

Proof that beauty can be more than skin deep

The architects of this site in southern New South Wales did more than turn conventional veneer construction on its head; they turned it inside out.

The Southern Highlands' Bowral region is an ideal environment for growing berry fruits. It can however be an uncomfortable place at times for those whose homes are not designed for the extremes of climate.

When the owners of the Alpine Berry Farm approached Mackenzie Pronk Architects to design a second residence for the property, their brief understandably, was for a climatically responsive, high quality residence, along with supporting farm facilities.

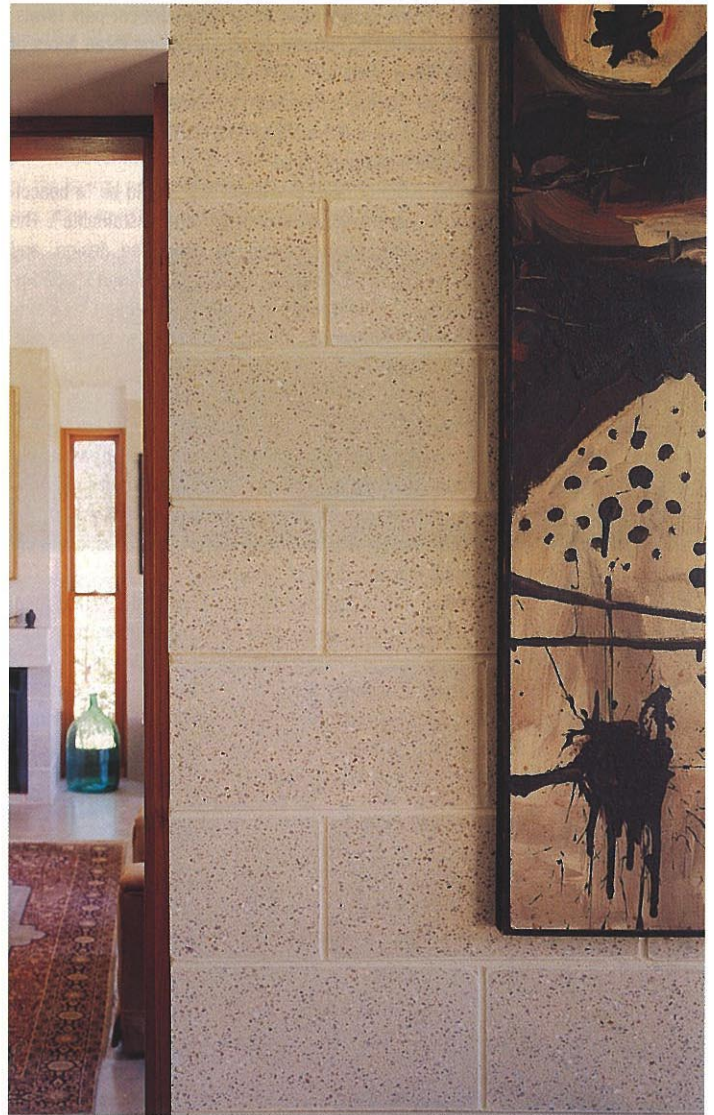
Neil Mackenzie and Heidi Pronk's design has resulted in a series of calm, interconnected rooms that enjoy peaceful views across the paddocks and vines of the berry farm. The designers worked from the inside out, creating a reverse veneer house – one where Boral Designer Block™ in Alabaster and with a Polished Smooth Face finish is used inside for the main north-south walls of the living spaces, as well as externally.

The architects specified the blocks, saying they were ideal for reverse veneer construction because of their thermal mass and structural performance when core filled with concrete. Their size, colour and finish were other characteristics that led to them specifying the Designer Block™.

"The house spaces are structured around a series of parallel, polished masonry blade walls that become both a fine finish to the internal skin of the reverse veneer walls, and elsewhere a high quality external finish," Mr Mackenzie said. "Polished end blocks allow the masonry walls to continue beyond the façades to also structure the immediate landscaped spaces."

Apart from the block walls that extend outside, the exterior is primarily a lightweight skin of painted weatherboard. Extensive use of recycled timbers is a feature of the home, including exposed timber roof members.

Zoning laws did not allow for more than one residence on the property; this however was overcome by linking the original and new homes with a covered walkway, which incorporates a 1500mm high wall on its eastern side, again in Polished Smooth Face blocks.



PROJECT Hatcher House, Alpine Berry Farm, Bowral NSW **ARCHITECT** Mackenzie Pronk Architects **CLIENT** A & D Hatcher **BUILDER** W F Pullan & Sons

PRODUCT Boral Designer Block™ Polished Smooth Face **COLOUR** Alabaster

Additional photography and information on this project is available from PIV Online. Subscribe by visiting www.boral.com.au/piv