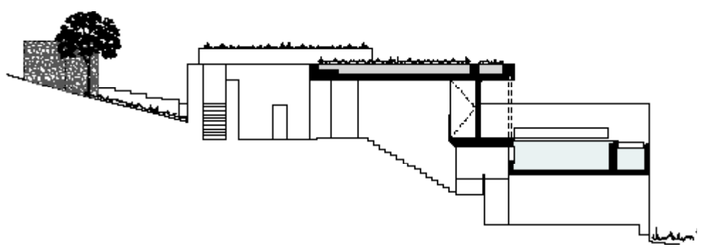
AZURIS
HAMILTON ISLAND, AUSTRALIA

Architect: Renato D'Ettorre Architects
Year of completion: 2011
No. of rooms: 9
Gross floor area/site area: 222 m²/2,336 m²
Luxury features: outdoor terrace pool, private beach, tropical gardens

Azuris, located on Hamilton Island, is a three-bedroom holiday home cascading down a hillside overlooking the Coral Sea. The design responds to three key elements of its island location: light, air and water. The simplicity of Azuris is a tribute to the beauty of its location. The home comprises a series of simple spaces carved out of robust masonry, generating a sense of both weight and lightness, and ensuring longevity and low maintenance in the sub-tropical climate. On approach, the house is visible as a green roof planted with native species, drawing the eye out further to the ocean's horizon beyond. An expansive pool is wrapped around the main pavilion, creating a dramatic design element, vital to introduce water's cooling and visual delight to the interior. The surface of the luxurious pool transfers seamlessly into the horizon with its unique ocean panorama, with other islands and Australia's mainland to the west. The house spans between two dominant painted anthracite-gray side walls for privacy; with the living area, main bedroom and swimming pool at the top, and the guest rooms and an undercover sheltered terrace on the lower story.

The western façade opens up entirely to the view of the ocean, whereas the two side walls and a natural stone wall anchor the building into the slope. The two gray privacy walls and exposed concrete elements blend in with the volcanic rock of the island and the native eucalyptus trees. The courtyard is a quiet contemplative place with a cooling reflection pond with waterlillies. On the lower level directly under the swimming pool are two guest bedrooms with framed views set within deep terraces providing shade from the hot westerly sun. Also a generously proportioned open under-cover living area is shaded throughout the day, ideal for escaping the heat whilst being closer to the natural vegetation and ideal for sunset viewing.

An architectural promenade between the land and the sea.



Architect: Renato D'Ettorre Architects
Year of completion: 2012
No. of rooms: 12
Gross floor area/site area: 371 m²/1,026 m²
Luxury features: outdoor pool, wine cellar, harbor access with private jetty, steam room, cool room, chefs kitchen

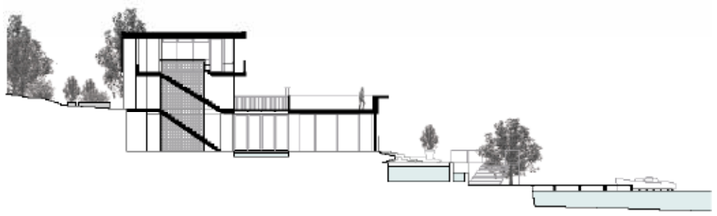
LINK HOUSE
SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA

Located in Sydney and with a challenging 30 degree fall to the east down to the water's edge, the house was built on the existing footprint to maximize the spectacular views of the bay. Divided into two separate pavilions, the buildings are joined at ground level by a glass link over a reflective koi pond and surrounded by an internal courtyard and garden. The design blurs the boundary between inside and out, whilst maintaining a strong distinction between privacy and openness. Glass is the key to refining the rawness of the concrete walls and floors throughout.

The pavilions are designed in the true sense of the word: surrounded by gardens, terraces and breezeways emphasizing the bay environment of sun, air and views. The interior courtyard is the pivotal element of the design. It enables natural light to be introduced to all the main living spaces of the house whilst providing privacy from the surrounding houses. A bespoke pizza oven and built-in teppanyaki BBQ serve this pivotal entertaining area. The link between the pavilions acts as a visual and functional connection to the living pavilion with kitchen, dining and sitting areas, completed with fireplace. The sleeping pavilion, spread over three floors, contains the bedrooms, bathrooms, children's room and media lounge. The use of concrete as the main material was for it's extreme resilience, excellent thermal properties and its textural qualities along with its ready-made finish, largely eliminating the use of renders and paint, as well as giving the surface finishes an instant patina.

The design incorporates a number of passive climate control measures such as thermal mass in the concrete slabs and walls; a 10,000-liter rainwater tank; and a garden roof which further insulates the building below and reduces storm water run-off. Deep overhangs and retractable blinds reduce the summer heat gain, while the impact of cross ventilation is amplified by reducing the building depth by the central courtyard and using bodies of water adjacent living spaces as cooling elements.

Cooling down from Sydney's summer heat has never been so easy.



Solis draws inspiration from its magnificent location and Mediterranean coastal architecture: simple, permeable volumes that open and unfold, capturing distant views of tropical waters and island life. Built over three interlocking levels the design intends to highlight the relationship between the interior and exterior environment and to capture the serenity of the natural surroundings of the built form. Emphasizing the importance of being connected with the island's sub-tropical environment was a key intent of the design. Materials and finishes were kept to a bare minimum so as not to create a sense of excess. The house is mostly seen from the elevated access road and neighboring properties. The small, articulated planted roofs offer an esthetically pleasing profile against the azure ocean and the hardy roof planting contributes to preserving the integrity of the surrounding natural beauty. Terraces are fluid extensions of internal spaces capturing cooling breezes and allowing cross ventilation. The bedroom terraces frame magnificent views of water and gardens, distant lands and the horizon.

SOLIS
HAMILTON ISLAND, AUSTRALIA

Architect: Renato D'Ettorre Architects
Year of completion: 2010
No. of rooms: 12
Gross floor area/site area: 373 m²/2,335 m²
Luxury features: indoor and outdoor swimming pools, tropical gardens, gymnasium, private beach

A main attraction of Hamilton Island is the impressive and colorful coral reefs.

The architecture incorporates a number of passive climate controls, such as deep overhangs that shade the interior, massive concrete walls or green roofs. Combining architectural energy-saving design principles along with material selection removes the need for other finishing trades and materials, requiring very little on-going maintenance, staying resilient to the extreme weather conditions of the tropics and avoiding regular repair and replacement maximizing the building's life span.