBRA Constructions, Pendle Hill.

Renovations/Additions Project Under \$180,000: Greg Harris Constructions, Lugarno; J Wallace Constructions, Balgowlah; Dennis Homes, Castle Hill; RBV Builders, Strathfield.

Display Homes Under \$110,000: Mirvac Homes, Parramatta; Beechwood Homes, Liverpool; Eagle Homes, Liverpool; Eagles Homes, Liverpool.

Display Homes Under \$140,000:

Edon Brae Homes, Baukham Hills; Bellevale Homes, Baukham Hills; McDonald Jones Homes, Broadmeadow; Mirvac Homes, Parramatta.

Display Homes Under \$170,000: Clarendon Homes, Baukham Hills; Withers Homes, Mullaway; Bellevale Homes, Baukham Hills; Etosha Homes, Alstonville.

Display Homes Under \$200,000: Clarendon Homes, Baukham Hills; Hibbard Homes, Coffs Harbour; Rob Tate Family Homes, Lake Cathie; Nu-Steel Homes Newcastle, Kotara Fair.



Display homes over \$200,000 finalist ... The Bellevue by Huxley Homes

Display Homes Over \$200,000: Krslovic Homes, Wetherill Park; Home Team, Northmead; Huxley Homes, Parramatta; Bartush Homes, Blaxland.

Spec Homes Under \$160,000: Little Beach Building Company, Bonny Hills; Jandson Homes, North Parramatta; Housing Development Australia, Corlette; Kingstone Homes, Erina Fair.

Spec Homes Over \$160,000: Bush Pavilions, Mullumbimby; Dennis Homes, Castle Hill; South Coast Homes, Kiama Downs; Montgomery Homes, Belmont North; Gremmo Homes, Baukham Hills; Dixon Homes Newcastle, The Junction.

Most Innovative Use Of Steel: B&C Design Construct, Marrickville; Trevane Building Services, Wimaloe; Anthony Ferreira Buildg Services, East Maitland.

Energy Efficient Home: Landcom with Jones Homes, Parramatta; Wincrest Homes, Parramatta; Wincrest Homes, Parramatta; All-Site

Constructions, Gosford.
Custom Built Homes Under \$250,000: B&C Design Construct, Marrickville; Buckton Building, Wamers Bay, LA & CA Murray, West Tamworth; Tisdell Homes, Sawtell.

Custom Built Homes Under \$500,000: Stone-Edge Homes, Wilberforce; Golden Edge Homes, Gold Coast; Brian Hopwood Homes, Coffs Harbour; Neil J Turner, Terranora.

Custom Built Homes Under \$750,000: Toscan Homes, Coffs Harbour; Koala Komfort Konstructions, Crescent Head; Cooks Hill Constructions, Broadmeadow.

Custom Built Homes Over \$750,000: CJ Miller Constructions, Dural; KDE Management and Construction, Castle Hill; Quality Country Homes, Mittagong; Pimas Gate Constructions, Neutral Bay.

Best Home North Coast Region: Toscan Homes, Coffs Harbour; Steve Kerr Homes, Cabarita Beach; Bush Pavilions, Mullumbimby; Hibbard Homes, Coffs Harbour.

Best Homes Newcastle/Central Coast Region: Cooke Hill Constructions, Broadmeadow; Tea Gardens Grange Lifestyle Resort, Tea Gardens; Cooks Hill Constructions, Broadmeadow; Jandson Homes, Nth Parramatta; AV Jennings, Wentworthville.

Best Homes South Coast/Country Region: Quality Country Homes, Mittagong; Bartush Homes, Blaxland; Chris Robson Property Developments, Hyams Beach; Andrew Elliot Quality Builders, Bowral.

Best Home Northwest/New England Region: Paul Newton Constructions, Narrabri; PL & RM Taylor, Inverell.

