



# CITY ESCAPE

A GETAWAY HOME THAT TRULY EMBRACES ITS SERENE SURROUNDINGS

Words by **Annabelle Cloros** Photography by **JJ Dunn**

Just a two-hour drive from Sydney is the National Trust-listed village of Kangaroo Valley. Encased by greenery and flowing rivers and lined with antique stores and enough bakeries to churn out a never-ending supply of pies and buns, the area offers a glimpse into another side of life — one not dominated by technology, but rather serenity.

Completed more than 10 years ago, Utz-Sanby Architects' creation is very much inspired by the property's location, offering dual-purpose as a holiday home for the family and a rental property for guests. Revolving around the concept of "one step up from camping", natural light and an open plan are the foundations of this abode. "The project was completed in 2005 and is much loved and well used by regular guests, family and friends," says architect and director, Kristin Utz. "Being inside the house is all about being connected with the site and the landscape beyond."

Featuring a large protective roof, the home is modest in scale compared to its expansive





**01** An outdoor dining area is the ideal spot to enjoy the morning sun or evenings outside  
**02** The Moroccan-style decor which is a great way to add colour and excitement to a home that's simple in style  
**03** A generous timber table is well loved by the family  
**04** Mist settles among the trees in this nook of Kangaroo Valley  
**05** The home blends into the landscape with ease





surroundings. It comprises three bedrooms, two bathrooms, a living room, kitchen and “spill-over sleeping” — with a pull-out bed and built-in day bed area for the kids. There’s also a fire pit incorporated into the landscape, bringing camping and the sweet scent of roasted marshmallows straight to your doorstep. It’s this easy transition from indoors to out that really adds to the charm of the home. Even if you opt to stay indoors on a particularly chilly day or night, you’re still exposed to the elements thanks to the amount of glass in the house.

The interior of the home is slightly rural in style, but is filled with bright Moroccan decor that invites warmth and personality into the low-maintenance space. A master bedroom



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**07** The landscape can be enjoyed from most rooms in the house

**08** The use of bright furnishings in the living area creates instant warmth and energy

**09** The kids enjoy a bonfire outside

**10** Overlooking the valley, the home is privy to a spectacular countryside view





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features a floor-to-ceiling window that overlooks dense bushland and lets in plenty of natural light. The living room and kitchen are separated by a partition that houses a fireplace and storage for books and various trinkets. With glass doors spanning the width of the property, light is again abundant, making the small spaces appear larger.

A timber-filled kitchen with a rustic dining table sets the scene for good times enjoyed by the family of five. "The project is ageing well and seems to improve as the materials build a patina," says Kristin. "It is a refuge for the family and now holds many memories of celebrations, holidays and weekends away with friends."

Inspired by the act of camping, it's evident this home goes back to basics. With its focus on quality materials that stand the test of time, the house doesn't appear dated and looks rather modern considering it was created more than 10 years ago. "The architecture is simple and well conceived," says Kristin, "and although the house is modest in size, it has never needed to be added to and continues to serve its purpose." ■

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