

# ABstract

NOVEMBER 2005

AUSTRAL BRICKS PROJECT SHOWCASE



# " We wanted to design a modern garden"

ABSTRACT # 1

## Urban Elements Showgarden

Designer: Blue Design Solutions

Construction: Semken Landscape

Austral Bricks products:

Sandstone Series - Flinders

Elements Series - Blue Onyx, Graphite, Manganese, Zinc

Melbourne Series - Hawthorn (halved, used as pavers), Newport

Riviera Series large format clay pavers - Andorra 400

(Clockwise from top left)

The prize-winning showgarden demonstrated the efficient use of a compact urban space. Riviera pavers lead across the garden to the waterwall. A timber pergola framing the entrance is supported on brick pillars. Urban Elements was designed by Amanda Greer and Brent Reid of Blue Design Solutions. A timber daybed nestles beside the elevated planter. The project made good use of a variety of complementary materials.

'Urban Elements' was awarded a Silver Medal in the 2005 Melbourne International Flower and Garden Show.



Behind the gently curved off-white brick wall framing the entrance to the 'Urban Elements' showgarden at this year's Melbourne International Flower and Garden Show is a practical demonstration of the creative use of a limited space.

The garden was designed by Brent Reid and Amanda Greer of Blue Design Solutions, a young company incubated by award-winning landscape designer Jim Fogarty. "We were aiming at the inner urban market," Brent explains. "We wanted to design a modern garden that makes the best use of a small courtyard."

Slim brick pillars frame the entrance and support a timber pergola which provides dappled shade to the Riviera clay pavers. Their large format and gentle colouration is ideal for opening up smaller areas.

The paver pattern tapers as it moves through the garden to the main feature, a water wall. But this is no ordinary wall. The glint behind the water cascading down the three stack-bonded and recessed columns comes from the 'Zinc' semi-glazed bricks from Austral Bricks Elements Series. Water is pumped through an open stretcher joint at the top of each column.

"We didn't want the water feature to have a big wow factor," says Brent. "We wanted something very subtle, that was just there in the background."

The internal brick walls frame the garden, creating semi-secluded spots amid the grey-green colour palette of the plantings. Timber, in the form of the pergola, benches, a daybed and wall feature, softens the hardscape. The diversity of foliage shapes and textures add a further dimension and balance to this striking garden.

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# " You can't get better than bricks and mortar, mate!"

## Seascape Apartments

ABstract # 2



Location: The Entrance, NSW

Developer/builder: Silky Constructions

Architect: Migliorino & Associates

Bricklayer: Jag Bricklaying

Austral Bricks products:

Bowral Dry-Pressed Bricks -  
Bowral Capitol Red, Bowral Charolais  
Cream, Bowral Blue

Paradise Pavers -



" We've been in medium-density construction ever since Dad started the company 25 years ago," says Ray Finianos proudly. Ray is MD of Silky Constructions, a Sydney based developer/builder.

Silky ventured out of the city to build this twenty-two-apartment building on an elevated site at The Entrance, a popular Central Coast holiday and retirement destination. Unusually the site was purchased with complete plans and all approvals in place. The challenge of meeting the stringent design controls had deterred other developers but Finianos saw the opportunity to create a landmark.

The three-storey building (plus underground car park) is completely constructed in loadbearing cavity brickwork, with clay bricks in both leaves. The exterior has two 'personalities' with face bricks on display from one direction and render from the opposing. Almost all the walls are slightly curved, including the internal walls. The brickwork is also modulated by colour and corbelling. " That was the hard part," recalls Ray Finianos. " We had a very good bricklayer who accepted the challenge."

Finianos believes its unique appeal made this a successful development. " We find our market prefers full masonry walls. They are more structurally sound, you get more for your dollar in an apartment with full masonry walls."

Since completing this project Silky Constructions has built several more full masonry apartment buildings including a seven-storey development " down the road." Ray Finianos regularly receives submissions for alternative construction methods " but so far we have been very happy with full masonry. You can't get better than bricks and mortar, mate!"

*Seascape Apartments' gently curved walls add interest and distinction to the design. The building is constructed entirely in cavity brickwork, with clay bricks in both leaves. The highly modulated facade uses colour, shape and corbelling to make the building stand out in a crowded marketplace.*

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# "Is brown the new black?"

