HIA INTERIOR DESIGN AWARD WINNER

Design Spotlight: Mark Gacesa from Ultraspace

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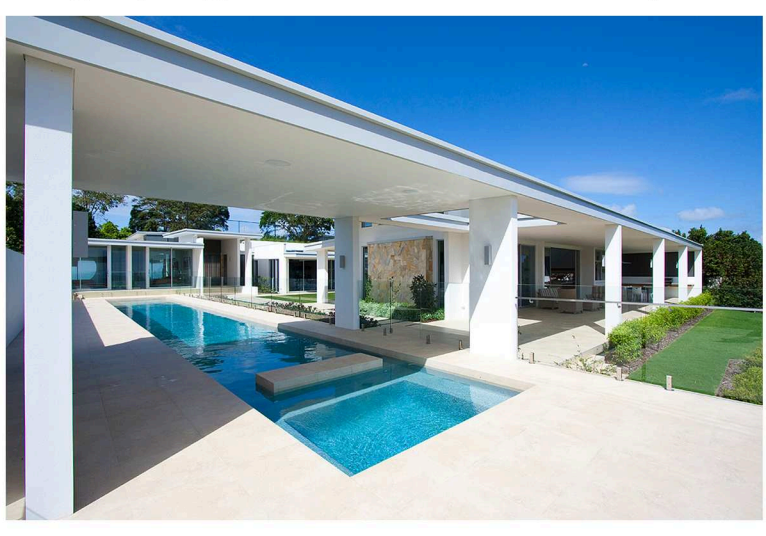
By Susan Schwartz
in Interior Design
No Comments

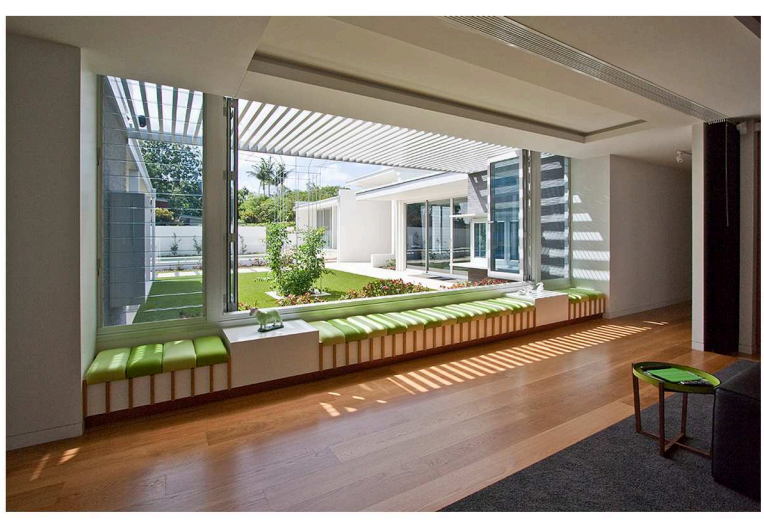


The rooms in this Buderim house have views of the water and surrounding mountains.

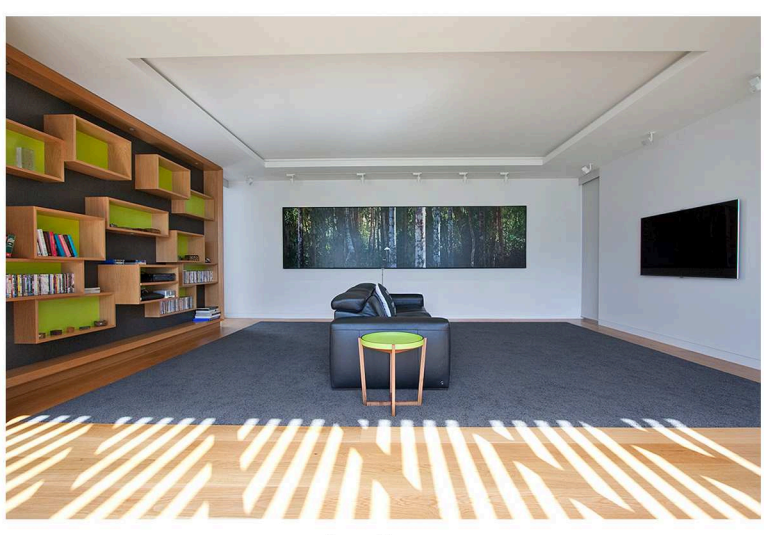
It is possible to literally see through walls in this award-winning Buderim home that overlooks the Sunshine Coast airport

The house is the work of interior designer Mark Gacesa from Ultraspace, who recently won the Housing Industry Association (Queensland) Interior Design Award.

