

01 The steeply pitched skillion roof turns away from the two-storey western neighbour to greet visitors at the street.

# Humble HOUSE by Coy Yiontis Architects

• BELLARINE PENINSULA, VIC •

This house near the sea is a site-responsive, highly liveable contemporary home for a mature couple to enjoy into their retirement.

Words by Ella Leoncio  
Photography by Tatjana Plitt





**02** Objects from the homeowners' past, such as the painted rowing oars, were planned for in the new space. Artwork: Nicolas Dillon.

**03** The kitchen's highlight windows are located close to the apex, welcoming light but not overlooking. Artwork: Vija, *Diamond Firetails in Summer Grasses*, print 1 of 10.

Coy Yiontis Architects' Humble House is a seaside home designed for a mature couple downsizing from a grand heritage farmhouse. The new house is, by contrast, a decidedly contemporary piece of architecture that has largely been driven by the site conditions. Although contemporary, the design is laced with elements of the family history. With the clients' lifestyle and future planning in mind, Coy Yiontis has designed a highly liveable new home.

Architecturally, the most striking aspect of the house is its dynamic, steeply pitched skillion roof, which greets visitors at the street. The form was driven by the desire to turn away from the two-storey western neighbour, which looms close and heavy at the site's boundary. With the threat of both overshadowing and overlooking, Coy Yiontis arranged the plan along the west boundary, essentially creating a wall of built mass. The garden has been located to the east, with bedrooms and living spaces orientated toward this rear courtyard space. The main living space is a flat-roofed structure that

folds out from the side of the skillion roof form. With full-height glazing facing both the north rear courtyard and the south front yard, the living space can be opened up completely on both sides, or extended to either the north or south to suit varying weather conditions.

Aside from shielding the new home from the western neighbour, the steep roof form creates generous ceiling volumes internally. Through the use of highlight windows located close to the apex, abundant light spills down into the main entry and above the kitchen, without inviting overlooking.

Given the desire to accommodate the couple into their old age, the house is a single storey, with the internal spaces and garden at one continuous level and no steps. The natural ground line slopes up toward the rear boundary so the garden is slightly depressed, allowing a terraced garden bed at the rear. The vegetable patch is tiered at varying levels, providing ease of maintenance as well as creating a spatially rich outdoor room at the back of the property.

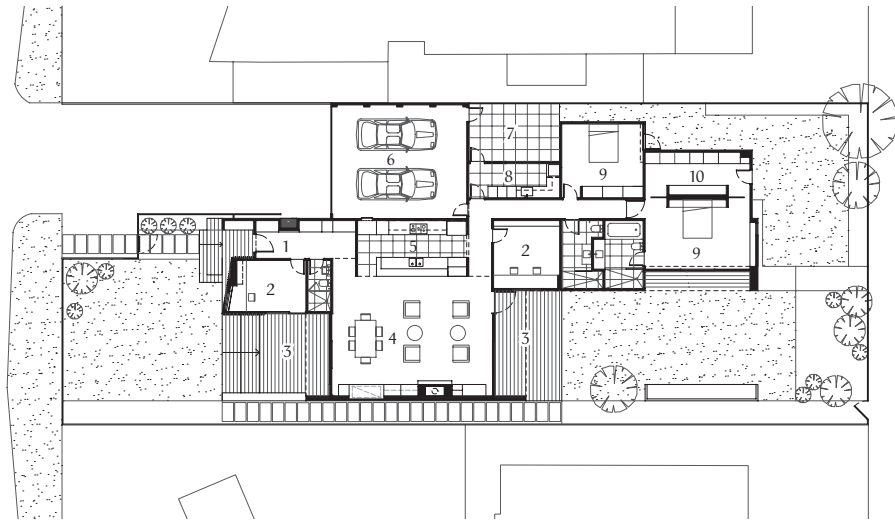






**04** Should the couple ever require a live-in carer, this study doubles as a guestroom with a bathroom nearby.

**05** Internal spaces and gardens are planned at one continuous level to avoid the need for steps.



- 1 Entry
- 2 Study
- 3 Deck
- 4 Dining/living
- 5 Kitchen
- 6 Garage
- 7 Courtyard
- 8 Laundry
- 9 Bedroom
- 10 Walk-in robe

