

# TASMANIAN *life*

TASMANIA'S OWN LIFESTYLE MAGAZINE

\$8.80 INCL GST  
MAY/JUNE 07

*Unearthing the secrets of*  
**Hillcrest**

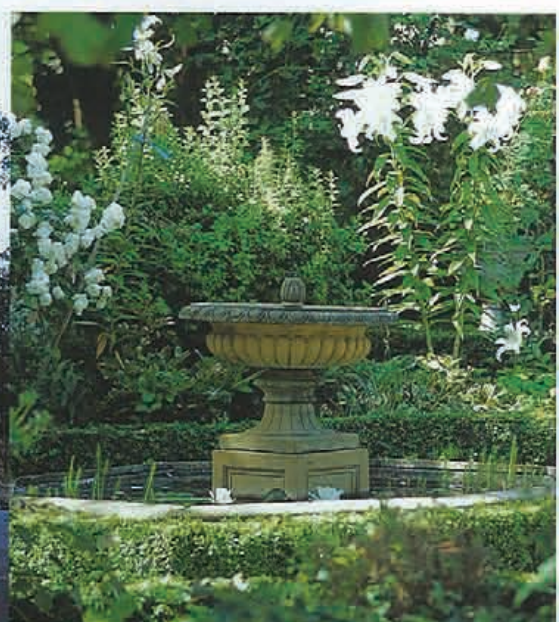


Comfort Food: She'll be  
**APPLES!**

WHEN FAMILIES  
MEAN BUSINESS

**6** of the  
**BEST**

Golfing in Tasmania



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As one of Tasmania's most respected literary figures and a public antagonist of the State government, Richard Flanagan's reputation extends beyond his pen. In this interview, the author talks about his third novel, *The Unknown Terrorist*, and reveals how he feels about his home State. "I just happen to live in a place where there are a terrible lot of wrong things going on and if a writer doesn't have the courage to speak the truth about them, how can you expect anyone else to?," he says.

## 28 **Unearthing the secrets of Hillcrest**

For Andrew and Loretta Thompson, researching the history of their gothic Victorian home, *Hillcrest*, has been a source of great joy which has led to many fascinating discoveries. The Hobart landmark, originally a humble cottage, has experienced numerous makeovers by different owners.

## 44 **Our fabulous fairways**

Tasmania represents a golfers' paradise. It is home to Barnbougle, one of the finest golf links courses in the world, has more courses per head of population and a greater variety than anywhere else in Australia, some say the world. The future is bright, with a host of new residential golf courses under development. Here, we preview six of the best courses in the State.

## 50 **The secret garden**

*Valleyfield* at Broadmarsh is an English oasis at odds with its surrounding farming landscape. Inspired by a visit to England in 1994, Susan Jones has created a carefully constructed landscape made up of a series of views. Picture gardens formed by well-trimmed box hedges are connected by dark green lawns, and feature a profusion of white, cream and palest pink roses, Oriental lilies, hydrangeas, hellebores and euphorbia.

## 56 **Family ties**

In a State such as Tasmania, where small businesses employ 80 per cent of Tasmanians, family businesses have an important role to play. We profile four such businesses – a father and son, mother and daughter, father and daughter and mother and son – to determine how they work, and what makes them successful. "If there is a serious problem with family relationships as a result of business, then business must come second. Our family is very strong," says Nick Cretan, who heads up Kriticos Nominees Pty Ltd.

## 72 **The apple isle**

Karen Goodwin-Roberts re-introduces us to a family favourite in the cooking pages: the apple, in many different guises. There are recipes for baked apples, apple pancakes, waldorf salad, chorizo in cider, apple tart with ginger custard, and braised red cabbage with apples.

