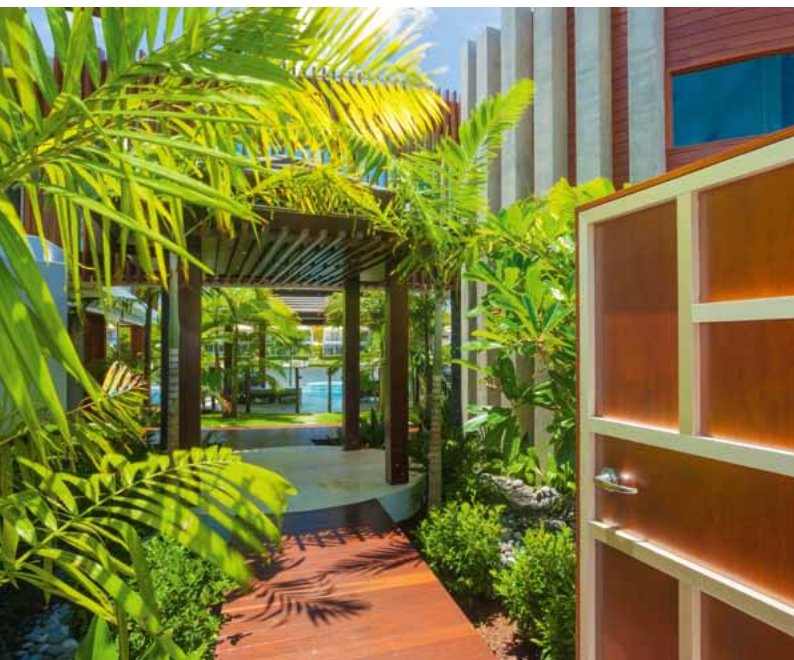
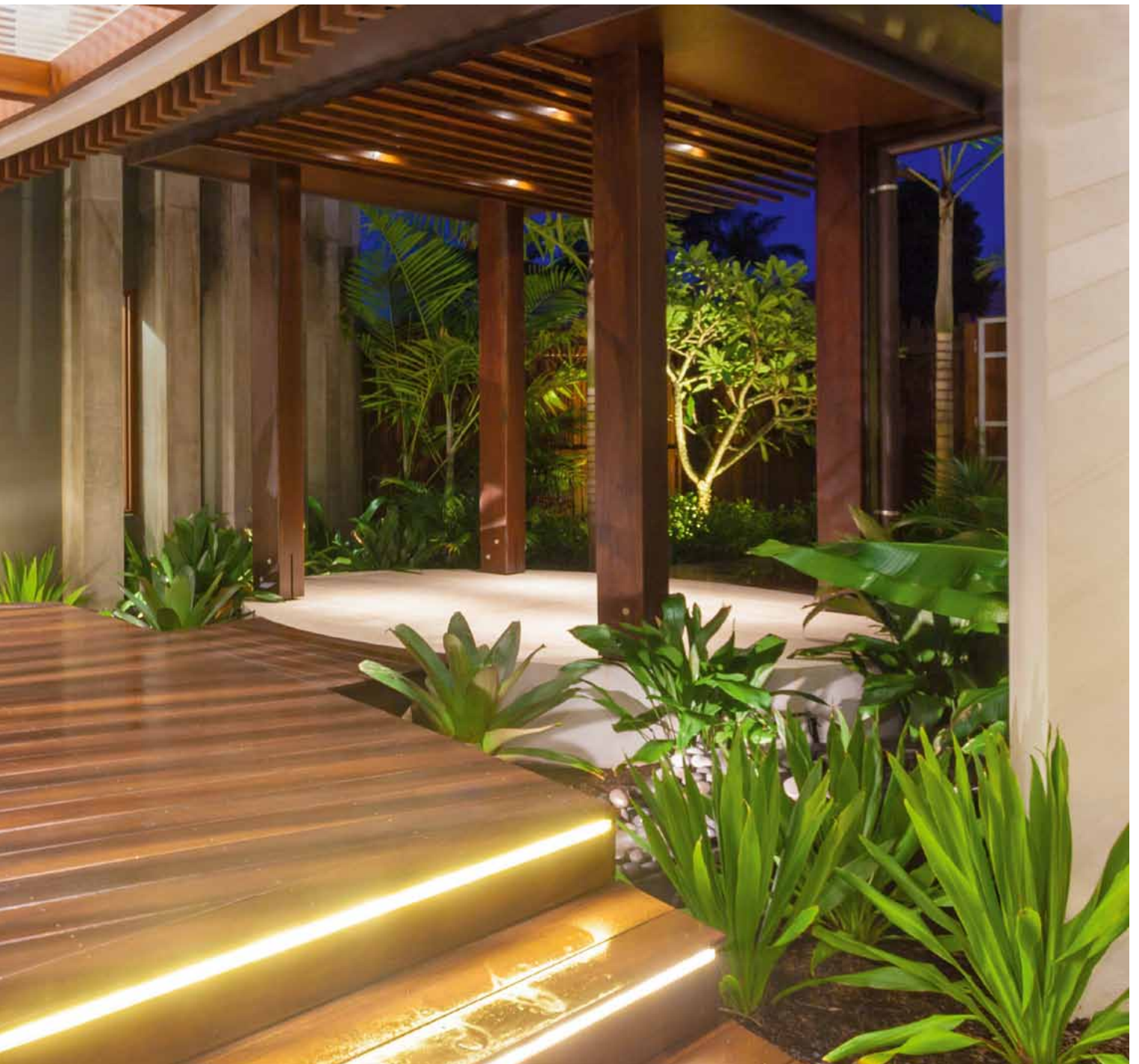




Home for the Holidays

If ever there was a house to typify today's luxurious Queensland style, this is it. Called The Tropical House, it is the latest stunner from Noosa designer, Chris Clout.

