A design-sensitive client, an extraordinary ocean site and the partnership of Dan Sparks and Gabriel Poole has to be the perfect combination. But for Margie Fraser, the humpback whales added something special.
As if it wasn’t blissful enough to be standing above a broad white beach, a cooling breeze rustling the banksias in the dunes, an endless view of sparkling blue existing waters stretched before me, and a picturesque headland crouching to the north. But the most dramatic in this context of paradise was yet to be added. Within minutes of contemplating the scene, a giant spout of water rose before me and several hornbills started cavorting in the ocean—tails lifting and thrashing with a divine audacity. Welcome to another day at Sunshine Beach, just south of Noosa on Queensland’s Sunshine Coast.

Given the project’s natural setting, it seemed likely that anything man-made could disappear. But that wasn’t to be, and more surprises were in store. Local architect, Dan Sparks, in association with Gabriel Poole, was briefed to design a holiday house that would eventually segue into a retirement home for its empty-nester owners. In the meantime, it was also to serve as an entertainment house for the couple and their friends and family.

"It was really something of an ideal project from our perspective," says Sparks. "An incredibly beautiful site coupled with a design-savvy client who was committed to realising its potential. To our delight he was also very open to having some fun with the design."

The site is splendid beachfront land, taking up half of a larger block once straddled by an old Queenslander. It is elevated just enough above the wide stretch of public beach to make the descent quick and easy, but at the same time retain privacy and a sense of exclusiveness. Looking east, there’s a sublime panorama of the Pacific on offer. The site slopes steeply from street to beach, and the house is tucked neatly into the slope, defying its generous 700sqm proportions.

In deference to the setting, the owner wanted a nautical look, using "materials that could stand up to the weather," he says. "It’s very exposed to the elements here. We looked at a few yacht fittings for inspiration as they use the sorts of materials that can endure in this environment. We want the house to eventually blend into the site rather than stand out from it."

Another reason to shun the "big white Greek mansion" (which are not unknown to the enclosing) derives from the owner’s passion for Japanese minimalism, "I lived in Japan for fifteen years," he says, "and love that space, simple aesthetic." The palette, then, was always to be natural, and the style simple. At one-year-old, the timber is already greying as planned to match the nearby Sh-oaks, while luminous tessellate such as titanium-zinc ceilings and timber and cork decking for floors steadily channel the comfort of the yachting brigade.

"We want the house to eventually blend into the site rather than stand out from it."

RESIDENT

06
The entry gate looks north over Sunshine Beach.

12
The custom "estate-like" wine cellar and tasting room on the ground floor.

47
Tasting section.

04
The kitchen with sliding timber door to the study.
The house is set out on three levels, with the top level containing a master bedroom, pool deck, and carpet. Placing the pool on the top level fulfills expectations, while catering for a mandatory 15 metre ocean control setback from the fragile dune. It also means that the ground level can enjoy a bit of garden and lawn. The climb to the top level pool is more than worth it - gazing through the glass balustrade to the ocean is a decadent take on a poop deck. The middle level, and point of entry, accommodates the main living space, a second bedroom and a television room. A series of substantial portal frames render the gallery-like space post-free. The above ground tray of space extends out to a wide deck which cantilevers over the lawn below.

The ground level is party zone, replant with a wine cellar, billiard table, bar and spare bedroom. Underground water tanks can be accessed through portholes set into the floor in the patterns of the Southern Cross. The holes provide service access points to the underground water and also act as art.
scenario

krimmer house — qld, australia

SPARKS ARCHITECTS
scenario
krinner house — qld, australia

installations: a special effects ‘shimmer pump’ makes the water ripple and glow underwater. sprints has designed a suite of furniture for the house, including the bed, a long dining table and a freestanding timber table that, unlike its more ponderous forbear with their turned Mahogany legs, works with the minimalistic aesthetic and beach regret. the finishes and details expose a careful craftsmanship and a finely honed sense of warmth. american rock maple timber is used throughout, and walls are rendered in american elm. an impreg- nated mix of marble dust, crushed glass and natural clay which ekes out zones. a mirror covers the front of the long kitchen bench, reflecting the ocean view, and, as sprints notes, ‘helps to stylize and visualize the esthetics of the bench as an object’. no two doors are the same size or proportion. doors and windows are carved into thick walls with deep timber reveals to offset their aluminium hardware. natural light is directed through a generous stairwell, and glazing punctuates tall walls to capture framed moments of garden, pond and ocean. the operable storme, though, is strategically stepping through the fully open side wall of glass from the living zone to the deck, perhaps accompanied by a shout of ‘that she blows!’

Southern elevation
with Noosa National Park ‘Lion’s Head’ beyond.
10. Long section.
11. The acrylic set-edge pool and lookout.