



# SUBTROPICAL REFUGE

Journey inside a waterfront residence rich with tactile exploration into thresholds and edges

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Cove House by Justin Humphrey Architect permeates a pristine piece of land on the Gold Coast's Sanctuary Cove.

"The home's exploration of threshold and edges enables an immediate and constant connection to landscape and water," Justin Humphrey explains. As the antidote to its owners' busy lives, the home incorporates robust natural materials and central gardens for indoor/outdoor cohesion. These internal garden spaces erase the idea of external thresholds as they function as gateways between the sequence of public and private zones.

Even before you enter Cove House, you feel like you've well and truly arrived. The exterior's off-form concrete wall guides visitors past a timber batten screen and into a succession of courtyards to the enticing water at the rear.

To produce the client's desired house of refuge, the architects have played with proportions and

luxury materials to create an intimate atmosphere where connection to the landscape and water are omnipresent. "The ground plan of the house is articulated and meanders up and down at times, encouraging engagement or reflection," Justin says. "These areas flow together beneath a single floating roofline that helps organise the concrete and timber form of the house below."

Capable of accommodating both small and large gatherings, the high functioning service spaces are connected by pathways that fortify fluidity. "Articulated ground planes and changes in materials elevate areas of daily importance, such as the main bath," BJ Millar Constructions' Brad Millar offers. "The green spine throughout the house demarcates public and private spaces."

The waterfront location, adjacent to an easement, allowed the architects to engage with the surrounding neighbourhood context on three

