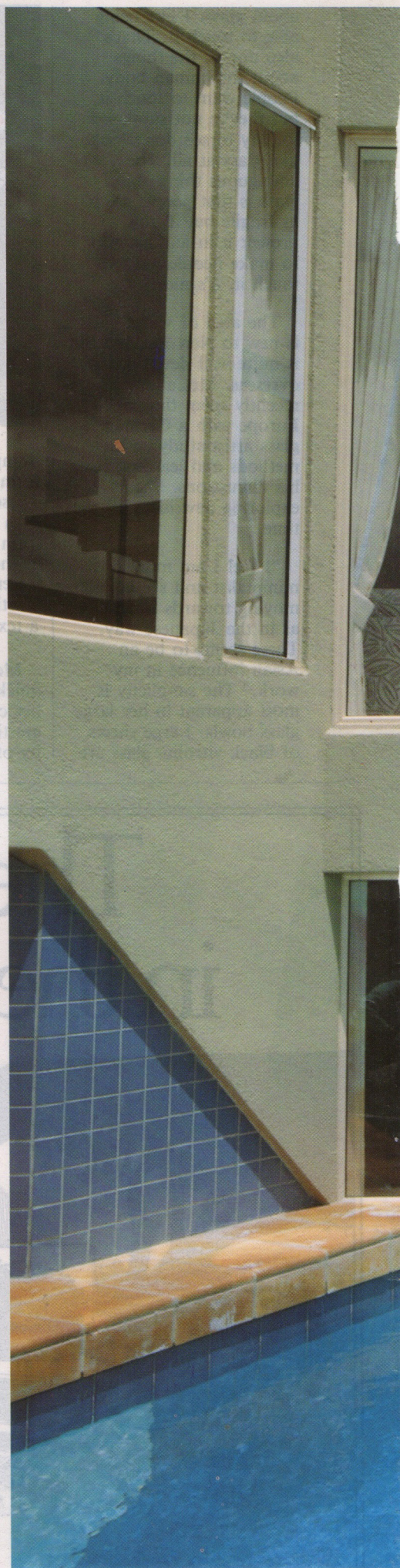


JAGGED EDGE

A clear architectural concept based on a beach theme gives strong direction to the overall design of this unusually angular home.

Above: Angles and windows in the dining room ceiling create shadow and light to emphasise the structure.

Opposite: Jagged lines in the swimming pool pick up on the architectural theme.



Text: Vicki Holder. Photography: John Pettitt.



Opposite: The atrium in the middle of the house allows light to enter all rooms. Above: Sliding shutters can be adjusted to filter light at different times of the day.

Like a jagged rock jutting out of the sand, this Takapuna home appears to grow out of its beachfront site. Strong rock shapes seen on the beach inspired Neil Simmons' initial concept and influenced all other details in the angles, textures and shadowplay which distinguish the house. Throughout, the house is rich with images that reinforce its harmonious relationship with the seaside.

Architect Lynda Simmons who was responsible for executing the design concept has made walls thicker than usual to give a feeling of permanence. Angles, recesses and jagged holes in fibrous plaster wall surfaces and cabinetry create a sculptural look. For example, an extra angular wall leading from the dining room into the kitchen has no function, but "it works well spatially", creating movement and interest.

Because of the shape of the long, thin site, the owners wanted an atrium dividing adult living areas on the beachside and children's areas to the rear, that would let light enter all rooms. To affirm the relationship of the house with the beach, Simmons wanted a flowing movement curving from

the entrance behind the house, through the atrium, out to the sea at the front. A jagged concrete wall along the driveway is reminiscent of rock outcrops and these are repeated in sandblasted glass at the main entrance.

A long thin blue swimming pool which laps against the downstairs windows continues the movement towards the sea. The pool ends in a waterfall washing smoothly down into a smaller pool. Viewed from across the swimming pool the structure of the house appears to rise up out of the sea like a massed rock form.

Barriers between the indoors and outdoors are subtle in this house designed for sun and light. The double height atrium, with its space frame which extends outside, is the central focus to which every room relates. Fully glazed on the northern side, it provides a courtyard effect. Simmons' passion for Italian architecture gives rise to a classical colonnade separating the children's area from the atrium. Columns delineating the adult area are integrated into a wall, but their shapes remain visible. Rooms look onto the atrium through large windows which can be closed off by



Above: Wrought iron furniture was specially designed to suit the taste of one of the daughters.

insulated cedar shutters to retain warmth if necessary.

A round-table meeting of designers to coordinate all decisions which affected the look of the house both inside and out took place before construction started. Colours were influenced by the blue of the sea and swimming pool.

Interior designer Trish McKay says Simmons set clear guidelines in her architectural theme which dominates the overall design. "Every idea came from the architecture and is there as part of the total design. There is nothing haphazard which meant my direction was chosen for me. My job was therefore a lot easier."

Simmons did not want round forms and was keen on sharp angles so McKay introduced angles to compete rather than compete with the architecture. For example, glass on the angular travertine coffee table in the lounge is slashed in a similar fashion to the mantelpiece opposite.

Colours in the atrium and upstairs are deliberately subdued so as not to clash with the architecture. However, downstairs the

entertainment area is a riot of colour with flashing neon lighting, influenced by a hot pink Ford Thunderbird jukebox. Walls are airbrushed with 10 colours gradually becoming brighter with oranges and pinks as you move from the subtle green atrium towards the jukebox. McKay explains: "It was important to make a feature of this piece. The room will grow and always have music, excitement and hype."

McKay consulted each of the three daughters to give them bedrooms which are custom designed to suit incredibly different tastes. One wanted slightly ethnic but romantic; another wanted totally funky modern with walls the colour of sun-burst and the third went for a traditional look.

This dedicated design team extended the clients well beyond their expectations to attain a comfortable yet stimulating home. The designers have gone to great lengths to ensure every family member is completely satisfied with their own special part of the home, as well as shared areas. Yet a strong architectural concept gives cohesion to the whole.