## 78 **Restaurant reviews**

Restaurant and wine writer Tony Walker deems Angasi restaurant at Binalong Bay on the East coast "a regional star", and enjoys the fresh seasonal produce at North Hobart restaurant, Amulet. Standout meals include the honey soy roasted duck breast served in its own stock sauce with a shredded duck, bok choy and sweet corn tart at Angasi, and Amulet's grilled spring lamb fillets with roasted eggplant, Cannelini beans and a Bruny Island Cheese Company "ODO" tart.

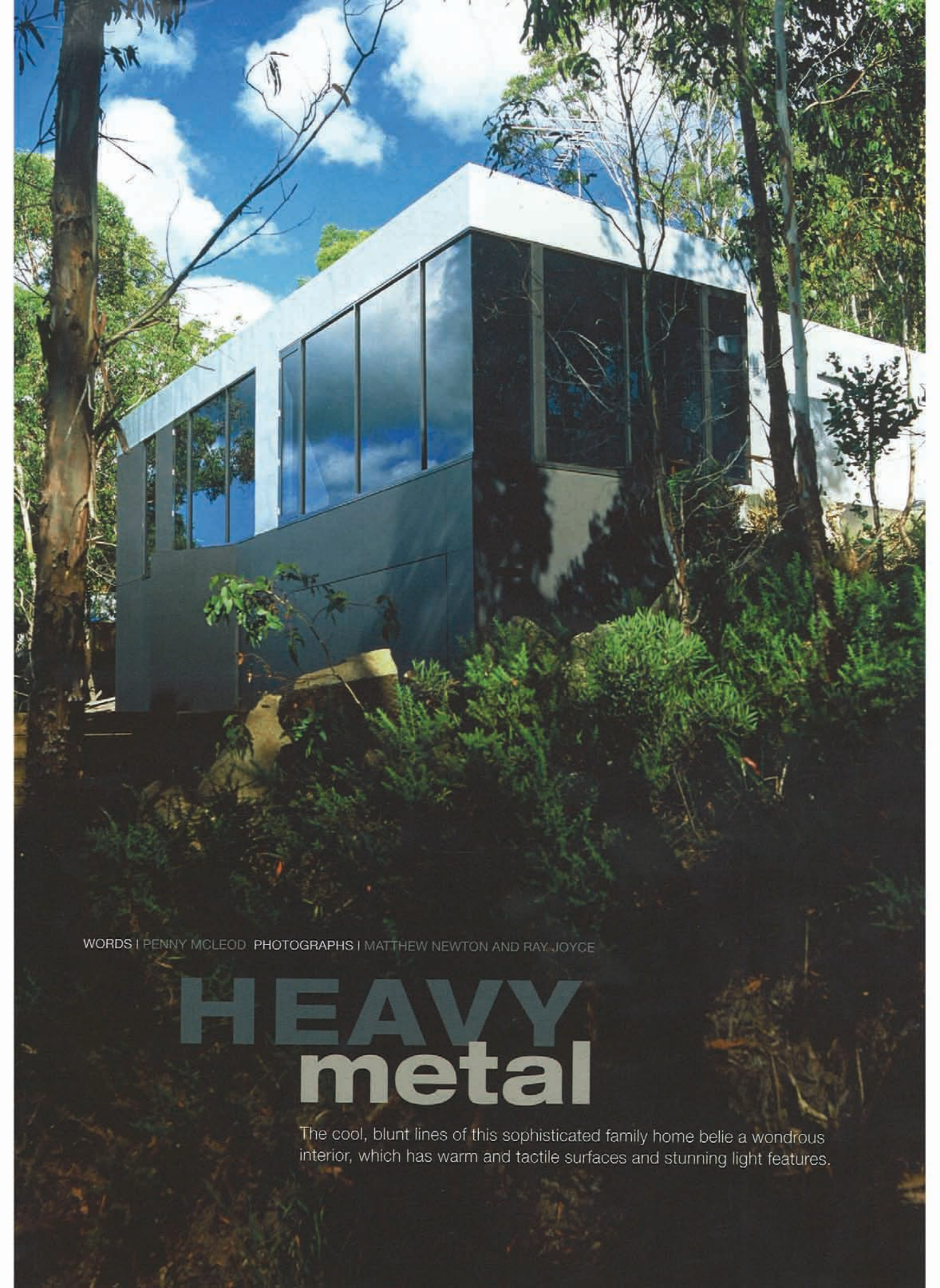
## 84 **State of design**

Tasmania has a reputation for design excellence and fine craftsmanship, forged partly by growing exhibition opportunities and historical factors. Several important exhibitions open shortly, including *Design Island* in Hobart and Launceston, *Nourish* at CAST gallery, Hobart, and *Singular and Multiple: New Jewellery from Tasmania* at the Henry Jones Art Hotel, Hobart.

### THE COVER

The entrance hall at *Hillcrest*  
Photograph by Richard Eastwood





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# HEAVY metal

The cool, blunt lines of this sophisticated family home belie a wondrous interior, which has warm and tactile surfaces and stunning light features.

