

SATURDAY, MARCH 27, 2010

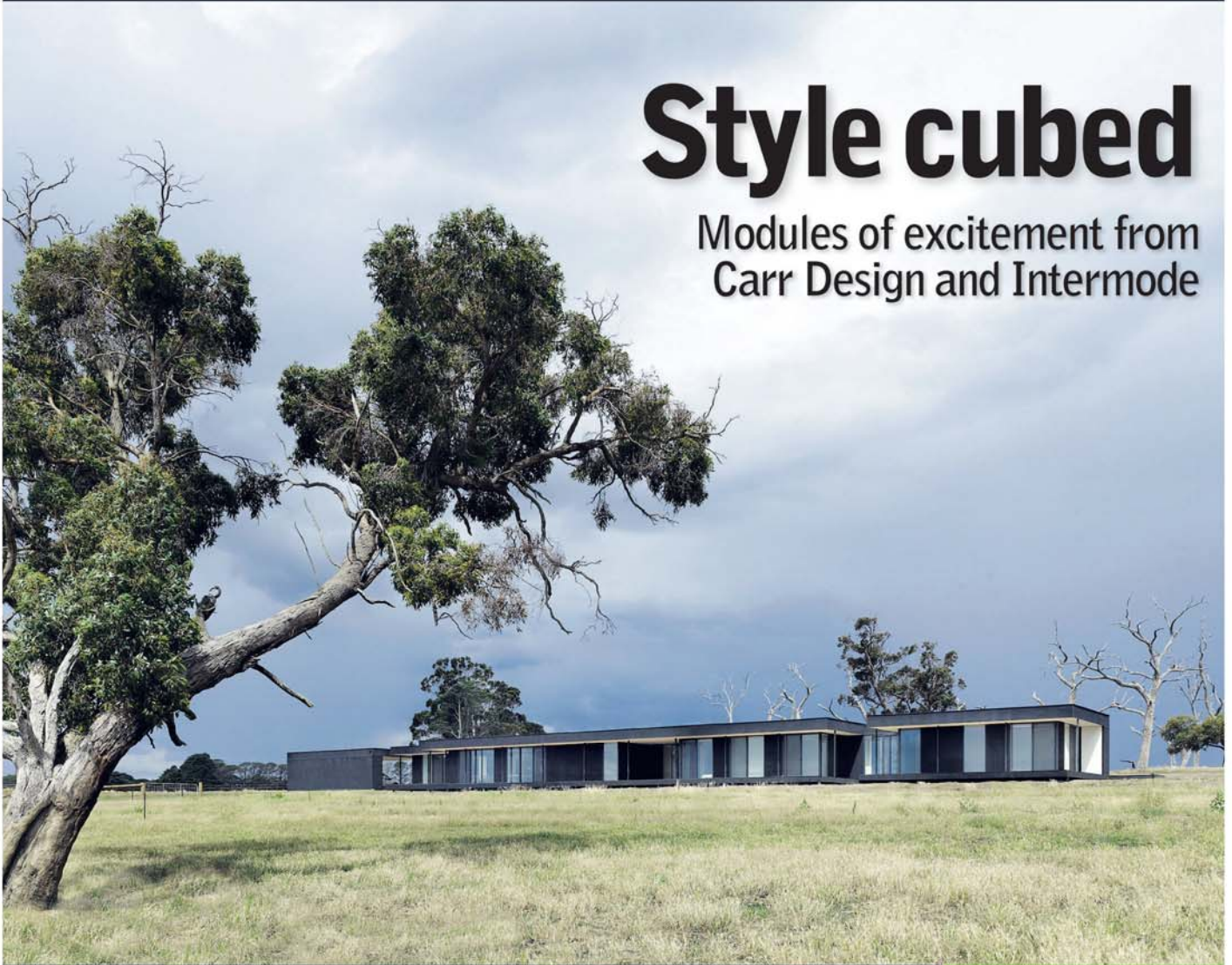
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NEW HOMES

BUILDING AND RENOVATIONS

Style cubed

Modules of excitement from
Carr Design and Intermode



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Build with a new set of blocks

Chic modules create stylish, individual spaces, writes **Kerrie O'Brien**.

