

set *in* stone

A solid effort has resulted in a spectacular home that encompasses space, texture and awe-inspiring views of the Victorian countryside





POOL The house is on one of the area's high points and inspired by its rugged terrain at the edge of the Strathbogie Ranges, within the Great Dividing Range. Cladding the pool is local granite sourced by the owners. Landscaping by Phillip Johnson. **FRONT PATH** (opposite) Concrete makes an appearance on the external stairs and is used to great effect inside the home.

cheat sheet

Who lives here Eddie and Dorothy Spain, business owners in the education sector, and their dog Coco, a Spoodle.

Style of home An ultra-contemporary home in steel, glass, reclaimed timber and stone, just outside Euroa in north-east Victoria.

 Six years, although the house is still a work in progress.

 To date, the project has cost the Spains roughly \$2 million.





Sometimes a house is epic in all ways and there is no other way to describe it. From the concept to the build, the challenges, and the scale of the finished building, that is the essence of this spectacular house in the rock-studded landscape of regional Victoria, at the base of the Strathbogie Ranges.

Conceived – and largely built – by Eddie Spain and his wife Dorothy (Dot), the 650-square-metre house rises above the surrounding landscape yet manages to sit within it comfortably, reflecting the land's textures and rich, raw colour palette.

Designed by architect Robert Harwood, with interior design and project management by Resident Avenue (RA) creative director Jessica Bettenay, the building is clad in weathered and rusted Corten steel and zinc, and encompasses 360-degree views through huge expanses of glass. “When we bought the property, we thought the location deserved a house like this,” says Eddie. “I wanted something fitting of the location.”

“It’s been an amazing project,” says Jessica. “This was one of those once-in-a-lifetime opportunities. Eddie and Dot are heaven, and have become like my second mum and dad over the years we’ve been working with them. Eddie is unbelievable, and Dot is just so gorgeous and so full of life... and then to have such creative freedom... I don’t think we’ll ever get such a wonderful collaborative project again.”

The house has been a passion for Eddie, who admits that it overtook his life in the six years (four more than originally planned) it has taken to build the house. It was even featured on TV series *Grand Designs Australia* – the longest project the local makers have followed. Work started in 2013 and there is still more to be done, namely a lower level that will include a TV room, cellar, mud room and laundry.

Shaped like a capital ‘H’, the dwelling was designed by Robert Harwood of My Architect and consists of two wings – one Eddie and Dot’s suite and the living/kitchen/dining space, the other houses the guest quarters (three bedrooms and a sitting room).



EXTERIOR The two wings of the home are clad in Corten steel while the entry ‘block’ is faced with zinc. Both are very low maintenance.

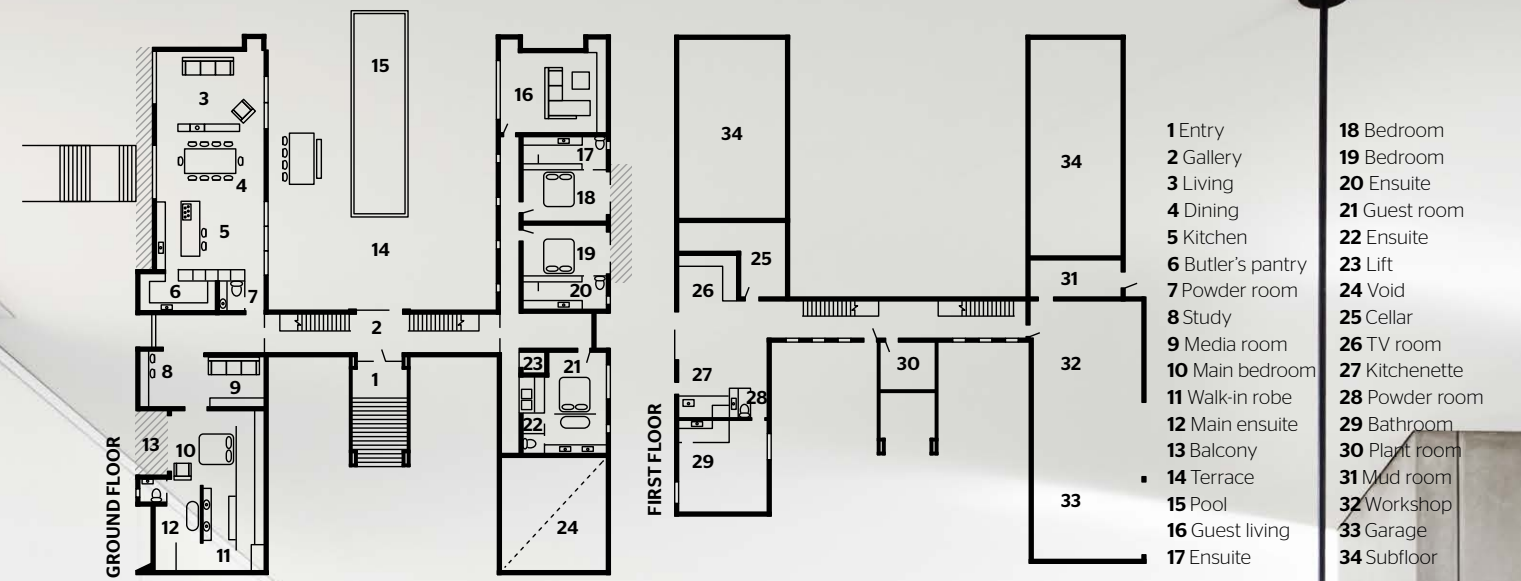
DINING AREA (opposite) Dot, Eddie and Coco in their impressive open-plan living space. All the internal walls, ceilings, doors and trims are painted Dulux Lexicon Quarter.

