On Tasmania's Bay of Fires, where ancient lichen-coated boulders meet crops of giant kelp at the ocean's edge, architect Tim Penny has designed a simple holiday shack for himself and his family.

ON THE BAY OF FIRES

PREVIOUS PAGES: The two-level house is perched just above the vibrant orange lichen-covered rocks of Honeymoon Point. THIS PAGE, OPPOSITE: The upper-floor deck commands a broad view of the stunning, but wild, eastern Tasmanian coastline.

THE SEASIDE HOLIDAY SHACK is an institution about as Tasmanian as they come. Shacks are about remoteness, simplicity, freedom, self-reliance and making do. They are places to go barefoot in ancient jumpers, grow salt crystals on one's skin, and cultivate a tousle-haired wildness that speaks of summer and sunshine.

Simple it may be, but architect Tim Penny's holiday house is no ordinary Tasmanian shack. Set on beautiful Honeymoon Point on the East Coast's Bay of Fires, the house is an outstanding example of what can be done on a remote beachside site with a lot of wood and a lot of imagination.

Tim bought the site on Honeymoon Point in 1999 because he and his family wanted somewhere close to the water where they could live a little differently from how they live at home in Hobart. "We wanted somewhere we could escape to, where we could stare out at the ocean, and have friends to stay over summer," says Tim. The idea conceived for the Bay of Fires house was never about classical architecture in the sense of aiming for perfection. In the shack tradition, Tim quite consciously designed the house to have a rough, textural quality, and to have the feel of never being quite complete.

The design that emerged was a tall wooden pavilion on two levels, rising out of the coastal heathland only metres from the water's edge. The two-bedroom house is made entirely from timber, with Tasmanian oak vertical boards that refer to the typical weathered shack, and western red cedar window frames. There are no external finishes and there's no internal plaster-board. Inside, the limed oak floors have not been sanded and the exterior vertical boards have been left to fade to a natural silver hue. Entry is from the lower level where there's a wide deck to shake off sandy feet and beach gear, and passing the ground-level bathroom and bedroom, the visitor climbs upwards to the main living area, kitchen and bedroom upstairs.

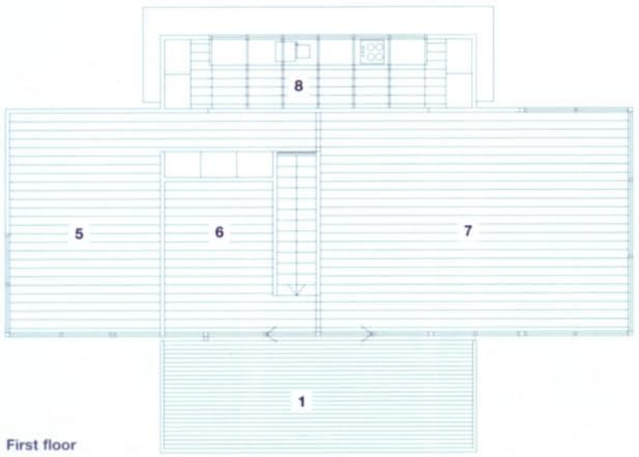
The view here is striking. Looking south, there's beautiful Binalong Bay. Then there's the wide sweep of white-blonde beach and ice blue water that ends in the rocks of Honeymoon Point. To the north, an even wilder coast-line leads the eye as far as Eddystone Point Lighthouse in Tasmania's extreme north-east. Directly in front of the house, granite boulders sheathed in vibrant orange lichen merge into giant kelp forests at the water's edge.

To take in this captivating scene, Tim has given the house a wall of windows on both the north and east sides, facing the sea. Use of low-emissivity glass has meant that even in the mornings, when the interior is washed with sun-light, there's brightness without any glare. In the centre of the glass wall, a wood-and-glass sliding door leads out onto a cantilevered upper deck. Out here, the coastal bush is not far below eye level and one can look down, as if from a wildlife hide, on honeyeaters and potoroos.

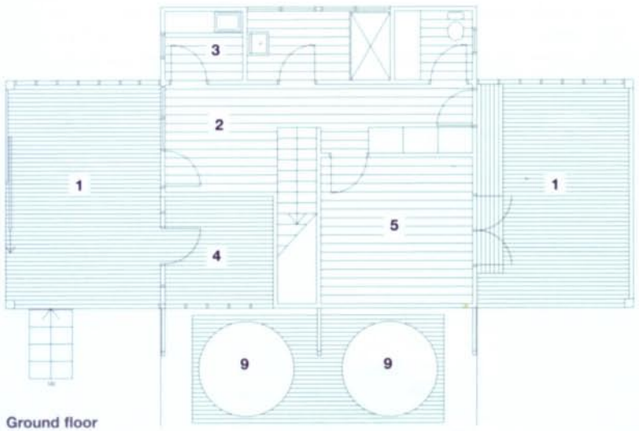
This natural setting was a stimulus for a great deal of the design. The aim was to make the environmental "footprint" as small as possible. This means the house runs off tank water from the zincalume roof, there are solar panels for power, and cooking is done with gas. Most of the bathroom fittings are recycled, and there's also a composting toilet. A state-of-the-art grey water disposal system treats waste water and then disperses it into the top layer of the surrounding soil where it quickly evaporates. The use of timber finishes has also been avoided, making this a low-allergen building.