## DETAILS

**HOUSE** Cove House

**LOCATION**

Hope Island, Qld

**FINAL COST**

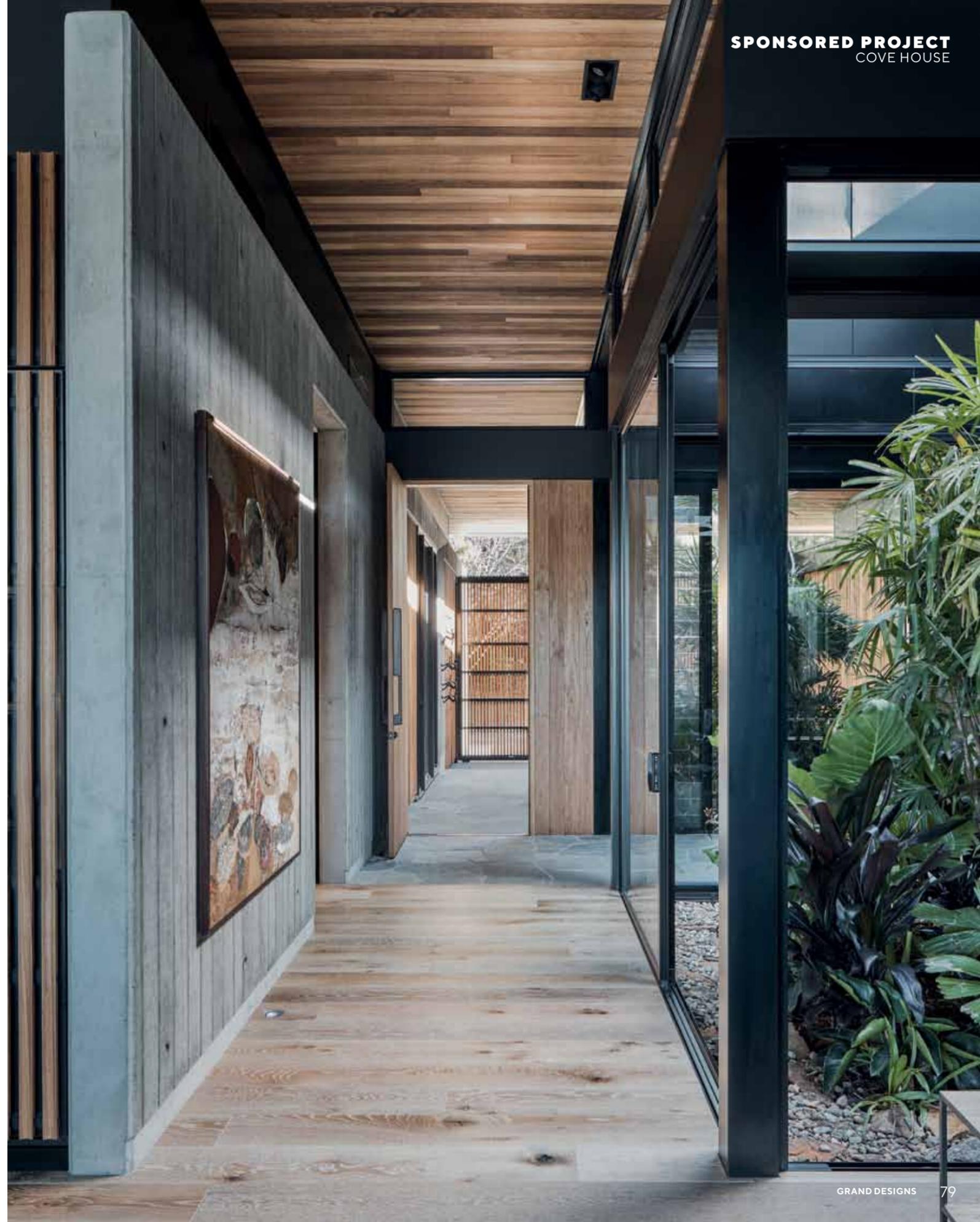
\$3,285,000

**DATE COMMENCED**

April 2017

**DATE COMPLETED**

September 2018





sides. "To challenge existing responses to easement constraints we chose to express and celebrate this edge through a grand tactile gesture — a board formed concrete wall," Justin says. "This beckons engagement and communicates the materiality of the house to passing neighbours."

The garden room is one of the most interesting spaces in the home. "We were able to challenge traditional ideas of security, arrival and enclosure," Justin explains, "and the landscaping acts as a foil between public and private space."

That landscaping is exquisite, minimising the visual scale of the home and refining the structure, while a detailed tapered roofline boosts the horizontal plane.

Cost-saving measures are plentiful within this project, especially when it came to choosing construction methods and materials. In lieu of sandblasted boards, Brad opted for a quicker and easier sheet product to fashion the formwork for the "board-formed" concrete. Likewise, a budget-friendly substitute was used when it came time to install the timber soffits.

A large indoor/outdoor living space is anchored by the deck, firepit and pool, providing hours of reprieve and ample space for the whole family to comfortably cohabit.

Joining the grand master suite is a pair of ensuited guest bedrooms and a home office. The kitchen enjoys a butler's pantry for uncluttered meal preparation, and the deep, rich materials define the home's robust, yet elegant, ambiance.

Abundant passive design inclusions encompass large roof overhangs and lush interior courtyards that virtually vanquish the need for artificial temperature control. Rainwater tanks, 54 solar panels and three Tesla solar battery storage systems allow the house to operate almost completely off the grid.

Dispelling the great divide between indoor and outdoor living spaces, Cove House is a fine example of innovative, considerate architecture that isn't afraid of taking risks.

"There's nothing like this," Brad says. "Everything in this house is custom and it's very much a hand-built house." [bjmillar.com.au](http://bjmillar.com.au)

## PROJECT TEAM

**ARCHITECT/INTERIOR DESIGNER** Justin Humphrey Architect, [justin Humphrey architect.com.au](http://justin Humphrey architect.com.au)

**BUILDER** BJ Millar Constructions, [bjmillar.com.au](http://bjmillar.com.au)

**WE LOVE**  
THE LARGE  
INDOOR/OUTDOOR  
LIVING AREA  
WITH DECK, POOL  
AND FIREPIT

