

FAR NORTH QUEENSLAND



When architect Renato D'Ettoire was commissioned to design a beach shack on a remote island off Far North Queensland, he was struck by the romance of it. "I reworked the idea of the simplicity of a beach shack, and while not making the new shack extravagant in any way, it is certainly more refined," he says.

The owners travel to the island by boat, with the final part of the

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journey in a rubber dinghy. All supplies accompany them for the duration. Quiet relaxation is the order of the day, as is contemplation of the views east across a shallow passage to the forested hillside of a neighbouring island.

The simple plan runs to 100sqm, similar in size to existing shacks on the island. Designed to lock up and leave, rather like a box with fold-down sides, the periphery of

glass and timber can withdraw into pockets as the occupants arrive and open up. Walls disappear and daybeds, large cushions and hammocks spill out onto the sandy edges. A skin of plantation shutters doubles as a privacy screen and ventilated wall, while stone walls constructed from local granite form bookends to the piece.

"The guiding principle was to use glass when it's windy and rainy, and shutters when it's hot," says D'Ettoire.

The rooftop lantern allows for

the expulsion of hot air and some degree of ventilation when the house is effectively transformed into a sealed container.

Materials are natural and, where possible, local. Hardwood timbers and local granite wrap around the concrete base. Stone walls create a solid backdrop for the bedroom and bathroom.

During tropical downpours, water runs off the gutterless roof and surrounds the occupants in a cool waterfall. As D'Ettoire says, "It's an enjoyable moment".



MAGIC BOX... (CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE) PLANTATION SHUTTERS ALTERNATE WITH GLASS ON EITHER SIDE OF THE "SHACK" ACCORDING TO THE WEATHER; THE EXTERIOR VIEW; GRANITE WALLS AT EITHER END AND STONE FLOORING PROVIDE STRUCTURAL BEDROCK.