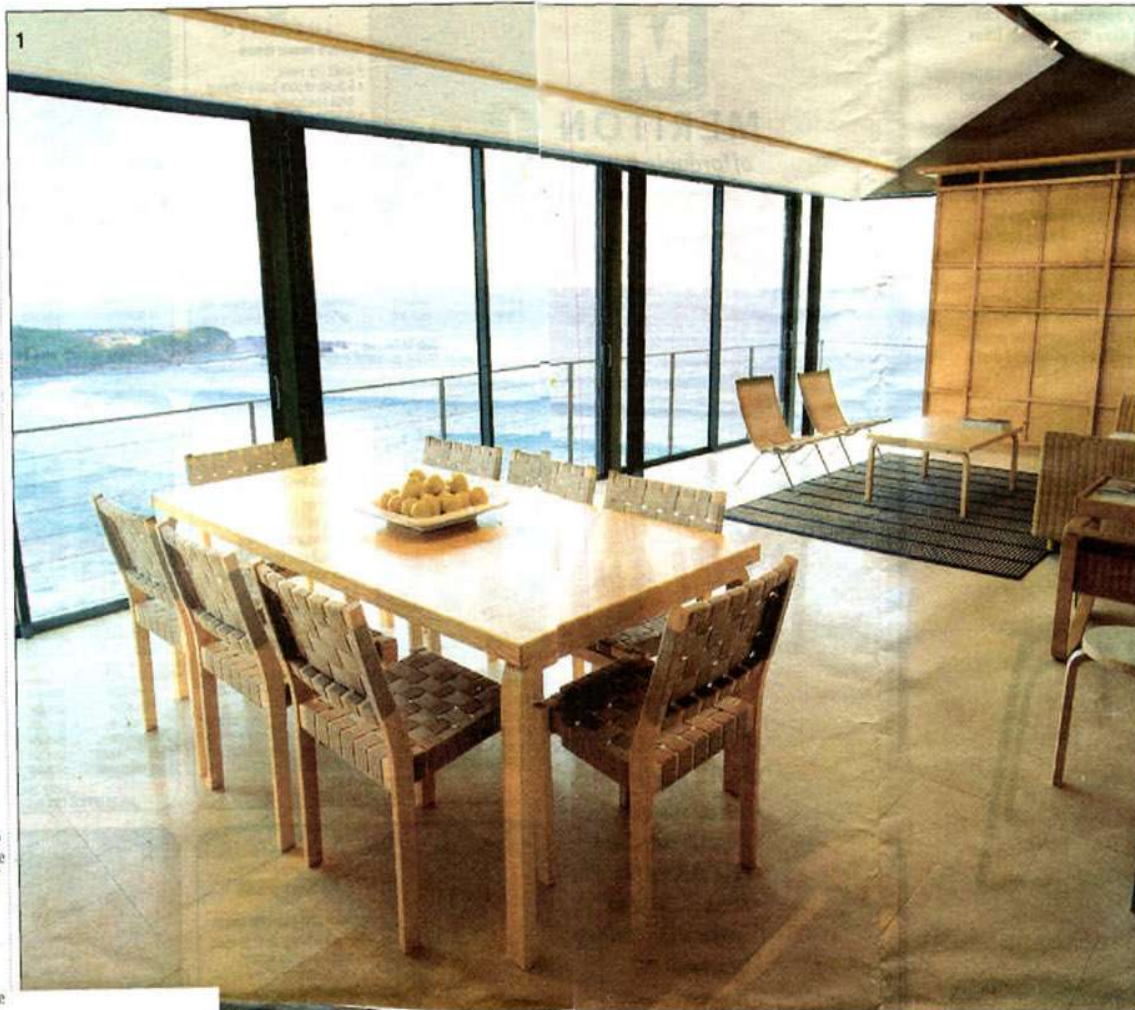
Housing Development: Nanganin Vineyard Estate, Bradman Corporation; Macquarie Links Estate, Monarch Investments; The Tiffany at Bondi Junction, Merton Apartments; The Manors, Kensington Place, Merd, Woodbury Park Estates.

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Stuff of legend

Surf icon Duke Kahanamoku stands sentry to this superb Freshwater home, writes **Guy Allenby**.



1 The new wing's living space overlooks Freshwater Beach. On the headland opposite is the statue of Duke Kahanamoku. Dining table and chairs from Anibou, 9319 0655. Egyptian limestone floor from Fred Pazzotti, 9327 1850.

2 Stairs from the restored cottage's covered veranda lead down to the new wing.

3 The upstairs bathroom: Duravit "Happy D" wall basin (on stand) from The Bath House, 9967 4000; original clawfoot bath by Antique Baths, 9836 0109; "Richmond" taps by Accent International, 9698 7598.

4 The ground-floor master bedroom: Artemide "Tolomeo" table lamps from Arlight NSW, 9889 4751; "Gina" side tables from Anibou, 9319 0655.

Photos: George Fetting

YOU can't help but wonder what the builders of one humble little 1910 beachside cottage would make of the lengths to which people have gone decades later to protect their handiwork.

"It was really a shack of two rooms with a veranda on the front," says architect Valdis Macens, the man charged with restoring and extending the house above Freshwater Beach near Manly. "When this was developed there was probably eight, nine or 10 of these buildings on the hillside," he says. "This is one of the few remaining around here."

