



'The design of Ocean House was about creating a unique retreat, suspended between forest and beach,' says award-winning Australian architect, Rob Mills. 'It's our family escape, away from hectic city life in Melbourne. We all feel instantly relaxed and nurtured here.'

Located in North Lorne, just off the Great Ocean Road in Victoria, one of the world's most scenic coastal routes, the property pushes all traditional design boundaries. 'I bought the land in 2003 with the intention of building a simple beach shack,' says Rob. But, after an arduous planning process, he decided to experiment, taking a risk with a more sustainable design. 'I like to feel challenged,' he says.

The result is a contemporary build that marries a linear timber-and-glass pavilion with a cylindrical concrete-and-glass tower on one side. Where the two forms meet, an internal spiral staircase leads to seven bedrooms and, in the top turret, a circular bedroom sits apart from the rest of the house. The room has a womb-like feel and features uninterrupted vistas. 'The house's concrete curves allow your eyes to travel over spaces; they free the spirit,' says Rob. 'There is a wonderful juxtaposition between the cocooning energy

of the bedrooms and the sharp-lined, open-plan living areas.'

Built over three levels, with vast, sweeping balconies and angled nautical-style balustrades, the connection to the outdoors is always evident in this home. A roof terrace at the top of the tower, reached via a separate external staircase, is ideal for enjoying the sea views – and with an outdoor bath and fire pit, it's the ultimate luxury. 'I wanted it to be a surprise. To discover it, you have to explore,' says Rob. 'It's my favourite sundowner spot, listening to the crashing surf.'

Inside, a few well-chosen design classics from the likes of Gubi and Eero Saarinen elevate this simple scheme and relaxing neutral palette. The Australian chalk-washed hardwood timber, polished concrete, natural linens, patina-rich stone basins and soft leather chairs all reflect Rob's ethos that 'architectural ingenuity and beauty should be matched to everyday functionality'.

'It may seem unlikely, but this house's link to the forest is just as important to us as its beach view,' adds Rob. 'It offers complete tranquillity – we feel entirely at one with nature. This is a hard place to leave.' oceanhouse.com.au ►



**'ARCHITECTURAL INGENUITY AND BEAUTY SHOULD
BE MATCHED TO EVERYDAY FUNCTIONALITY'**

Living area The hardwood used for the ceiling and kitchen cabinets was sourced from the adjacent land and has been rubbed with chalk, creating a warm look. A concrete kitchen island, designed by Rob's architectural practice, is flanked by 'Last Minute' bar stools by Patricia Urquiola for Viccarbe, while the 'Dia.47' pendant light by Claus Bonderup and Torsten Thorup for Gubi hangs above. The 'Extrasoft' sofa by Piero Lissoni for Living Divani and 'Paulistano' chairs by Paulo Mendes da Rocha for Objekto provide comfort, paired with tables by Eero Saarinen **Stockist details on p167**



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