



Island Time

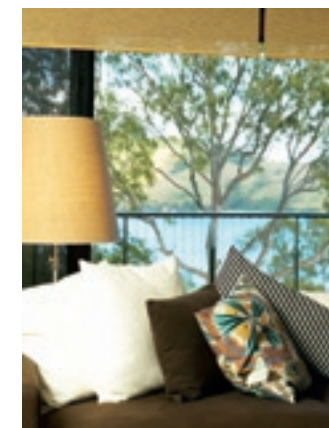
Natural materials and a striking colour scheme ensure this Hamilton Island retreat gives kudos to its magnificent views.

SYDNEY-BASED INTERIOR DESIGNER Heather Buttrose can't see any one thing that she likes in this North Queensland home. Instead, she likes clusters of things: colours, materials, combinations and styles. "I quite like the interesting combinations in this home, for example, the collections of fabrics and subtle colours against one another. For me, there's no particular stand-out piece, but each piece is comfortable and contributes to the eclectic mix" she muses. "All the items and furnishings work together to personalise each area."

The designer is speaking on the phone from her southern office, early one Monday morning. She is lovely to talk to, with a soothing bedtime-story voice ... an unexpected treat for the beginning of the week. Heather works with a dedicated team, and often uses

the term "we" instead of "I" when she answers. "We wanted this home to be a treat, and a retreat. We think it works for what it's designed for." Her responses are calm, considered and thoughtful – arguably the very traits that define her interior design in this sublime holiday home.

Located on Hamilton Island, the owners wanted this home to be designed as a holiday destination. "It's an Australian take on tropical island architecture" say the owners, who worked with award-winning architect Chris Beckingham, and master builder Wayne Orenshaw. "We're really happy with the integration of the design with the natural environment, and the quality of the carpentry work is top notch." Hassle-free from go to whoa, their advice for people embarking on



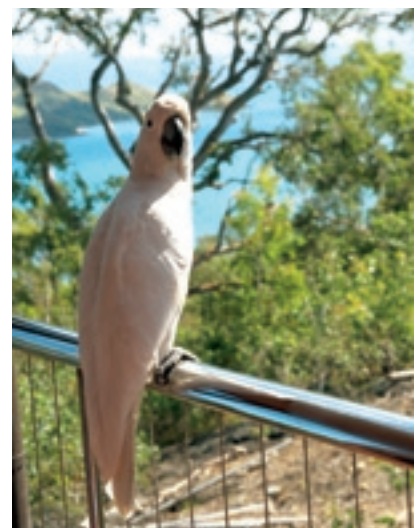
a similar project is to "pick good people to work with, and then let them get on with it."

Intended to make the most out of barefoot luxury, the home entwines style and comfort, while fronting up to the weather of the far north. "The climate up here is humid and warm" explains Heather. "A lot of the time, it's great holiday weather, but the tropics can also be quite stormy and exciting."

With this in mind, her choice of materials throughout the home work with – instead of against – the tropical climate. "In this hot climate I've used natural fibres that breathe, like linens and cottons. The colours in each area denote which fabric we've used. We tried to work with the surrounding environment, the colours outside." Her use of fabrics in the sitting room exhibits this ethos, with a cotton and viscose blend sofa in chocolate brown, decorated by Missoni

pattern cushions. The dynamic of the room pulls together, offset by round, decorative urns, and a quirky bean-shaped glass coffee tables by Noguchi.

Bi-fold doors open onto a spacious verandah, where there's enough room for you to catch your breath from 'that view'. Luminous water, framed by tinges of green characterise the surrounding Whitsunday Islands. "We didn't want inside to be bright" confirms Heather. "The light on the island is bright and fresh and colourful enough. Inside, we wanted a subdued palette; a cool escape from the heat of the day." A polished collection of browns, taupe, beige and black – with the occasional, surprising splash of blue – achieves her and the owner's vision. "We wanted people to look out and enjoy the day from the comforts of inside, without being distracted by the colour scheme. We've opted to anchor the home using slightly darker colours."



It can take a second glance to recognise the occasional streaks of brilliant blue, playfully placed throughout in the form of rugs, outdoor settings and stools. "We felt that the splashes of blue added a highlight to the home" says Heather. "It's a mellow, coastal colour and reflects the beautiful Hamilton Island sky."

The crisp and bright natural views of the island certainly differ from the towering lights of Sydney city, but Heather takes it all in her stride. "The owners had seen our work in Sydney, and asked us to become involved in their property up north" speaking earnestly, she continues. "We look at every job as an individual style, and try very hard to actually bring the client's personality into the interior design, rather than our image." As she explains this makes things

"more fun for us as designers. It means we get to tackle new, different things."

Like the interior design equivalent of playing dress ups, Heather clearly enjoys the challenge of creating different moods for her clients. "This home is very comfortable" she says, "but it is individual and luxurious. It's understated luxury, which evokes a sense of calm." The owners agree, adding that the home "feels like it belongs here. It captures the peace and beauty of the Whitsundays without interrupting the natural environment."

Text Lisette Ogg Photography Mike Lyon