0 5 m

**Plan 1:400**

For the owners, it's the easy liveability that resonates strongly. The house has been designed with their daily rituals, comfort and ease of maintenance in mind. Firstly, there are the usual mod cons like hydronic heating and motorized blinds, which have been a luxury for the owners after living in the old homestead. More important, however, are the little moments throughout the house that speak directly to the way they live. A bench seat is located at the front door for removing dirty boots before entering the home after a visit to the farm. An outdoor shower has been located near the garage to wash sand off after their regular beach visits. A secret door in the garage allows the owners to dump their grocery shopping directly into the pantry from the garage. Elements like this reflect and accommodate how the couple lives day-to-day.

The house is also highly flexible. It's a two-bedroom, two-study home. The main bedroom is for the owners, who have one study each, and the second bedroom accommodates the frequently visiting grandchildren. The private studies can easily be converted into bedrooms when there is an overflow of visitors, which occurs often, given that the couple enjoys entertaining. One of the studies

is located at the front of the house, away from the other bedrooms, and has access to its own bathroom. This secluded bedroom and bathroom have the potential to house a live-in carer, should the need arise in the future.

While the house is intentionally a departure from the owners' previous home, there are elements of the family's history designed into the house. A niche has been built into the entry hallway to house a treasured grandfather clock. The joinery in the living room has been designed to display a pair of rowing oars, painted with the family name. Boulders and crushed rock from the old property are scattered throughout the garden. The design is a contemporary response but it invites moments of history and nostalgia, allowing a personal connection between the owners and their new home.

The site conditions and the need for accessibility have driven the architectural form of this house, resulting in a dynamic facade and dramatic internal volumes. Yet it's the liveability and the architects' understanding of the clients' personal living patterns that make it a comfortable and joyous place to live. **06**





**06** The contrasting materials and varying roof heights add visual interest while complementing one another.

#### Architect

##### Coy Yiontis Architects

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#### Practice profile

A small practice with expertise in designing functional family homes, both new and renovated.

#### Project team

George Yiontis, Rosa Coy,  
Elodie Lim

#### Builder

J & S Trickey Builders

#### Consultants

**Engineer:** Greer Consulting Engineers

**Landscaping:** Bellarine Landscapes and Carpentry

#### Products

**Roofing:** Lysaght Spandek in Colorbond 'Monument'

**External walls:** Spotted gum with Cutek Oil finish; Lysaght Spandek in Colorbond 'Monument'

**Internal walls:** CSR plasterboard, painted

**Windows and doors:** Capral AGS windows in Colorbond 'Monument'; Centor retractable flyscreens in 'Black'; solid-core medium density fibreboard door, painted

**Flooring:** RMS tundra tiles, honed; Royal Oak Floors Driftwood flooring with matt finish; Godfrey Hirst carpet in 'White Feather'

**Lighting:** Vistosi Balance pendant; Inlite Ecostarr soft downlights

**Kitchen:** Neff ovens, microwave, warming drawer and gas cooktop; Qasair rangehood; Caesarstone benchtop in 'Snow'; stainless steel benchtops; Porcher Saga pull-out kitchen mixer

**Bathroom:** Kado Arc under-counter basin from Reece; Nikles Square Pearl shower head; Mizu shower/bath and basin mixers; Kaldewei Sanilux bath; Roca Meridian toilets

#### Heating and cooling:

Hydronic heating; ducted airconditioning

**External elements:** Spotted gum decking with Cutek oil finish

**Other:** All joinery custom made by Scott's Country Look Kitchens

#### Area

**Site:** 715 m<sup>2</sup>

**Floor:** 205 m<sup>2</sup>

#### Project cost

\$3,000 per m<sup>2</sup>

#### Time schedule

**Design, documentation:**

5 months

**Construction:**

11 months