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DOUBLE TAKE
A House
Inside A House
in Taipei



The Family Way

Project: Mercer House
Architect: Vibe Design Group
Location: Melbourne, Australia
vibedesign.com.au

Sited in Geelong, Victoria, the miraculous metamorphosis of this Australian family home by Melbourne-based practice Vibe Design Group arose from a fairly rough beginning: a rundown single-story house poised somewhat indeterminately on a slope. To make matters worse, the site's awkward disposition also meant being overshadowed by a double-storey residence to the north, making privacy a problem. Refusing to submit to these shortcomings, the architects focused on bringing out the best aspects of the property, culminating in its final, form-oriented design. "We saw the corner block as a bonus in that the shape and dynamic of the design could have a greater impact," says principal designer Michael O'Sullivan. "A bold tapering form would also be highly visible to vehicle and foot traffic on this north side."

Heeding the client's request to create "a liveable family home with sophistication and warmth," O'Sullivan, spurred on by the former's understanding and appreciation for

Change of Place

Two studies in contrast – a bachelor pad vs a family home, and a casual home vs a glamorous condominium – show how with the right designers, any space can be remade to fit any client.

Story by Adele Chong

Photos by Robert Hamer



design, created a structure that would at once make a visual impact from the street and effectively address the family's daily needs. "This [openness towards the design] gave us the inspiration to create something quite unusual," he says. While its shapely exterior certainly sets the house apart from its comparatively subdued neighbors, the idea was not to upstage surrounding elements but to complement or enhance the street's architectural mainstays. The eye-catching façade, crafted in silvertop ash timber, plays up the natural materiality while placing emphasis on the building's bold configurations. Rendered virtually invisible by the tapering shape, the master bedroom and ensuite are tucked away on an additional third-story, giving ample privacy.

In line with the rest of the house, the entry gate combines functionality and aesthetics – clad in a perforated metal, this security feature and main

access point also functions as a strong visual link to the property. Inside, the streamlined interiors are devised to support the family's "interactive nature". Timber paneling throughout the premises echoes the look and feel of the façade, as does a continuous timber-



battened wall, which breaks up the space into a series of communal and private zones. Finished with glass sliding doors on one side, the house heightens the contrast between transparent and opaque materials while simultaneously paying homage to classic Modernist homes. »