*The nondescript front door could easily be mistaken for a storage porthole.*



*The dining room and casual living area open to an outdoor courtyard.*



*A striking light shaft is lined in red stained plywood.*

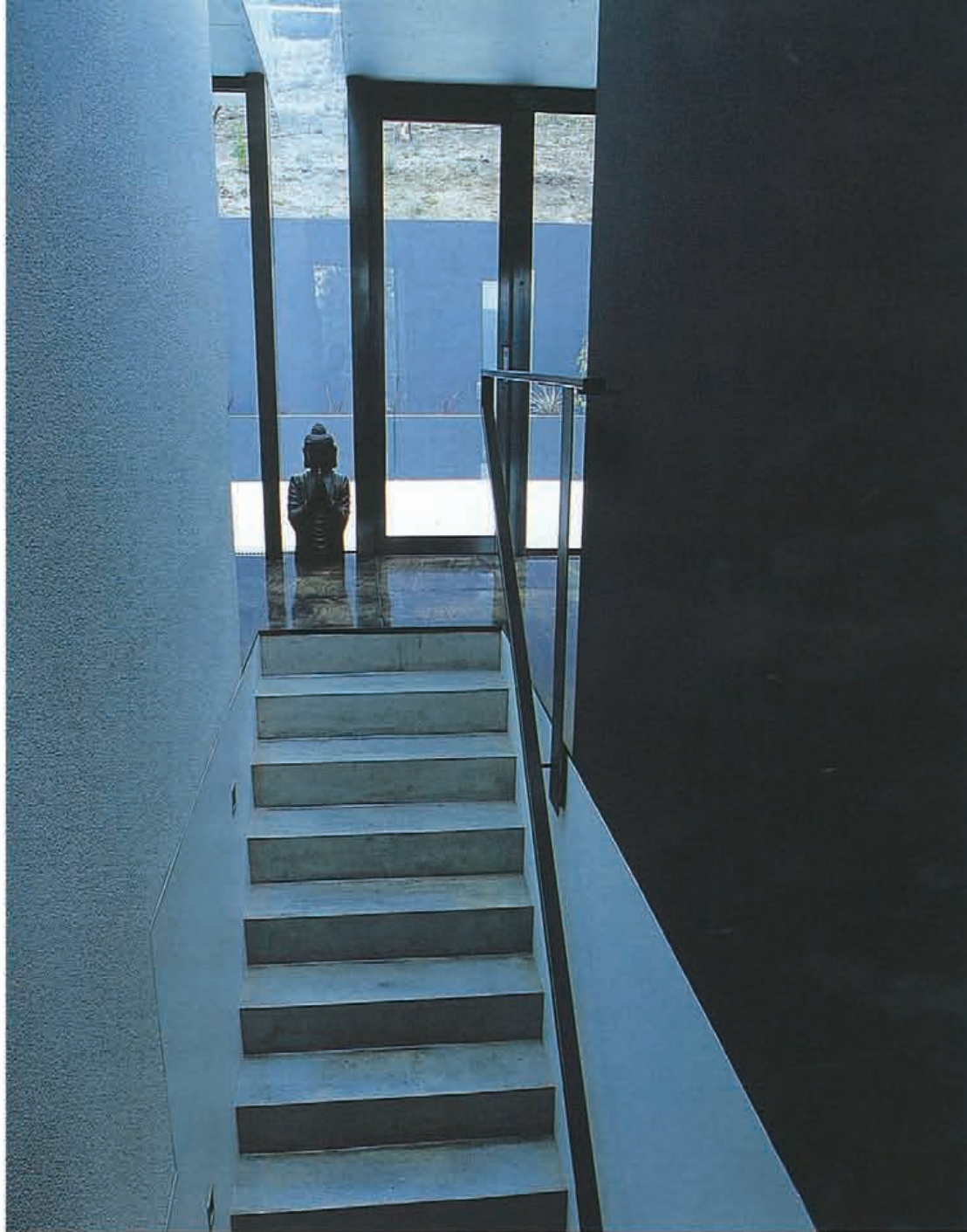


**M**ARIA AND ROLFE BRIMFIELD WANTED A HOUSE WITH AN industrial feel – one that had clean lines, lots of metal and sharp surfaces. When they couldn't find what they were looking for, they decided to build it. "It was mostly a case of seeing the block of land and knowing it was a good opportunity," says Rolfe.

The couple settled on a steep, south-facing bush site in West Hobart, with sweeping views of the city, and briefed Hobart architects, Terroir, on the look and feel they were after. The result of the collaboration is a home that's defined by contrasts: industrial and intimate; cool and warm; state-of-the-art and homely. "I don't think it's everyone's cup of tea," says Maria, "but I don't care. At the end of the day, we built it for us and we love it."

Since its completion just over a year ago, the three bedroom, one bathroom home has been acclaimed in local and national design awards. It won the Best of State award for residential interior design in the 2006 Interior Design Awards, and was awarded for its innovative use of steel in the 2006 HIA and CSR Housing Awards. It was recognised for the way it "challenged conventional thinking when it came to product selection and material use", and deemed "one of the finest examples of a joinery-like approach with steel taken on a comprehensive scale to the total building project".

