

Sanctuary

MODERN GREEN HOMES

ISSUE
63

HEMP BUILDING
SPECIAL

PLUS: Renovating heritage homes for sustainability;
National Biophilic Design Awards; swap your lawn for habitat

Hemp Sensation

Seven gorgeous hempcrete homes inside



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WIN

One of two e-scooters from Voltrium,
with a total prize value of \$6,500

Offer open to Australian residents. Details page 81

**NATHALIE CURTET**

Architect and Certified Passive House Designer
Compass Architecture
www.compassarchitecture.com.au
Works in Sydney and regional NSW

What kind of house did you grow up in?

As a child, I lived in a 60-square-metre unit on the eighth floor of a 1970s concrete tower in France. There I learned about orientation, as we lived mostly around the table in the sunny south-facing kitchen. I learned about shared spaces and the advantages of services and shops close by. Then my parents built a house in the village where my mother was born. I learned a lot about the physical work of building, the importance of insulation because of the cost of electricity, and how to build for shelter from the cold northern winds. I learned a sense of connection to land, to a site's geology and history.

What was the first design project you were really proud of?

A low cost, small footprint house under an oak tree in Bowral, NSW. The design allowed flexibility of use, with the bedrooms in the roof space and a living area that with a temporary partition housed a small herbalist clinic. The deciduous oak helped with shading and sheltering the house. Achieving spaces that bring joy and a sense of wellbeing to the clients is greatly fulfilling.

What is your favourite sustainable building, and why?

It's the Charlotte Perriand Chalet in Meribel les Allues, France, designed and built in 1960. The chalet has a long gable roof, is orientated to the south for sun and to enjoy the valley view, and is integrated into the slope of the land. It is simple, elegant, and built from the materials of the land.

What's on your drawing board right now?

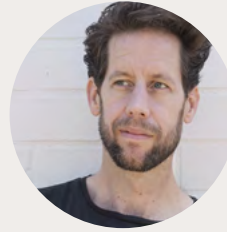
I'm working on alterations and additions to a worker's cottage in Sydney's inner west – I love the intervention within a tight urban building fabric that has stringent parameters imposed by council. I'm also designing a new house in the Illawarra region, for clients who wish to age in place; it's an interesting brief with lots of challenges.

If you weren't an architect, what would you be?

An archaeologist or a geologist, for the earth and the layers of history it contains.

What would be your dream project?

My dream project would be to design a sustainable community development with affordable Passive Houses, infrastructure and facilities to respond to our urgent need for a sustainable, inexpensive and future-proof development model to stop the growing 'black roofs, no trees' suburbs.

**JON LOWE**

Architect
Jon Lowe Architect
www.jonlowearchitect.com.au
Works in South Australia

What kind of house did you grow up in?

It was a typical South Australian inner-suburban villa with an early 1990s builder-designed addition and a big backyard that was partially swallowed by a pool.

What was the first design project you were really proud of?

That would be my first new residential project – a greenfield lightweight pavilion in the Barossa. Set on the side of a steep hill, the home presented regional construction challenges that made it an equally steep learning curve, which ultimately proved highly rewarding. Together with the client, I pushed the sustainability ambitions as far as the low budget would stretch to deliver something pretty special.

What is your favourite sustainable building, and why?

My favourite is House in the Blue Mountains by Glenn Murcutt, 1994. I had the opportunity to visit this home in 2007 and was blown away by the steel detailing, elegant response to place, bushfire resistance and compact footprint.

What's on your drawing board right now?

A group of social housing townhouses, a changing room upgrade for a heritage-listed swimming centre, and two unique and complex residential additions. I also have four fantastic projects in construction scheduled to finish this year.

If you weren't an architect, what would you be?

That's a tough question. I loved making short films while at university, where I also enjoyed studying philosophy, so possibly something in the arts. More realistically, I'd probably have a trade like carpentry – I like working with my hands and making things.

Who is your ideal client?

For me, the ideal client would be someone with a strong belief in the power of design to change the world for the better – and a love of modernism.