Tim describes spending time in the house as "a bit like living in a tent", which, with its high ceilings and open layout, is just what was intended. Because there is no thermal mass, the house heats and cools quickly at different times of the day. "We use the house all year round," says Tim, "and

1 Deck
2 Entry
3 Laundry
4 Store
5 Bedroom
6 Study
7 Living
8 Kitchen
9 Tanks



First floor



Ground floor





PREVIOUS PAGE: The shack's rough sawn Tasmanian oak exterior sits well in its context – a billowing sea of coastal heath. **THESE PAGES, OPPOSITE:** The building has been designed to sit low in the landscape, to merge with the surrounds. **ABOVE:** The interior is robust, casual and low-maintenance.

it's different at every hour of the day with the angle of the sun and the sea breezes coming in. You also discover, living in a place like this, how different the seasons really are." For Tim, good architecture should take all these things into account, and in his design the differing seasons are provided for with winter and summer decks on different sides of the house. The outdoor areas on the lower level, protected by the dense coastal bush, are suitable for use even when the East Coast whips up wild winds. To avoid too much sunlight entering the living areas of the home, wooden parasol arrangements have also been added, and these lend an interesting additional dimension to the plain vertical board exterior.

In shack tradition, the house has been furnished with an eclectic collection of second-hand furniture. The furniture is simple and fairly utilitarian, but the whole is brought together with consummate style. There are works by Tasmanian artists and lots of books, as well as a collection of 1920s and 1950s crockery. "Things that have been loved go into this house," says Tim.

Tim and his wife, with all or any of their four children, escape to the house as often as possible. The place has slept up to 15, and is a real hub for family and friends. But even with a lot of people around, Tim says there's always a quiet corner to contemplate the views. "My wife is a writer, so often I'll leave her to write while I go snorkelling for abalone, and she can set up and write in peace and tranquillity."

This is indeed a wonderfully tranquil place. When the days are still, the water is glassy in front of the house as the tide sucks gently in and out against orange rocks. The honey smell of banksias drifts up from below. When the weather is wild, the home is a cocoon, safe from the roaring wind and surf, rocking gently on its timber frame. At night, viewed from the exterior, the house glows like a jewel on this dark coast and, from inside, one can make out the ocean horizon picked out by brightly-lit fishing boats. Lighthouses to the north and south cast their beams through the darkness, and when the moon rises it makes a path of light across the water.

Living in this house means that one is living close to nature, but doing so in an entirely civilised way. This may well be a home that sets new standards for the honoured institution of the Tasmanian shack. **GM**

ARCHITECT
Philp Lighton Architects
49 Sandy Bay Road
Hobart Tas 7000
Tel: (03) 6234 9199
Fax: (03) 6223 2433
Mobile: 0407 091 955
Email: timpenny@
philplighton.com.au

PRACTICE PROFILE
The firm has offices in Hobart, Launceston and Burnie comprising a total of 23 architects and support staff. Areas of expertise include residential, interiors, tourism and leisure, sports facilities, health, education and environmental design.

PROJECT TEAM
Tim Penny (architect and project manager)

BUILDER
Ian Carter, Graeme Franks

CONSULTANTS
Engineer Gandy & Roberts
Geoscience John Sloane

PRODUCTS
Roofing Zincalume corrugated iron **External walls** Rough sawn ship lapped Tasmanian oak screw fixed with galvanised hex screws for future replacement **Internal walls** Hoop pine finish grade A screw fixed, no applied finishes **Windows** Wrc frames and sashes with friction stay awnings, natural finish **Doors** Wrc frames **Flooring** Tasmanian oak, t & g **Lighting** Recessed lv; suspended lv over kitchen bench **Kitchen** Stainless steel bench with integral sinks (big enough for crayfish) and integral splashback; Mobile trollies under bench; Caroma Liano mixer; Smeg 4 ring gas cooktop **Bathroom** Recycled 1948 vitreous china basin and original taps; Caroma Leda AAA water rated shower outlet with Caroma mixer; Bosch hydrostart hot water unit **External elements** Native grasses; timber decks

TIME SCHEDULE
Design, documentation
3 months (design),
12 months (council)
Construction 3 months

PROJECT SIZE
115 m²

PROJECT COST
$85,000 (inc. kitchen, tanks and site work)

PHOTOGRAPHY
Richard Eastwood