"This was a departure from our previous work (Peppermint Bay, Cataract Kiosk)," says Terroir architect Scott Balmforth. "This was more about the path through the house; about creating a wondrous interior within an otherwise very blunt exterior."



*The central stairway leads from the front door on the ground level to all of the living areas on the first level.*

Rolfe and Maria were confident the architects would do a good job. "It was very much a trust thing," says Rolfe. "We knew they would come up with something good because we had worked with them on two other occasions."

Terroir designed the interior of Maria's business, Sugo café, in Salamanca, five years ago. Happy with the result, the Brimfields were prepared to take more risks and experiment with materials, such as flat Zinalume wall sheeting – a metal usually used as an external roof and wall cladding, but used in this case as an internal ceiling and wall lining. Says Rolfe: "The idea came from our original brief about incorporating metallic surfaces. But as far as we're aware, using flat Zinalume sheet in this way has never been done before. We really weren't sure about it, but then we thought, let's just do it."

The architects trialed the Zinalume for a month on a temporary wall inside the house while it was being built, to see how it looked and worked. "It was a real challenge for the builder," says Rolfe. "But it will never wear and we don't have to paint it. It's a neutral, liveable colour."

Other features include dark stained plywood flooring and joinery. The house also carries no cornices, few skirtings and no architraves. "We've used traditionally external finishings on the inside of the house. The architects talked about the walls outside coming in. The texture of the ceiling and the walls is the same outside," says Rolfe.

