

TOP OF THE STATE

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*Qweekend* presents ten homes that, inside and out, typify the very best of Queensland architecture over the past decade.

Some of the most accomplished, beautiful and versatile residential architecture made in Queensland over the past ten years is represented on these pages. Each is inspiring in a different way – some are statements of luxury, such as Renato D’Ettorre’s beautifully sculptural Solis on Hamilton Island, while others, equally intriguing and arresting, are clever explorations of humbler values. Vokes and Peters’ Four Room Cottage began as a tiny worker’s cottage in inner Brisbane’s Red Hill and unfurled into a series of wonderfully crafted rooms and courtyards, with gardens in reach.

Each of these houses shows attention to detail and pure inventiveness. More

importantly, the architects have addressed the needs of clients, and valued their desires and ideas about how they wish to inhabit the spaces. Planchonella House (by Jesse Bennett) and Aperture House (by Jayson and Melissa Blight) both belong to the architects themselves, and in both cases represent a long labour of love in the making.

A common theme in the designs is the importance of the physical context, and of creating ways for inhabitants to live both indoors and out, something we’re happily able to do in Queensland and that influences our architecture accordingly. The indoor-outdoor spaces such as those in James Russell’s Raven Street or Elizabeth Watson Brown’s (now Architectus) playful garden-centric House of Orange are the envy of our southern neighbours.

Who wants walls? Ways of keeping them minimal are becoming more and more inventive, as our architecture embraces elements of what has been developed in South-East Asian buildings for many centuries. Perhaps no-one is

**THIS PAGE** ... COLOURED GLASS AND EXPOSED TIMBER STUDS DEFER TO THE ORIGINAL COTTAGE THAT BECAME ARCHITECT JAMES RUSSELL’S RAVEN STREET HOUSE IN WEST END, INNER BRISBANE.

**OPPOSITE PAGE** ... (CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT) THE ORIGINAL COTTAGE SPACE; EXTERIOR VIEW FROM REAR, THE COLOURED GLASS IS A RUNNING THEME OF LIVING AND SLEEPING QUARTERS ALIKE.





**THIS PAGE ...** (ABOVE LEFT & BELOW) CHARLES WRIGHT DESCRIBES HIS 2014 STAMP HOUSE AS "BOTH BRUTAL AND ELEGANT"; IT HOVERS OVER AND IS REFLECTED IN THE TROPICAL WATERS OF FAR NORTH QUEENSLAND, WITH RAINFOREST BEHIND IT.

(ABOVE RIGHT & BELOW) TWOFOLD STUDIO'S MELISSA BLIGHT AND HUSBAND JAYSON BLIGHT OF COX RAYNER EXTENDED THEIR HIGHGATE HILL (BRISBANE) WORKER'S COTTAGE IN 2013 WITH ROOMS THAT OPEN TO THE GARDEN AND SKY AND ACCOMMODATE THEIR YOUNG FAMILY IN CRAFTED SURROUNDS.



(ABOVE) DONOVAN HILL'S 2007 H HOUSE AT PORTSIDE, INNER-NORTH BRISBANE.  
(BELOW) ELIZABETH WATSON BROWN'S 2008 HOUSE OF ORANGE, BRISBANE'S INNER NORTH.



more attuned to this condition than James Russell, whose fond memories of boating weekends and holidays in Moreton Bay have a role in the planning of many of his buildings.

As in much South-East Asian architecture, the use of water as both an ornamental and cooling device has been adopted cleverly. The beautiful lily ponds and waterfalls in Solis House induce tranquility, while the interior and exterior become almost interchangeable partly through the use of water in Donovan Hill's (now BVN) extraordinary H House.

Sometimes homes need to be battered down, and when Brian Hooper had finished

building Busby Residence on the coast near Yeppoon in Central Queensland, a cyclone soon proved its worth. This very resilient structure taps into a robust and perhaps starker Modernism, using an industrial palette of materials to withstand nature. While many of the buildings here explore the idea of connected pavilions that link into surrounding nature, this house is a deftly composed, open-able box sitting on a wild hill.

Tin and timber still hold their romance for many, but the re-emergence of brick and concrete is clear. These thermally practical materials are wonderfully explored in Aperture house, where new



and old bricks are used in floors and walls in decorative ways, and spill over into the garden. Few of the houses rely on air-conditioning, and it is a common theme to address the extremes of Queensland's climate in clever ways. The quest for sustainability is no longer thought extraordinary, but par for the course.

Many of these houses are concerned to blend into the landscape and surrounds. Kirk's elegant and highly formal shaping of inner Brisbane's Highgate Hill House plays to a similar beat in terms of its slatted timber wrapping. Deeply carved reveals add a sense of restful solemnity and monumental permanence. Charles Wright's Stamp House defiantly and spectacularly stakes its claim amid a gorgeous natural setting in Far North Queensland. This rippling metal object appears to float above the nearby water as if just landed from space. It's an exciting proposition, one that encapsulates where innovative architecture in this state is heading.



**THIS PAGE ... (ABOVE LEFT)** JESSE BENNETT'S 2015 CAIRNS HOME IS NAMED FOR THE PLANCHONELLA TREES OUTSIDE THE WINDOW; (CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE) RICHARD KIRK'S 2007 HIGHGATE HILL HOUSE FORMS A FLOATING PLATFORM OVER STEEP TERRAIN; INTERIORS ARE FINISHED IN TIMBER.

**OPPOSITE PAGE ...** RENATO D'ETTORRE'S 2011 SOLIS HOUSE ON HAMILTON ISLAND USES CONCRETE AND STONE AS SCULPTURAL AESTHETIC ELEMENTS.



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