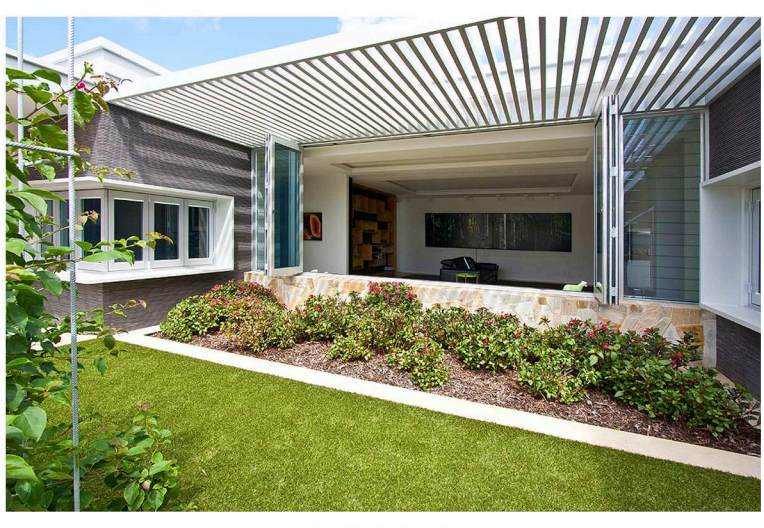
"If you stand in the master en-suite, there is a big sweeping wall of tiles with a rectangular gunslot-style window," explains Mark. "This is repeated in the wall behind it where the bedroom is. And it allows you to look straight through the courtyard and up the airport runway."



Green features extensively inside and out which helps to further blur the living spaces.



The media room.



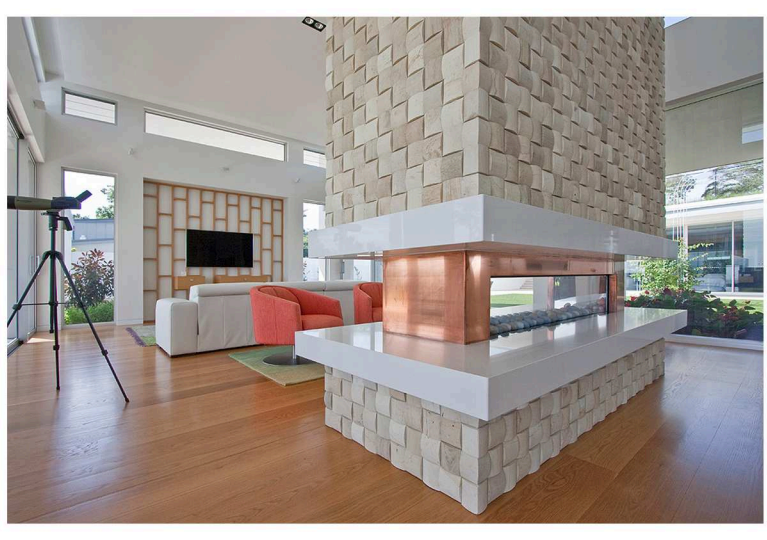
Outside, looking in.

It is the first time the HIA has introduced an award for interior design and decoration. It was one section that had been previously overlooked by the awards which recognises Australia's top builders and designers.

Designed for a prominent surgeon, the house is nestled into the side of a mountain, and has four bedrooms and bathrooms. "It's Californian style – open, spacious and elegant," says Mark. "But at the same time with its sheer size it feels serene."

At more than 2,000 sq m it's certainly a lot of house. Costing close to $2.5 million to build, it also features a slew of customisations and luxury finishings like the fireplace made from woven sandstone, and materials such as American oak, copper and Bisazza tiles.

American oak features heavily throughout the kitchen.



The woven sandstone fireplace with its copper surround is the focal point of the family room.

As a seven-year-old, Mark decided he wanted to study architecture but changed his mind a decade later when he found out QUT had launched a design degree. For Mark, studying design was an especially good fit as his father was an interior designer on the Sunshine Coast. "The main thing I've learned from him is that a great designer needs to become their client," says Mark. "There's so much psychology that needs to happen. That way you can slip into their shoes and take them on this journey."

Mark Gacesa from Ultraspace.