ABstract # 3

## Elphinwood Townhouses

Location: Launceston, Tasmania

Designer: Jason Van Zetten Building Design & Drafting

Developer/builder: Tedeschi & Voorham Builders

Bricklayer: Peter Schouten

Roof tiler: Austral Bricks

Austral Bricks products:

Homestead Tan clay bricks

Clay Render Blocks

Villa Coachwood concrete roof tiles



*Face brick, render, and a variety of panel shapes and sizes come together in this eleven unit development in inner Launceston. The townhouses are grouped in a part circle around a brick-ringed water feature. The enclosed pavilion terraces are a constant design feature. The rendered walling is constructed with double-height purpose-made clay brick commons.*

Is brown the new black? The builder/developer of this townhouse development in Launceston took a punt on brown ... and came out a winner. The eleven units feature Austral Bricks Homestead Tan clay bricks contrasted with the light render and capped with Villa Coachwood roof tiles.

The angular facade design and the mingling of face brick and render helped differentiate the development and build sales. "We were one of the first to do this down here, especially to use a brown brick," says developer/builder Pino Tedeschi proudly.

The units vary from 16 to 27 squares, each having a distinct floorplan and facade design. A common feature is the use of a pavilion, mostly accessed by folding doors, to take advantage of the views and sunlight. Despite being arranged around a circle, each townhouse has good northerly solar access thanks to site-specific design such as orientation and limiting the height of neighbouring walls.

Under the rendered walling are double-height clay Render Blocks. We asked Pino Tedeschi why he chose these over concrete blocks. "Engineers like them and we've had problems with concrete blocks shrinking."

Tedeschi is an enthusiastic supporter of roof tiles. "I like tiles," he says simply. "Valuers value tiled roofs more than Colorbond® roofs. And they look better."

Designer Jason Van Zetten shares this enthusiasm. "I really like a tiled roof. I think we are seeing a resurgence of tiles here in Tasmania, especially with the huge range of colours out now."

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" We use products we know will stand the test of time"

## North Lakes Retirement Resort

Abstract # 4



Location: Endeavour Drive,  
Mango Hill Qld

Developer/manager: Australian  
Retirement Communities

Designer/builder: J&G Knowles &  
Associates

Building cost: \$40m+

Austral Bricks products:

TerraÇade terracotta facade system -  
Bunbury Smooth

Purpose-Made Commons bricks-  
Universal 90 mm (standard height),  
Avanti 90 mm (double-height)

Trend Series clay pavers - Ashgrove  
(main paver), Birkdale (borders)

Bristile Swiss profile terracotta roof  
tiles - Sunset (70%), Natural Blend  
(15%), Ivory (15%)

Roman ridges

*North Lakes is the Knowles Group's first venture in Queensland. The 170 two-bedroom units have Austral Bricks double-height purpose made commons under the render. A panel of TerraÇade creates a durable and attractive feature in the pool area. "Installation was straightforward," says construction manager Des Powell (pictured). Capping the entire project are Bristile Swiss profile terracotta tiles.*

*In the 2005 HIA Queensland Awards, North Lakes Retirement Resort was named the Brisbane and Gold Coast Special Purpose Housing Project of the Year and was runner-up for the state award in that category.*

With over 3500 units under management, Australian Retirement Communities is Australia's largest independently-owned retirement company. Part of the Knowles group, J&G Knowles designs and builds their villages and handles their marketing and ongoing management.

"Because we know we will be looking after these properties for the long term, it is very important we use products we know will stand the test of time and won't require significant upkeep or maintenance," explains Des Powell, ARC's construction manager.

The company's first venture outside Victoria is an 8.5 hectare development that will comprise 170 two-bedroom independent living units, 56 condominiums and 28 serviced apartments. Under the units' sandstone-coloured acrylic render are Austral Bricks Purpose-Made Commons, predominantly the Avanti 90 mm double-height clay blocks. "They are slimmer and lighter than concrete blocks," says Powell, "and just as economical and easier to lay."

