



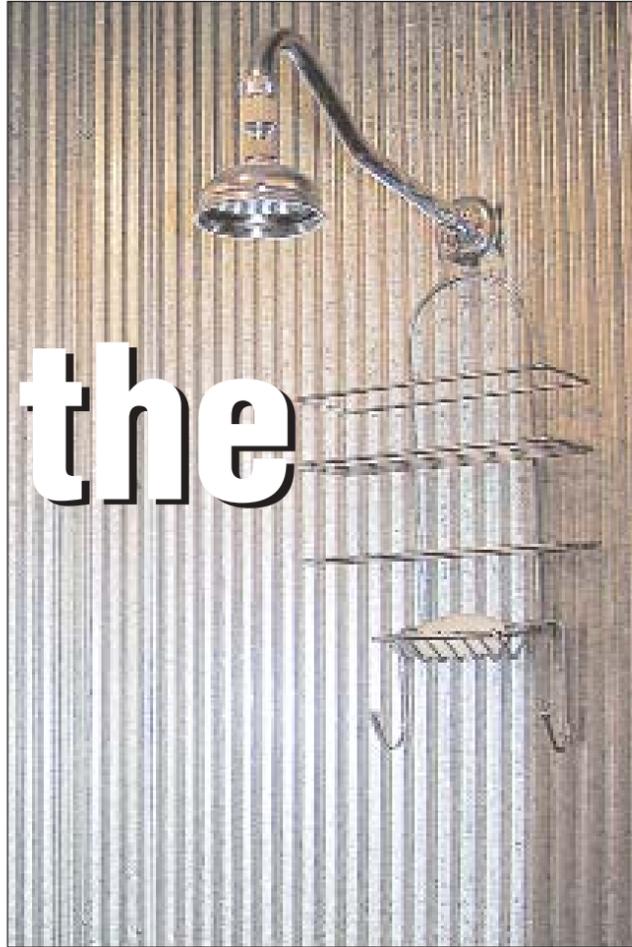
HOME AND GARDEN



Clean and simple...the uncluttered discussion room.



In context...industrial-grade jarrah highlight the steel inserts.



Designs on the Highlands

The unique Southern Highlands also demands a unique architectural design. JOSHUA GRECH spoke to architect Martin O'Toole about the amazing design of his office, and discovered some of the characteristics that set Highlands designs apart.

Building is all about context. It is this statement that Bowral architect Martin O'Toole has looked for when creating his new work space.

Such context has been the driving force for the architect's office that formerly functioned as a horse riding school stable.

Mr O'Toole maintained that the building had to respond to the landscape and what better way than keeping the original stable structure.

"My aim was to retain the original Australian country feel of the Highlands while putting a modern spin on it," Mr O'Toole explained.

Finding that many project homes lack relevance, the O'Toole office was purpose-built to display Australian vernacular style.

This style draws on Australian icons such as the woolshed for inspiration, while maintaining contempo-

rary functionality within the building.

"There is a misconception that modern means sterile and boring. That doesn't have to be the case.

"What I have aimed to do here is let the materials speak for themselves, whether it is the polished concrete floor, the use of corrugated iron or the charred bricks from the old fireplace that was on site.

"By using these materials I have created a country atmosphere to what is ultimately a clean, functional workspace," Mr O'Toole said.

The test in style is whether or not the building is able to stave off old age. Another misconception is that buildings have to be big.

"The office seems quite small from the outside but people are surprised once they see how much room there is.

"When people work out how much space they actually live in they are surprised that it works out to be only a fraction of their home," Mr O'Toole said.

HIGHLANDS STYLE

What type of design typifies the Southern Highlands architecture?

- Climate dictates what a sensible building is.
- Buildings around Sturt and Frensham are what I see as classic Highlands architecture.
- Broad white boards create rich, but clean uncluttered exterior line.



Open to new ideas...many features of the property's former life are retained.



"People say I'm a lucky guy"...Architect and owner Martin O'Toole takes a seat at his workstation while explaining his workspace design motivations.

IN FOCUS TODAY



Young Mathew seeing stars Page 31



The best in the country



Brides and babes



How does the new Windows XP stack up?

Who did it? Who was born? Who got married? Who was honoured?

The heartbeat of any community comes from its network of volunteer organisations. Its soul comes from the residents - lives rich and diverse. The Southern Highlands is a region steeped in community spirit. There are more than 400 volunteer groups devoting their time and effort to building a better place for all of us to live.

The Southern Highland News has always been an avid supporter of all community group activities. Community News, is a section dedicated to highlighting the activities and achievements of all groups. It appears in every edition of Southern Highland News. Community News also covers those special moments in

the lives of Southern Highlands residents - the births, the marriages, the honours and their dreams. We believe this bright, informative section is something special, bringing the whole community closer together.

Where should you turn to every Monday, Wednesday and Friday?

Focus