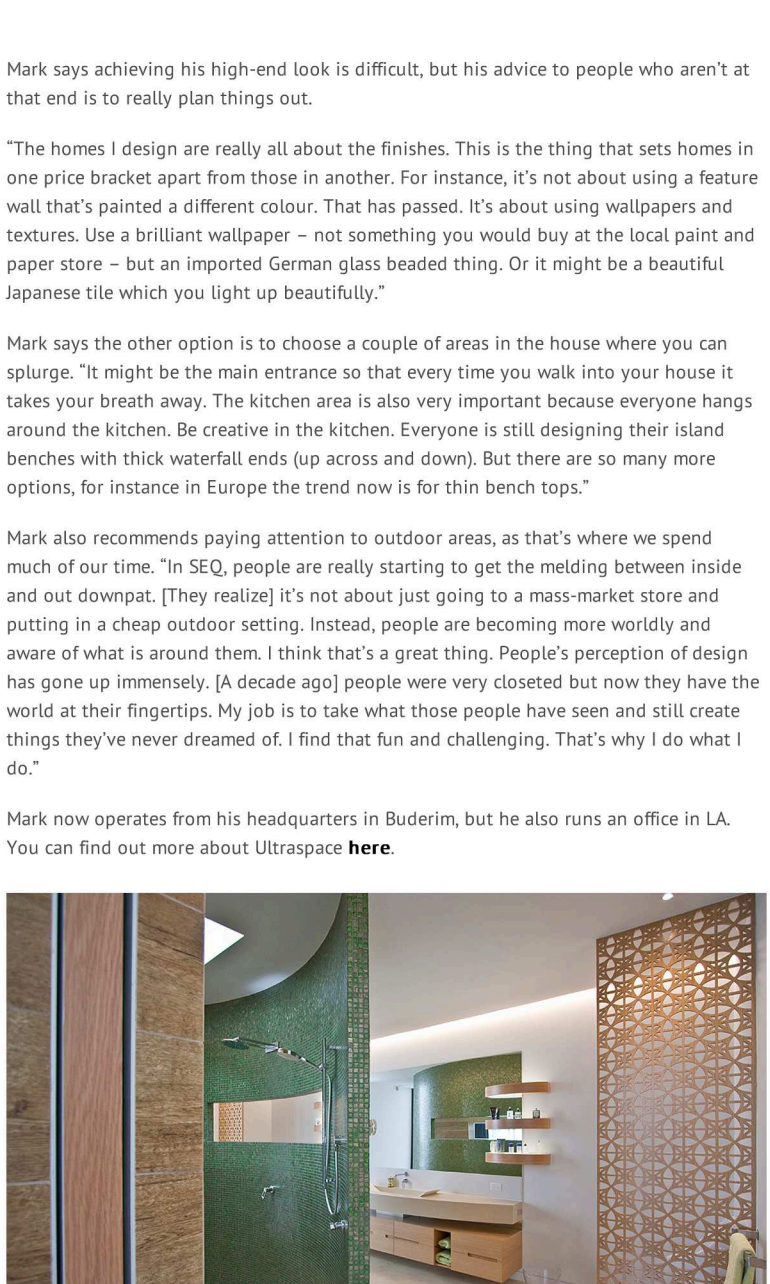
Mark says achieving his high-end look is difficult, but his advice to people who aren't at that end is to really plan things out.

"The homes I design are really all about the finishes. This is the thing that sets homes in one price bracket apart from those in another. For instance, it's not about using a feature wall that's painted a different colour. That has passed. It's about using wallpapers and textures. Use a brilliant wallpaper – not something you would buy at the local paint and paper store – but an imported German glass beaded thing. Or it might be a beautiful Japanese tile which you light up beautifully."

Mark says the other option is to choose a couple of areas in the house where you can splurge. "It might be the main entrance so that every time you walk into your house it takes your breath away. The kitchen area is also very important because everyone hangs around the kitchen. Be creative in the kitchen. Everyone is still designing their island benches with thick waterfall ends (up across and down). But there are so many more options, for instance in Europe the trend now is for thin bench tops."

Mark also recommends paying attention to outdoor areas, as that's where we spend much of our time. "In SEQ, people are really starting to get the melding between inside and out downpat. [They realize] it's not about just going to a mass-market store and putting in a cheap outdoor setting. Instead, people are becoming more worldly and aware of what is around them. I think that's a great thing. People's perception of design has gone up immensely. [A decade ago] people were very closeted but now they have the world at their fingertips. My job is to take what those people have seen and still create things they've never dreamed of. I find that fun and challenging. That's why I do what I do."

Mark now operates from his headquarters in Buderim, but he also runs an office in LA. You can find out more about Ultraspace **here**.



The master en-suite with its shotgun window allows for views to the Sunshine Coast airport.

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