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**Balnarring Beach House** was built with one stipulation: it had to be a house where the family could be together, but not live on top of one another. A wide, north-facing block near Balnarring Beach in Mornington Peninsula, Australia, was the perfect place to build such a house. Amongst the tea-tree and banksia are the sandy driveways of 1950s-style fibro shacks interspersed with modern housing indicative of the continuing development of the region.

**Simon Couchman Architects** designed a house that would make use of the entire site, but remain sympathetic to its surroundings. The single-level U-shaped building steps up towards the rear of the block following the gentle slope of the land, while an integrated landscape solution helps to create a series of indoor and outdoor spaces.











The family room can be opened to the central courtyard and also to a fully secured front yard defined by a curved, vertical batten fence which arcs back to the house and connects to a curved wall leading visitors to the front door. A glazed corridor links the entry and family wings to rear living areas with a free-standing spine wall; this conceals a small private courtyard addressed only by the master bedroom and study.







The main living area flows directly into the central space via fully retractable bi-fold doors. Terraced decking links to a covered barbeque area with a pass-through window to the kitchen, while full height glazing and slot windows frame the landscape and emphasise the flow of outdoor spaces throughout the house. The black cement sheet panel and raw hardwood timber cladding used externally emerge inside the house, and contrast the clean white interior plaster shell.

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