

# Sun seeker

With its mesmerising views,  
premier bayside position  
and stylish new fitout, this  
Portsea house has it all.

Photographs SHANNON McGRATH



This page Herman Miller lounge chairs by Charles and Ray Eames in walnut and cream leather from Luke Furniture. Afghan Kandahar rug from Cadys. Antique metal coffee table from India. Side table in faux shagreen with polished brass top from Interiors Online. Opposite page The view to Portsea Pier.

**A**n early 80s house in Portsea was in need of a freshen up and David Hicks was just the designer for the job. *How did you become involved with this project and what was the brief?* We had previously designed a house and undertaken decorative work for the client in Melbourne and developed a great working relationship. The client wanted to refurbish and extend their existing house in Portsea. *What were the challenges of the site?* As the house is located on the edge of a cliff, hovering above the ocean at the end of a large, long and narrow block we had to be careful about changing the footprint. To demolish and rebuild would mean losing the valued area the house takes up on the block due to changed council building regulations. Instead we decided to keep the ground-floor slab and demolish everything except for the two front walls and the garage. *What do you consider when designing for a coastal setting?* As the house is in close proximity to the ocean we had to be considerate of external materials such as cladding, glazing and roofing. Because of the harsh weather conditions and the associated wear and tear, we used materials



This page, clockwise from top Pool surrounds in honed golden granite from Lapege, with Castlemaine random paving from Yarrabee & Castlemaine. In the kitchen, honed Calacatta Oro Grigio marble splashback from Corsi & Nicolai. Lacanche rangehood and cooktop. Custom oak stools by David Hicks. Lindsey Adelman chandelier. Custom oak dining table with marquetry top by David Hicks. Hans J. Wegner chairs from Cult. Afghan Kandahar rug from Cadrys, cast brass side table from Bella Loco, custom sofa by David Hicks upholstered in Perennials canvas weave from South Pacific Fabrics, 1940s armchairs from Nicholas & Alistair.



Opposite page: Herman Miller lounge chairs from Luke Furniture, antique metal coffee table from India, brass side table from Bella Loco, custom sofa by David Hicks.



This page, clockwise from top left Upholstered wall fabric from Zepel Fabrics, cushions in Sacco 'Clouds' from South Pacific Fabrics, Hans J. Wegner chair from Cult. Client's own Chinese chest, Prestige Carpets 'Natural Cord' in Palomino from Don Currie Carpets. Honed golden granite benchtop from Lapege. Prestige Carpets 'Himalayas' rug in Anna-Purna from Don Currie Carpets. 1940s maplewood armchairs from Nicholas & Alistair. Teak root coffee table from Weylandts. Artwork by Christopher Lees (left) and Jill Lewis.



that could withstand the elements and would remain good looking. It was also important to select attractive, hard-wearing and practical materials for inside the house as it would host numerous guests. We also wanted to take full advantage of the views. *Describe the completed home and favourite design elements?* The house was designed from the inside out, and is an expression of modernist planning and architecture with a sympathetic beach-toned interior. The staircase and lift core were positioned in the centre allowing the spaces to circulate around them. This achieves a light and airy floorplan. The other main feature is the swimming pool. It cantilevers off the back of the house, gesturing towards the ocean. The sides and end are glass allowing for transparency which aids in the floating effect. *How does the project respond to its coastal context?* The location is fairly built up. The position of the house was a given as we retained the footprint. We strategically limited the windows to the front and opened up all the rooms to the back where the view is. We used large expanses of glazing to create a seamless inside/outside feeling, bringing in the sky, ocean and greenery. *What informed the selection of fittings and finishes?* I like to limit the materials and create a considered palette that really speaks to the project and its location. Here we took cues from the beach and sourced a sandy-coloured granite and marble for the bathrooms and the kitchen that has sandy, gold veining through it. Natural oak and Castlemaine stone were also used, all in sand colours. We wanted the house to mimic the natural colours of the landscape. We did weave in some references to the ocean – the blue oven and rangehood and the blue bath in the master ensuite. *Were the owners happy with the execution? How do they use the space?* The client was very happy. They wanted something that was usable for a large extended family and also individually. The whole house can be opened up or the client can just use the first floor as a weekend retreat. [davidbicks.com](http://davidbicks.com)