As part of the Californian design theme, the architect, Terry Edwards, specified a three-way blend of terracotta roof tiles from Austral Bricks sister company, Bristile Roofing. The rounded Swiss profile is capped with Roman ridge fittings. "The market loves terracotta roofs," says Des Powell. "They associate quality and prestige with the product."

A panel of Austral Bricks TerraÇade features at one end of the salt-chlorinated communal swimming pool. "It's a feature that is durable and easy to maintain," says Powell. "Installation was straightforward. It's a pretty simple product to work with."

Stage one of the project was completed in time for first tenants in May 2005. By late 2005 about two-thirds of construction was complete and ARC expects to finalise the balance by September 2006.

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# "I thought I'd spell out the brief for them"

## ABSTRACT # 5

## South Melbourne townhouses

Builder/developer: Pali Homes

Architect: Orbit Solutions

Austral Bricks products:

TerraÇade terracotta facade system in Kimberley Linear

*The TerraÇade tiles on this facade spell out the building's function for all to see! The four townhouses are located in a heritage precinct in inner Melbourne. The design detailing and installation of the terracotta tiles went without a hitch and provided a unique selling point for developer/builder Ramo Pali, shown here (left) with Darren Cole-Sinclair, co-principal of architects Orbit Solutions.*



Did you spot the joke? Builder/developer Ramo Pali of Pali Homes calls it "Fantastic!" The inspiration came to architect Chris Goss, Orbit Solutions co-principal, while doodling on a flight from Sydney. "They wanted a town house so I thought I'd spell out the brief for them."

Still puzzled? Look closely at the facade of this four-townhouse development in a South Melbourne heritage precinct. The Austral Bricks TerraÇade terracotta facade system spells out the word HOUSE in two-storey high letters. Obvious isn't it!

This site was effectively greenfield, having been the storeyard for a small, long-defunct factory. The high site coverage prompted the Orbit team to focus on the facade. "We only have one facade to deal with, so we said let's do something really high quality," Goss explains.

TerraÇade's genuine terracotta tiles also tied the new building to its neighbours, without being imitative. "We said to Ramo, this is what you need to sell this building," says Orbit's co-principal Darren Cole-Sinclair. "It will create the first impression for prospective buyers."

Pali's team installed the facade. "Installation was a bit difficult for the first or second day," says Pali. "But as soon as we learned the technique it was easy." Design detailing was also straightforward. "The detailing provided by Austral Bricks makes it pretty easy," Goss commends.

Two townhouses sold before completion and the others before auction. "I believe TerraÇade is a good product, it's not that expensive, and to achieve this writing is fantastic," says Ramo Pali. "It's a good contemporary response in a heritage environment," concludes Chris Goss. "And it still puts a smile on my face!"

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# “ It was very easy to attach the tiles ”

## Seymour residence

### ABstract # 6



Location: Kew Vic

Architect: Baldasso Cortese Architects

Builder: Pansec Constructions

Austral Bricks products:

TerraÇade terracotta facade system in Kimberley Smooth



Architect Steve Cortese describes the exterior of this remarkable house as “ a series of interlocking planes. I felt the blades and masses needed to be treated by different colours and materials.” The visually-dominant facade element is a double-storey corner panel clad in Austral Bricks TerraÇade.

Cortese considered many materials, including copper, render, timber and colourback glass, in his search for a lightweight, low maintenance yet substantial facade. “ We didn’t just want it rendered and painted, and we were concerned about the maintenance aspects of timber lining.” He also examined adhering tiles to cement sheet “ but the (sheet) manufacturer wouldn’t warrant the application because of water penetration concerns.”

TerraÇade’s genuine fired terracotta colour created a highlight, “ something for the rest of the building to hang off,” says Cortese and respected neighbouring, long-established brick homes. “ We also liked the strong lines of the open joints. They give a nice texture.” The panel runs past the glass line into a living area. TerraÇade-wrapped pillars impart a ceremonial formality to the entrance.

Austral Bricks assisted in the design, documentation and installation phases and supplied all mounting and ancillary hardware. The entire system was builder-installed. “ Once the horizontal rails were set up, it was very easy to attach the tiles,” Cortese comments. Aluminium corner sections were powder-coated to match the tiles. “ We wanted to lose the corner detail as much as possible.”

The happy owners love the house’s light and airy feel, and crisp, clean lines, and Baldasso Cortese has added a stylish new option to their material palette.