WORDS Ann Rickard **PHOTOGRAPHY** Patrick Oberem & Paul Smith Images





Every element of this Noosa Waters home – from the majestic curved facade, through to the internal courtyard where a pavilion and infinity pool take the property right to the edge of the canal - shrieks 'wow factor and then some.'

The Melbourne owners handed over their Noosa holiday-house dreams to Chris Clout with only one request: "Give us a place we can walk into and immediately feel as though we are on holiday in a resort."

Chris needed no further encouragement to design a grand waterfront tropical retreat and to take every advantage of the subtropical Noosa climate.

"They were great clients," Chris said. "They gave us a lot of trust and no restrictions on design. They didn't change anything in the design I presented to them."

Flow and curves, bridges and voids, creeks and rivers, glass and timber... the arresting features are everywhere.

Through the front gate (there is no door), the property opens to a central landscaped courtyard which flows to a circular pavilion with outdoor kitchen, lounge and dining, all jutting over the infinity pool which dips into the canal.



"The house has two separate wings and wraps around the pavilion and pool," Chris said. "It is a design that could be plonked on any island around the world, or on a river. With a triangular-shaped block I was able to give privacy (from neighbours) on either side by creating an open courtyard garden in the middle. When you walk through the gate you are in a retreat."

The pool is a show-stopper. With its central raised, circular acrylic spa (built by Pool Windows) and round timber platforms built into the water to accommodate sun lounges, it is the focus from every area of the house, even across the canal. "Coastal Pacific Pools built the pool," Chris said. "It was important to have round, clean lines along with flowing curvature."

The two wings – on the left, the living wing, on the right, the entertaining wing – are connected across the courtyard by a timber boardwalk. When the large sliding doors are opened and stacked in both wings, the entire house seamlessly melds with the courtyard and garden to further enhance the resort ambience.

In the living wing, the kitchen overlooking the lounge area has all the Chris Clout signature details, including a sleek Caesarstone bench and Japanese-style timber framework on doors, cupboards and set into the bench. A long glass panel behind the stove top lets in light and frames the tropical foliage outside.



Open to the breezes

Wide opening awning windows are a clever way to bring in the breezes and loads of light



There is no internal dining area ("The clients are from Melbourne, they want to live outside" said Chris) but a long living space extending to the canal edge is furnished simply but elegantly with a black and white theme in the sofa, cushions and artwork.

Up a stunning curved timber and steel staircase in the living wing, two bedrooms are separated by a bridge. Fixed glass panels running the length of the bridge flood the space with the sky and light.

Furnishing in all the bedrooms, with their timber vaulted ceilings, has been kept minimal with just custom-made side tables, padded bed heads, chairs, ottomans and lampshades.

The two front bedrooms in both wings project, unsupported, from the house, giving the impression of floating over the canal. The bedrooms in the entertainment wing mirror those in the living wing, making four private, self-contained bedrooms, and giving the owners the ability to share the house with friends.

The marble bathrooms feature white accessories and floating mirrors in front of windows with tropical greenery.

The curved timber board walk downstairs connecting the two wings is mirrored above with a dramatic curved glass floor. Over the entry point of the house below it links the two bedroom wings upstairs.

"We originally had a front door below but it would have blocked the open feel, so we just put in a gate and put the glass floor above it to create a wow effect between the two wings," Chris said.

Builder Chris Smith of Chris Smith Constructions worked for 12 months on the project and formed a friendship with the owners.

"The layout works so well with all living in the centre of the home," he said. "It was amazing to work on something different to the usual architecture in Noosa. The curves and panels gave us lots of challenges but it was worth it."

Extensive use of spotted gum gives the house warmth. The mass of glass – in the louvres, stacker doors, awning windows and panels – brings the Noosa light into every corner.

Concrete pillars add interest, and although every element of the property is elegant and eye-catching, there is an air of uncluttered restraint which allows the tropical design to star.



Pool Party!

Everything you'd need for a memorable pool party is right on hand.



External and internal lighting showcases the house, gardens and pool so the property becomes a romantic wonderland every evening.

Water has always been a vital element in Chris Clout's designs and it features in cascading falls, flowing 'rivers' and of course, the pool. Lighting is also a vital element. External and internal lighting showcases the house, gardens and pool so the property becomes a romantic wonderland every evening.

Chris Clout's ground-breaking designs have caught the eye of television producers in the US and he has just finished filming a program entitled *Amazing Water Homes* to air in America on cable channel HGTV (Home and Garden TV.)

"The show will feature three of my designs: River House, Saltwater House and Tropical House," Chris said. "It's a very popular channel in

America and they mostly feature big Hollywood and Vegas homes. The research team found me, contacted me, said they had never filmed outside America before but wanted to include me."

The US filming was followed by the filming of *Sandcastles*, a property program for Australian television.

"*Sandcastles* is an architect-based show and when the people contacted me I told them I was not an architect but a building designer. They said they didn't care; they loved my work and wanted to feature it. Both the Australian and US shows will also feature Noosa so it will be good for tourism and local businesses."

You could say Chris Clout was a winner – all this and he has just turned 30.