

WHERE LIGHT AND LINES MEET

WHEN ARCHITECT SALLY DRAPER OF SWANEY DRAPER architects received the brief to create a home in Ovens Valley, Bright, Victoria, she felt it was meant to be. The all-Australian new home, located on a farm, was to centre on two old tobacco-drying kilns, made from corrugated iron, that date from the early 1960s. “I had so often driven past them, marvelled at their design, and thought they’d translate into a fantastic domestic space,” she explains. The brief from Sally’s client was flexible: just incorporate the kilns into the building, separate adults’ spaces from children’s and make the most of a breathtaking setting: overlooking the owners’ vineyard and Alpine Angus cattle stud, and towards snow-capped Mount Buffalo. Draper’s response was to create a glazed, lineal space built using cedar battens on fibre cement sheet and housing three bedrooms, bathrooms and a kitchen. This strip runs behind the kilns but serves, too, as a corridor connecting them. The kilns themselves were to be transformed into an adult living room and a teenagers’ den respectively. “I was intrigued with the idea of creating a space that truly interacts with the landscape here, where different view points are offered from the different spaces. So often, in this sort of setting, it’s tempting to create what can be little more than a viewing platform,

but the flow of this building means you’re occupying the space in a more complex, fragmented way.” In the adults’ kiln, hoop pine-faced plywood was used to cover the walls and high ceiling of the room, adding warmth and rich texture. Views are emphasised by framing the windows in a darker brush box wood, while black butt timber covers the floor. “The aim was to allow the scale of the room – five metres high at its apex with the roof – the views and the colour palette to combine, creating a contemplative space,” says Sally Draper. Windows in the roof, plus louvred windows lower down on the east and western walls, allow cross-ventilation, while a slow combustion stove kicks out heat in winter. Russell Grainger was the interior designer responsible for ensuring that furniture and ambience merged with the house’s structure and design, and the changing colours of the seasons. For Jim and Clare Delany and their three adult children, the house provides both an ideal retreat – Jim grew up locally, and is passionate about Angus cattle, farming and being able to return to his roots – and an additional revenue stream as a rental property. Says Clare Delany, “The Kilnhouse always instils a sense of calm in us, perhaps because of the simple, strong lines within the house and the sense of space, both inside the kilns and looking out to the mountains and vineyard. It’s a building that manages to be both sophisticated and welcoming.”