These days the steep slope overlooking the beach is populated with sizable contemporary homes.

And although the cottage may be "a modest sort of development in lots of ways," says Macens, the cost of rebuilding has been anything but modest. The precipitous, inaccessible site and a heritage listing on the old shack meant it has been a very costly project.

"What it meant effectively was that in order to keep the original cottage and make a new building work, we had to drop the height of the roof [of the new building]," he says. "We had to do a lot of excavation work."

Scooping out solid sandstone is expensive at the best of times, and when your block has no direct access to the street beyond a narrow right of way beside the house above, the costs really escalate.

Rubble had to be removed by hand. "Something like 200 tonnes of excavated material was taken out by



barrow down a pathway a couple of hundred metres long," he says. "Thankfully the best of it stayed in the form of quarried and dressed stone."

And herein lies the most impressive aspect of the project: both the restored cottage and the new wing sit on sandstone bases quarried and dressed on the site.

"This is normally a fairly prohibitive pursuit cost-wise," says Macens. "But because the access here was difficult, by the time we'd taken all the excavated stuff out and brought masonry back in and built with it, it would probably have cost the same."

"The upshot is we've actually been able to use material from the ground. And the qualities of stone are in many ways superior to those of other masonry products."

All they had to do was find someone skilled in the ancient craft of stonemasonry. Michael French fitted the bill. "There aren't many stonemasons these days who can turn up to a rocky hillside and say 'not a problem,'" says Macens. "Most people are not prepared or skilled in the art of quarrying and dressing from scratch."

The sandstone base anchors the house to its site. "One of the nice things with such a steep site and using stone as the material for the base of the building



THE AIM
To balance the charm of an existing cottage with a contemporary design for living at the beach.

HOW LONG DID IT TAKE?
Two years for design and approval, eighteen months to build.

WHAT WOULD THE OWNERS DO DIFFERENTLY?
Nothing about the design or the building. The legal, planning and financial aspects were extremely testing but, looking back, there was no way of handling them better or making them less stressful.

FEATURE OWNERS ARE HAPPIEST WITH
The feeling of space and isolation from everything but the beach and the ocean. It is a world apart. The choice and use of materials have enhanced the fuss-free, tranquil feeling.

INSIDER TIPS
On any budget, stonework is worth considering. The sensual qualities of Sydney sandstone are hard to match with "off-the-shelf" materials.

ARCHITECT
Valdis Macens Architects, 9241 5799
BUILDER
J. Wallace Constructions, 9948 8122
STONEMASON
Michael & Chris French, 0401 213 892
HERITAGE CONSULTANT
John Graham & Associates, 9241 4688

5 The original cottage has three bedrooms (the third's door is out of shot) and a covered veranda that boasts views every bit as sensational as the new structure built below it down the hill.

6 The new structure sits on an impressive sandstone base quarried and dressed on the site. Note that the home's downpipes and gutters are copper, designed to weather the salt air.

7 The living room. To the right of the picture is a courtyard bounded by the sandstone base of the original cottage. A staircase to the immediate left of the kitchen leads to the master bedroom and study below. Sofa and wicker easy chairs from Corporate Culture, 9690 0077.

is that you are always brushing past stone walls as you are going through the changes in level," he says.

At the top of the site is the original cottage which has been extended to accommodate a third bedroom.

The veranda is enclosed to provide a sun-drenched living space for these rooms. Down a staircase at one end of the veranda, through the sandstone base and past a small courtyard that divides the old and new, is the new two-storey wing. On the top floor of the new structure are an open-plan living space and kitchen, which lead to a courtyard at the rear and overlook the full sweep of Freshwater Beach and the sea.

Down another set of stairs - beside a built-in cabinet displaying old bottles dug up during construction - is a rightly planned master bedroom, bathroom and study/guest bedroom on the ground floor.

Upstairs, the joinery has an oriental accent and is made from Canadian rock maple. The floors are limestone and the windows are finished with timber venetian blinds which can be retracted into the ceiling "so that you can just read the view," says Macens. "At night they can be brought down so that you are not sitting in black glass walls."

During the day you can see straight across the beach to a silhouetted sculpture of a figure on the headland opposite. "That's Duke Kahanamoku," says Macens.

On a summer's day in 1915, the Hawaiian Kahanamoku, paddled out into the breakers on a newly carved timber board. In so doing, he is credited with introducing Australia to the sport of surfboard riding, observed - it's nice to think - by the occupants of a certain little timber shack on the hillside above.