*(Clockwise from top left) A double-storey corner panel of Austral Bricks TerraÇade is the dominant element in this remarkable design. The terracotta colour respects that of neighbouring properties without being derivative or imitative. Architect Steve Cortese considered other materials but chose TerraÇade for its durability, low maintenance and distinctive appearance. TerraÇade wrapped pillars highlight the entrance.*

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# "Aesthetically pleasing, a timeless design"

## ABstract # 7

## Parklake Terraces

Location: Chancellor Park Qld

Building owner: Clearmead

Architect: Designinc

Builder: Stokes Wheeler

Building cost: \$5.5 m

Austral Bricks products:

Riverview Kunari bricks

Millennium Cream bricks

Millennium Red bricks

*(Clockwise from top)*

*The 35-townhouse development is located adjacent to the University of the Sunshine Coast, a significant local employer. The terrace-like layout allows a neighbourhood feel with security and a sense of openness. Most units have their own street access and front and back gardens. The mix of materials and brick colours reflects the 'inner urban' style and created "a timeless design" according to the developer.*



"We like our residential projects to be in or around educational facilities," explains Simon Curtis of Gold Coast-based developer Clearmead. "Many of our buyers like the strength of rental enquiry that education brings to a property investment."

This philosophy was central to Clearmead's decision to build a 35-townhouse development in the Chancellor Park estate adjacent to Queensland's University of the Sunshine Coast. "The university is a very big user of labour, with one staff member (teacher or ancillary) for every ten students" he continues. The development is aimed at staff and their families, rather than students.

Parklake Terraces comprises 23 two-storey, three-bedroom townhouses, as well as 10 larger lakefront homes and two very large home-offices. Most units have a direct street entry framed with brick piers and wrought iron, combining visual neighbourhood integration with full security and a sense of openness.

Designinc's Angelo Pernazza describes the design as "the inner suburban look you'd see in Glebe or Woolloomooloo. The brick colours are very reflective of heritage-type buildings. We chose them to suit the character of the development." Simon Curtis supports this observation and adds that "a mix of materials ensures the development is aesthetically pleasing, a timeless design. Other developers opt for a cheaper form of construction that in my opinion will date quickly."

Clearmead's investment has paid off with brisk sales and now has the added fillip of another major employer, a public hospital, commencing construction alongside the university.

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# "As good as you would see anywhere"

## Loxton High School

ABSTRACT # 8



Location: Loxton SA

Architect: Department for Administrative and Information Services

Builder: AJ Chappell

Bricklayer: Contract

Paving contractor: Barry Davis

Project cost: \$4.3 m

Austral Bricks products:

Lonsdale Ascot Pewter bricks

Grove Autumn Sunset 50 mm pavers



"Seeing is believing," says Kent Spangenberg proudly. Kent is the principal of the newly redeveloped Loxton High School, in South Australia's Riverland. Until last year the campus was dominated by timber transportable buildings that lacked functionality and were expensive to maintain. "Our buildings are now state-of-the-art, as good as you would see anywhere."

The \$4.3 million project commenced soon after masterplanning was completed in 2003. Specialist buildings housing science labs, art rooms, an administration area, library and staff room are the last and most substantial addition to the campus. Existing durable buildings were retained and renovated and the transportables earmarked for demolition or removal. "We had to build around the existing buildings," comments architect George Hum. "It was exciting but quite challenging."

Brick veneer cladding to steel framing allowed the school to combine economy with the durability and low maintenance of face brick. The brick colour and tumbled finish unifies the campus, tying the new work to the retained buildings. Paving was an integral to the project, with over 90,000 Autumn Sunset clay pavers laid. The buildings are perimeter paved, feeding a network of paths, seating areas and quiet study zones.

George Hum is pleased with the end result that he describes as combining functionality with simplicity. "I like the simple lines."

This is echoed by Kent Spangenberg who describes the redeveloped school as "functional but very aesthetic." He is convinced that staff and students "feel better working and studying in an aesthetically-pleasing environment. Your productivity can do nothing but increase."