Attention to detail and tactile finishings have resulted in a house that is homely, despite first impressions. Seen from the street, the house resembles a cool grey minimalist cube,



*Floor to ceiling windows in the formal living area help create a feeling of space.*





"It has a very stark, cold look on the outside but the interior has warmth; it almost has a totally different feel on the inside. It's a paradox in that way."

at odds with its rustic bush setting. A nondescript front door, which could easily be mistaken for a storage porthole, accentuates the sleekness of the industrial façade. The angular lines and subdued colours are replicated inside. Yet here the effect is enticing. This ultra-modern family home has been carefully designed to create intimate, warm and liveable spaces. Says Rolfe: "It has a very stark, cold look on the outside but the interior has warmth; it almost has a totally different feel on the inside. It's a paradox in that way."

Design always came first, even over materials. "We had our budget and had to compromise on a fair bit. For example, we couldn't have a concrete floor because suspended concrete is very expensive. But generally, we compromised on materials as opposed to the actual design of the house and the features within it," says Rolfe.

The house has been built over two levels. A steep, narrow stairway leads from the front door on the ground level, which houses a large storage area (potentially a fourth bedroom) and double garage, to all of the living areas on the first level. This includes a formal and casual living room, study, bedrooms, utilities and services, and the kitchen and dining room which open to an outdoor courtyard that runs the full length of the house. The house, which is 247 square

metres (excluding the deck and courtyard), appears larger than it is. "We didn't want large bedrooms and we didn't want to waste space," says Maria. "We are a family and we work all the time, so when we come home we want to see each other."

There are metallic finishings throughout the house. In the kitchen, the dark plywood cupboards appear to have a metallic finish and a metal balustrade, which runs the length of the central staircase, has been allowed to rust naturally. A Zinalume feature wall forms one side of a light shaft in the formal lounge room and is adorned with kids' magnets.

Other than some Asian artifacts and sculptures, there are very few decorations or paintings. "It's hard to decorate the house. That's why we haven't hung many pictures on the walls – they're interesting in themselves, they don't need anything on them," says Maria. Instead, the windows "are like paintings": small rectangular slots in the bedrooms and large floor-to-ceiling panels in the living areas frame the views from each room.

The windows also bring the outside in and help create a feeling of space. Says Rolfe: "We feel like we're sitting on the edge of a cliff when we're in the main living area. One of the things that was important to





*Dark stained plywood flooring and joinery are a feature of the kitchen.*

me was to try to maximise access to Mount Wellington ... We also wanted to make sure we maximised the light, because we're on a south-facing block."

One of Maria's favourite features is a rectangular roof light that runs the length of the staircase, separating the dining area and second lounge room, and down the rear wall, creating a waterfall effect when it rains. There's also a skylight above a generous, walk-in shower in the warm, coffee-toned bathroom. "It wasn't until we moved in that we started to appreciate certain design features, such as the light trap in the toilet," says Rolfe. "Although there's no window in the toilet, it's illuminated by the bathroom skylight, which is visible through a glass section of the wall between the two rooms."

The most striking light shaft, however, is the one that divides the lounge room and study, and throws light into the entrance way at the foot of the house. It resembles a large chimney, and is lined in red stained plywood. The splash of colour is a nice touch amid the dark furnishings. "The original intention was to have the concrete stairs stained in red as well. From our point of view, we wanted a splash of colour because everything is neutral, dark colours. This provided a nice contrast," says Rolfe.

Clever design also extends to the most basic requirement: good storage. In the kitchen, the pantry and refrigerator are hidden away in an area that includes a microwave, coffee-maker and kettle, and there are floor-to-ceiling cupboards in the study which also act as sound-proof room dividers. This area, which has sweeping views of Hobart, doubles as a kids' retreat, with lots of room for a computer, books, magazines and games. "It's where our son Fabian spends most of his time. And it's where all of [our other son] Daniel's books are so it works well from that point of view too. It's really a library and a quiet space."

It's a functional room that's both state-of-the-art and homely, just like the house itself. ■