IF YOU'RE looking to build a house, get ready for a roller-coaster ride. It's an incredibly exciting yet potentially very stressful time. The most common options are to employ an architect or a custom builder or to choose a display home. There are, in fact, other alternatives and this property by Intermode is one of them.

It's a stylish, distinctively Australian, modular design — in effect, a series of cubes — which can be put together in all manner of configurations to create a house. Its clever design puts a new spin on the system-built abode: forget the awful pre-fab dwellings or cheap and tacky kit homes of old.

This is a high-end, smart house. The concept is simple and works on the principle of building blocks; the basics are in place and the detail is up to you. With the design already done and by using pre-cut and prefabricated building materials that

are assembled on site, Intermode keeps costs down and reduces construction time.

According to Intermode's general manager Nick Carr, the average build time is 20 weeks. Mr Carr is the son of architect Sue Carr of the Carr Design Group, where he worked for the past 12 years as a director in finance and development.

He says the idea for Intermode has been percolating for a while; it was set up nearly three years ago, after a year of honing the concept.

Carr Design Group's basic design has a C-shape as its fundamental premise, with the roof and deck framing or cupping the house.

Environmentally, the designs are based on the simple principles of orientation, light and cross-ventilation. The design takes town planning and residential codes into consideration. The house is structured around a 1.2-metre grid, which is a standard building material



A wraparound verandah harks back to traditional Australian homesteads.



measurement. A spine wall runs through the centre of the house, which expands or contracts, depending on the owner's requirements. All the walls, window frames, doors, cupboards — pretty much everything — work back to that 1.2-metre grid.

This house is set on several hectares in the country and the view out the floor-to-ceiling windows consists of rolling plains dotted with gum trees. The windows act like frames around a painting, setting off the vista. The surrounding timber deck recalls homesteads with wraparound verandahs, giving the house a typically Australian look.

The owners here opted for two independent houses joined by a deck, with a series of steps leading up from the main house to the one designed for their teenage children. Ceilings are 2.7 metres high and doors and windows are predominantly full height.

The colour scheme throughout is mainly dark on the outside and light inside, so the external timber and the deck are dark, the window frames are a dark aluminium and the walls and ceilings are white. The floor in the main house is a dark concrete and in the teenagers' house it is Victorian ash.

In the main house, a good-sized living room with floor-to-ceiling windows and sliding doors lining three of the walls sits at one end. It adjoins the kitchen, with white stone benches, loads of two-pack cupboards and drawers, a lovely Aga stove and fabulous views out every window. There is also a freezer room and a cellar for wines.

Two bedrooms, a bathroom and the laundry come off the hallway, which extends the length of the house along the spine wall. Before you reach the main bedroom at the opposite end of the house to the communal spaces, there's a covered, deeper deck area, four modules wide, lined by glass. The hallway extends along to reach a study, then a bathroom with a pivot door, which means it can be a separate bathroom or an en suite. Inside the main bedroom, the spine wall becomes the built-in wardrobe and floor-to-ceiling glass all along the back wall gives access to the view outside.

In the teenagers' block, which is made up of five modules, there is a living room, kitchenette and two bedrooms. A pool is planned and a four-car garage was added on.

Thus far, the houses have been built in mostly coastal or rural sites. Plans for two-storey houses are

Details

Design: Carr Design Group for Intermode
Website: intermode.com.au
Phone: 9665 2333
Price: Average cost per square metre \$1800-\$2000; this house between \$900,000 and \$1.1 million
House size: 850 square metres, including garage and deck
Bedrooms: 5
Bathrooms: 3
Parking: 4

The Kilmore property comprises a main house and a separate teenagers' quarters, linked by a deck, with high ceilings giving a sense of space.



done and Mr Carr says these are ideal for narrow blocks, fitting on a width of 8.7 metres. These urban options can also include such things as central courtyards. Single-storey designs can fit on blocks as narrow as 7.5 metres, depending on council restrictions.

The standard modules include a

main bedroom, bathroom and laundry, a standard bedroom and, of course, a kitchen, living and dining module. All include three metres of deck area outside and 1.7-metre eaves. The palette of colours can change and finishes can be altered.

Intermode won *Belle Magazine's* Georg Jensen Design Award 2009.