

into the landscape

challenges, among them poor footings, sloping land and construction restraints

While many homes with views turn their backs to the street, this home presents as a series of timber and corrugated steel "boxes" with gently curving roofs that sit well in the landscape. The garage below is accessed via a curved driveway, which is just one flight of stairs from the kitchen.

Downes says living areas often need to be positioned on the top floor to optimise views, but this site was so expansive it was not necessary. However, for all its natural attributes, construction was not easy.

Not only did the builder need to be mindful of construction noise travelling across the valley, owner Peter says they had to use fewer heavyweight vehicles because of concerns over damage to the right of way.

Despite such obstacles and the drama of constructing on a sloping block, the building was a relatively smooth process, with the exception of the footings.

"The thing that held up the building process was we thought the existing house was on bedrock. It turned out it was on a thin layer of rock with a lot of fill underneath so we had some problems," Peter says.

With that resolved, however, Maya and Peter watched

their new home take shape within a matter of months. Together with passive solar design, two 3000-litre rainwater tanks and a solar hot-water system, they have the epitome of modern Australian design to call home.

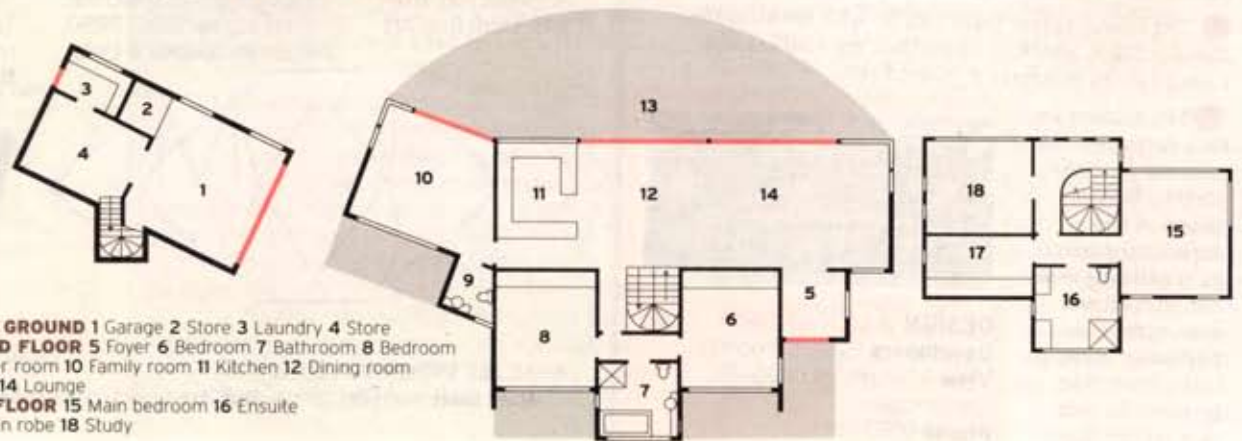
"We wanted to end up in a house that has a resort feel, where it feels like a holiday every day. It has achieved that purpose," Peter says.

And the owners are not the only ones enchanted by this design. Downes recently won four awards for this project from the Building Designers Association of NSW, including the Premier Award for Design Excellence, and Best New Dwelling. For his part, Downes is delighted that he had an opportunity to make the most of an unusual but idyllic site.

"There were no preconceived [design] ideas. For every site there is one perfect solution that maximises the good points and minimises the bad points," he says.

Robyn Willis

● MORE INFORMATION
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LOWER GROUND 1 Garage 2 Store 3 Laundry 4 Store
GROUND FLOOR 5 Foyer 6 Bedroom 7 Bathroom 8 Bedroom
9 Powder room 10 Family room 11 Kitchen 12 Dining room
13 Deck 14 Lounge
FIRST FLOOR 15 Main bedroom 16 Ensuite
17 Walk-in robe 18 Study