*The high school redevelopment comprises construction of new specialist facilities complemented by extensive paved areas in a natural setting. Loxton High School principal Kent Spangenberg describes the redevelopment as "functional but very aesthetic" and believes students and staff respond well to such an environment.*

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# "I've always been attracted to dark bricks"

ABSTRACT # 9

## Epstein house

Location: Glen Iris VIC

Architect/owner/builder: Greg Epstein

Austral Bricks products:

Elements Series clay bricks - Blue Onyx

Concrete blocks



*(Clockwise from above) Greg Epstein acted as own-builder on this project, as well as designer. He embraced modern design and building practices for this energy and water-efficient residence. The facade of Blue Onyx semi-glazed clay bricks from Austral Bricks Elements Series faces the enclosed front garden that acts as the focus of the living areas. The light coloured mortar further highlights the brick colours by framing each unit.*

For over 20 years Greg Epstein has designed new homes and renovations, mainly in Melbourne's fashionable inner eastern suburbs. When it came to his own home he had no hesitation: "I wanted to embrace modern design and building technology."

Energy efficiency and therefore site orientation is central to Epstein's design philosophy. Being north-facing to the street, the site "was challenging, but skillful design can turn a liability into an asset."

Orientation dictated the placement of the outdoor living space to the front. The delightfully landscaped front garden is flanked by a tall rendered fence and overlooked by the north-facing living area. The sunny aspect of this indoor/outdoor area has a welcoming informality something like a holiday house or weekender. Two rendered panels of solid brickwork sit unobtrusively in the living area, further enhancing the building's thermal mass.

The ground floor facade of the two-storey, three-bedroom house features Blue Onyx semi-glazed bricks. "I've always been attracted to dark bricks. Once I saw (Blue Onyx) I knew it was the way to go. It had the colour I was looking for and that nice reflectivity."

The light mortar colour emphasises the bricks, further intensifying colour perception and contrasting with the light upper level. "The darker colour grounds the house, but the light colour lifts it."

How does Greg Epstein feel now about his selection of Blue Onyx? "Bricks are a natural product and you expect their natural variation. It helps identify it as a brick rather than a more precisely-engineered product. I like that."

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# "I don't think we could have chosen better"

## Araluen Botanic Gardens

ABSTRACT # 10



Location: Roleystone WA

Owner/designer: Araluen Botanic Park Foundation (Inc)

Construction: Leo Coppins

Austral Bricks products:

Riviera Series large format clay pavers - Valletta 300, Portofino 300, Valletta stairnose pavers

Waterloo Collection clay bricks - Newstead

Deep in a valley south-east of Perth is Araluen Botanic Park, a cool dark oasis featuring exotic plants against a background of native flora. The 59 hectare property, originally a youth camp, has been operated by a foundation since 1990, supported by a thriving volunteer network.

We visited Araluen during the recent springtime tulip festival and spoke to Grant Nixon, a third-generation nurseryman who began as a volunteer and is now garden development manager.

The park's display area is traversed by a network of winding paths that carry the occasional truck or loader as well as foot traffic and a 'train'. The first pavers were laid in 1994 with additions over the subsequent decade as funding allowed. "Initially we wanted to blend the colours with the soils structures of the hills," Nixon explains. Austral Bricks unique Folklore pavers were selected and laid in a sand bed over a base of crushed rock.

The 60 mm thick pavers have since given unfailing service, one section uncomplainingly supporting a semi-trailer carrying a mobile crane and massive jarrah logs!

For the Tulip Festival Austral Bricks supplied its new Riviera large-format clay pavers to create Tuscan-style piazzas on the Concourse Lawn. "As a feature the Riviera pavers look fantastic," Nixon compliments. "They have very clean lines and the colours blend very well with what we had on site."

The Araluen team are pleased with the public's response to their work. "I don't think we could have chosen better bricks or pavers to do what we were trying to achieve."

*(From top) This brick water feature became an instant hit during Araluen's recent Tulip Festival. A hexagonal pavement of Austral Bricks Riviera Series pavers (Valletta and Portofino) surrounds the water feature and is surrounded in turn by a profusion of colour. The park's pathways are paved in Newstead clay pavers from Austral Bricks distinctive Waterloo Collection. Although medium-rated the pavers uncomplainingly carry heavy loads, including the Araluen visitor train and the occasional truck or maintenance vehicle.*

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