“We have the best sunrises and the best sunsets – nearly every night – it’s gorgeous”

DOROTHY SPAIN, HOMEOWNER

SITTING AREA/HALLWAY Polished concrete encases the central fireplace, by specialist concreter Keenan Harris. Moroso 'Redondo' armchair, Hub. Sahara rug, Halcyon Lake. The 'Loren' square coffee table is from Criteria. Vessels, Kazari + Ziguzagu. Artwork by Heath Newman, through Otomys Contemporary.

DINING SPACE (opposite) The custom table was made by Lost Arc Antiques and matched with Magis 'Officina' leather chairs from Dedecé. Pendant light by Giffin Design. Leather wine barrel (on dining table), Graham Geddes Antiques.





Inside Out expert advice

Mark Elmore, general manager of design at Fisher & Paykel, on the benefits of integrated appliances

"The beauty of integrating appliances is the design freedom it affords architects and designers. It allows appliances to be hidden or showcased, making for more considered spaces and for chosen appliances to become the focal point of the kitchen. In smaller spaces or those with an open-living plan, this integration provides the opportunity to have more or larger appliances without them overwhelming the kitchen or adjacent living area."

The contemporary design is in stark contrast to the Spains' previous home in Shepparton, which was a Victorian house. Dot says she engaged Jessica to fit-out the interiors of the new house because she was worried it would end up too clinical without an expert hand. "I've always been a real lover of the Victorian era and its antiques," says Dot. "And I think warmth comes through your rugs and things. So when we proposed an ultra-modern house, I needed help.

"I have family and friends who've built houses and they just look very clinical, very white and stark," Dot continues. "I didn't want that, so I said to Jessica, 'If I do something like this, I need to have warmth and I need it to look like a home. I don't want it to look sterile and I don't want it to be white.' So she talked about texture and how important it was to do layers and colours and I think we've done really well. I feel at home, which is good."

Natural timber elements, woollen rugs and soft, oversized furniture have indeed made the spaces seem home-like and intimate. Much of Jessica's design inspiration came from the location. "We took all of our colours from outside," she explains. "The landscape is extremely seasonal. In winter it's green with pinks and purples, and in summer it's dry and earthy, more orange

and rusty. And all year round, the blues of the sky are dominant inside the home. We started with lots of photos of the rocks and the surrounding area, which has a very definite kind of colour palette, and quickly realised that, in terms of materiality, it would need to be all based on texture. So we needed to layer as many things in there as we could to create warmth."

One of the home's key features is the glass in the kitchen – on the benchtops, and the cupboard and drawer fronts. "Dot fell in love with the material on one of our shopping trips and we chose a gunmetal Resene colour that had blue undertones to spray on the reverse side of sandblasted glass. The finish is super matt. When the weather is sunny, the colour is a vivid, strong blue-green. On cloudy days or at night, the colour is a deep and dark blue-charcoal. The glass turned out to be an art piece in itself."

There's more happening on the lower level soon, too, says Jessica. "Downstairs, there are more exciting interiors to come. That floor will have an incredible cellar, an additional kitchen space and a large mud room, which will help ensure Eddie and Dot have a home that encapsulates their lifestyle." **10**

My Architect can be found at my-architect.com.au. RA is at residentavenue.com.au. Phillip Johnson Landscapes; phillipjohnson.com.au

KITCHEN Dot loves cooking, alone or with her adult children when they visit. Her super functional kitchen was installed by David Powels Kitchens and features gorgeous toughened 10mm and 12mm glass from AV Glass in Shepparton, fixed to a moisture-resistant MDF charcoal substrate. Mary Noall tapware is featured throughout. **PANTRY** (opposite) As the home is a fair distance from town, Dot has to be organised and always have essential ingredients to hand, as seen in the pantry's impressive line-up of glass storage containers. The stone on the bench is Tundra Blue, supplied by Apex Stone. Laminex white cupboard and drawer fronts.



"It was important that the kitchen did its job but wasn't the focal point. We wanted the surfaces to be matt and complementary to the surrounding landscape"

JESSICA BETTENAY, INTERIOR DESIGNER



ENSUITE "The main ensuite is bigger than the bedroom, probably twice the size," says Dot. Each vanity is Blue Tundra limestone, with a custom weathered-brass mirror. Natural stone bath, Bath Worx. **GUEST ROOM** (opposite) There's plenty of space for friends and family to stay over. Behind the bed is a textured wallpaper called Mayfair (in Duke) from Instyle. Bed linen, Bedouin Societe. Rug, Halcyon Lake.



"The bedrooms are big and spacious. They're minimalist yet beautiful"

DOROTHY

GREAT FINDS



CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE LEFT Ronan and Erwan Bouroullec for Magis 'Officina' chair, POA, Dedece. Amadi 'Sonoran' rug (300cm x 400cm), \$10,620, Halcyon Lake. Moroso 'Redondo' fabric armchair by Patricia Urquiola, \$7050, Hub Furniture. Mette Dittmer 'Cubic' cotton throw in Tobacco, \$109, Designstuff. Baxter 'Loren' small table (42cm x 42cm), \$5610, Criteria. H Skjalm P ceramic vase in Vesuvius Black, \$74, Designstuff.

ADDITIONAL PRODUCT SOURCING BY NATE VELLA

