

PRESTIGE LIVING

THE SECRETS OF LUXURY HOME BUILDING

ISSUE 2



# TARDIS!

**Maximising A  
Small Bondi Site**

# Two Homes,

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When professional couple June and Maurice set about building their first home at Lindfield 14 years ago, no one was surprised at their choice of Chateau Constructions, a name very much synonymous with design and building excellence on the North Shore.

This traditional, elegant home on a 900m<sup>2</sup> site with 19m frontage was very much the type of property with which Chateau was synonymous and the firm's architects had an enviable reputation for conceiving new designs that blended with the North Shore's old world, built environment.

When, nine years later, their Lindfield home went on the market and the couple decided to move to Bondi, they did not hesitate to call Chateau, notwithstanding that the Bondi knock-down and rebuild was almost the antithesis of Lindfield and that the suburb called for more contemporary design.

The Bondi site was a mere nine metres wide with major site access and overshadowing issues.

Despite these profound differences, June and Maurice were convinced that on the basis of their first building experience, not to mention the 100% profit that that their property had realised, that they would be foolhardy to change the design and building team.

Their conviction was further underscored by an architect retained by the fussy Lindfield buyers to carry out a pre-purchase inspection. After spending hours poring over, under and through the property he was unable to find any negatives or faults.

"Lindfield is now 14 years old and still looks new today," June said.

"Lindfield was a large home designed for the family. We always planned that when our last child finished the Higher School Certificate we would move to Bondi, to a smaller place designed with the expectation that the children would leave."

**June & Maurice:  
"A winning formula  
is worth repeating."**

"When we finally wanted to relocate, the first thing we did was contact Chateau and tell them. They said if I found a house or a site I liked to show them they'd have a look at it for us to ensure it could be built on.

"We found the Bondi site quickly and Chateau advised on some potential issues, although none which should preclude us from buying the site.

"Because we used the same Chateau architect on both projects, we came together quickly on design, although we spent a lot of time with them working out exactly what we were getting and ensuring that what was in our heads was also in the architect's." June said.



# One Builder

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June believes quite firmly that the secret to a successful build is the time spent with the architect working through all of the details to ensure that the architect understands exactly what it is that each client is looking to achieve.

“You need to know what everything is going to look like and Chateau’s staff are more than happy to spend this time with you. They never lost patience despite the fact we had a multitude of questions.”

June said that at no time did she feel disadvantaged in Chateau knowing from the outset that she and Maurice were committed to them only. “I never felt that because they knew this that they took advantage of me in any way. They are very fair and honourable, a company of true integrity, and that’s an amazing attribute.

“Both houses were built for very good prices for the quality. They’re not the cheapest for sure, but you get what you pay for.”

June believes that this was very much reflected in fit-out. She and Maurice chose to look after their own selection of particular fixtures and fittings and it quickly became obvious that Chateau’s allowances were more than appropriate for such a quality home.

The pair are still benefitting from the company’s other strength, a cleverly designed build and site management program that took into consideration the imposts of a tight, narrow street and a small site and went to considerable pains not to upset the neighbours.

“Site management was a major consideration and Chateau managed it brilliantly, virtually building the house

in two halves so they could store materials and equipment on one side while they were building the other,” June said.

June would not hesitate to use Chateau again and has already recommended the company to many of her friends. Certainly, the clincher for her was the after-build support. It never took more than one phone call to have even the smallest issue attended to immediately.



# Integrating Building And Design

When Roderick McDonald finished his architectural studies, the furthest thing from his mind was joining his father's building company. Then came a call to "just help out for a while" when the firm's designer suffered a mild stroke. That was 25 years ago and the rest is history.

Builder Malcolm McDonald and designer Neville Hopkins started Chateau Constructions with the vision of creating a holistic service providing everything from design to building and fit out.

But it was still a case of one was a builder and the other a designer.

Rod, who grew up visiting building sites with his dad, now melds the two disciplines, advocating that great design is nothing without quality construction and vice versa.

"They are two sides of the same coin and must not only blend seamlessly to achieve the best result, each must inform the other along the way. As the architect ensures the integrity of design and detailing during construction, construction input during the design phase is invaluable as improved build-ability ensures great design is also affordable".

This basic philosophy has been successfully followed for more than 42 years in a company that now occupies a unique niche at the upper end of the prestige market.

"Chateau had always provided a holistic service, but our true advantage now is that there's no disconnect between architect's design and builder's practical limitations. Everything is discussed from the outset, at critical stages of development and through to completion. Often I wear the builder's hat as well as the architect's.

"We are also pleased to provide a quality build-only service for externally produced architectural designs of new homes and welcome this opportunity to add value for other architect's clients too."



Rod McDonald Architect/Design Manager

He cited a home in the Kuringai Local Government area that set a new price record when it was sold just four years after being built. Another client, himself an architect, averaged around \$300,000 profit on the sale of each of 7 houses he had Chateau design and build...

For clients the most obvious measureable benefit of Chateau's approach is a fixed price contract. Prices are locked in at the developed design stage.

Before clients commit to the design going to the next stage of DA drawings, they know what the price is, held for up to six months in advance.

"There are simply no unexpected surprises, no skeletons in the closet. Everything has a level of price assurance and we bear full responsibility for that price," Rod said.

As Architect and Design Manager, Rod believes Chateau has taken the holistic approach to the ultimate level, even to site selection.

"There are many examples where this process has saved hundreds

of thousands of dollars, money our clients were unaware would be needed to develop a potential site.

"Our recommendations on the style, size and type of home for a specific suburb is also critical to ensuring clients maximise investment potential," Rod said, citing a design in the Ku Ring Gai council area that set a new price record when sold four years after completion. Another client, himself an architect, averaged around \$300,000 profit on the sale of each of seven houses he had Chateau design and build for him over seven years.

"One advantage is that we do not design in a bubble. We design knowing how every project goes together exactly, using our own building methods, systems and procedures.

"We don't just design the home, we design for the whole site including the landscaping, pools, cabanas, play and Al-Fresco areas, courtyards and the like.

Chateau has only ever done one-off individual homes and has never repeated a design in 42 years.

For many years, mainly due to the nature of the established Sydney suburbs in which the company mainly builds, and by dent of the ages and tastes of its high net worth clients, Chateau primarily designed and built new homes to suit 50-year-old street scapes.

"No sooner had we completed one 'traditional' home, we would have three new customers wanting something similar. Now, though, the mix is 50/50 traditional versus modern / contemporary.

Annually Chateau designs and builds 12-18 high end homes a year and throughout its history clients have been the primary source of marketing, advertising and, naturally, repeat business.

"Some years we have to close our books to ensure the level of service we promise is delivered and the design and build quality expected of us is maintained."



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