

05 Barn

Design Handbook 2026

Barn is evolving into an immersive, distinctive and soothing style. In 2026, this style is refreshed with dramatic shape, natural light and restorative palettes that evoke nature.



Meet your team of experts

Guided by leading experts in architecture, design, lifestyle and global trend forecasting, this handbook draws on deep experience and distinct perspectives in creating homes that are thoughtful, relevant and future-focused.



Neale Whitaker
Interior Design Expert

Neale is a renowned Australian design expert recognised for his thoughtful approach to residential architecture and interior home design.



Justin Logan
Architect/Founder, OBI Office

Justin's residential architecture is recognised for creating connection, wellbeing and a strong relationship between interior and exterior spaces.



Rebecca Caratti
Editor-in-Chief, VOGUE Living

Rebecca leads Vogue Living, recognised globally for its design authority, creative and cultural reach and rigorous curation.



Jenny Li
Trend Specialist, WGSN

Jenny analyses global data and trends shaping design, lifestyle and consumer behaviour and contributes as a researcher and writer for WGSN content.



Matt Leacy
Creative Director, Landart

Through Landart, Matt designs landscapes connecting nature and architecture, creating outdoor spaces that restore and inspire.

Cover
The Barn's facade is defined by a strong gable form and pronounced verticality, with Axon™ Cladding 133mm Smooth and its linear grooves accentuating the height. A simple, monochromatic approach to colour, inspired by nature, reinforces the home's grounded, restorative character.

Contents

| | |
|----------------------|----|
| Lifestyle themes | 4 |
| Style overview | 6 |
| Floorplan | 8 |
| Design features | 10 |
| Cladding solutions | 12 |
| Colour palettes | 14 |
| Style variations | 16 |
| Materials & textures | 18 |
| Landscaping | 20 |
| Styling | 22 |



Lifestyle themes

Guided by evolved, creative, multigenerational and autonomous ways of living, the Barn home perfectly responds to the dynamic needs, pressures and aspirational shifts of modern life—supporting elevated daily living, human connection, independence and adaptability.

01—Evolved Living

Evolved Living shapes the Barn through smarter spatial thinking, where bold form meets efficient performance. Adaptable layouts, durable materials and passive principles deliver comfort, flexibility and long-term resilience while responding to cost, climate and contemporary patterns of living.



02—Creative Living

Creative Living amplifies the Barn’s distinct shape, as dramatic rooflines, layered textures and expressive detailing become tools for personal storytelling. Rich materiality and sculptural finishes transform the home into a canvas for self-expression, balancing grounded warmth with contemporary flair.



03—Multigenerational Living

Multigenerational Living informs the Barn through open, flowing layouts and flexible zones that adapt over time. Strong form and layered materiality frame shared spaces, while quieter retreats offer privacy, enabling households to live together comfortably, balancing connection, independence and evolving family rhythms.



Bravo House by Hazelwood Home Builders and Altereco Design. Photography by Marnie Hawson.



04—Autonomous Living

Autonomous Living defines the Barn as resilient, self-reliant and thoughtfully efficient. Bold form is supported by passive design, durable materials and simplified construction, enabling homes to perform with minimal intervention. This approach helps deliver comfort, reduced maintenance and long-term adaptability, offering stability and confidence amid shifting environmental and economic conditions.



Distinct, immersive & soothing



The simple Barn form is elevated through intricate detailing, layered materiality and deep tones, creating homes that are both bold and comforting. Nature is integrated in unexpected ways, and this style prioritises autonomy and a deeply restorative home environment.

Barn style reimagines rural forms through a bold and expressive lens. Drawing from its simple, traditional silhouette, this evolution transforms the design through sculptural finishes and rich materiality. Strong form is blended with raw, grounded textures to create a space that is both bold and comforting. Barn's graphic silhouette is met with layered materiality, deep tones and textural contrasts that evoke nature's beauty, while principles of passive design are thoughtfully integrated to add depth and a sense of quiet efficiency. The result is a joyful juxtaposition—where strength meets softness and contemporary refinement enhances the familiar warmth of the rural vernacular.

Dramatic rooflines, asymmetrical details and expressive forms inject bold personality, while overlaid materiality and light create immersive, natural beauty.

Effortless flow is achieved through strategic natural light, airflow and smart, passive design, with simplified, graphic constructions ensuring low upkeep and strong visual character while enabling comfort.

A palette of creamy whites and greens, gently layered with deep bark and soft pink, suggests a grounded yet expressive foundation. Raw, clay-like walls and wooden textures with bold green tile accents enable visual depth. The abundance of colours and textures, animated by dramatic light play, creates a space that is both comforting and sensorially profound.



- 1 The same restrained gable form continues at the rear, where the ground floor angles away to create a subtle cantilever above. Axon™ Cladding 133mm Smooth defines the upper level, paired with Hardie™ Brushed Concrete Cladding and Hardie™ Axent™ Trim below.
- 2 The side elevation highlights the material contrast of board and batten expression on the ground floor and Axon™ Cladding 133mm Smooth above, with large sliding doors allowing flow from interior to exterior living and dining areas.

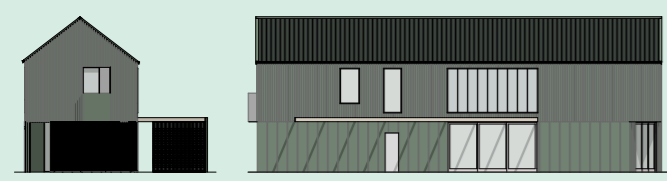


Floorplan

The Barn leans into familiar agricultural forms with a floorplan that blurs internal and external living, designed for calm and flexibility. Guided by wellbeing and quiet efficiency, it balances simplicity and thoughtful zoning.



From Justin:
 'The Barn style is about honest simplicity—strong geometry, public and private zones, grounded materials and spaces that feel calm, clear and deeply connected to nature.'



The brief

Site & Location Context
 Bowral, NSW. Within 1.5hr drive to the CBD. The region's elevated setting and cool seasonal climate influence passive performance, material selection and responses to light and landscape.

Homeowner profile
 Professionals working remotely with a preference for a quiet lifestyle.

Intended use
 Regional primary residence

The layout

3-4 bed | 3 bath | 2 car

A modern Barn layout relies on strong zoning, with a clear public-to-private sequence. This floorplan centres around a primary living zone with an open kitchen, dining and living space that connects seamlessly with the outdoors. From this central point, the Barn volumes branch into a loose triangle, with quieter areas positioned at the top and front. In this example, a rear master retreat is separated from a dedicated kids' wing across a central void, and a ground-level sitting room can shift between openness to the street and privacy through rotatable screens.

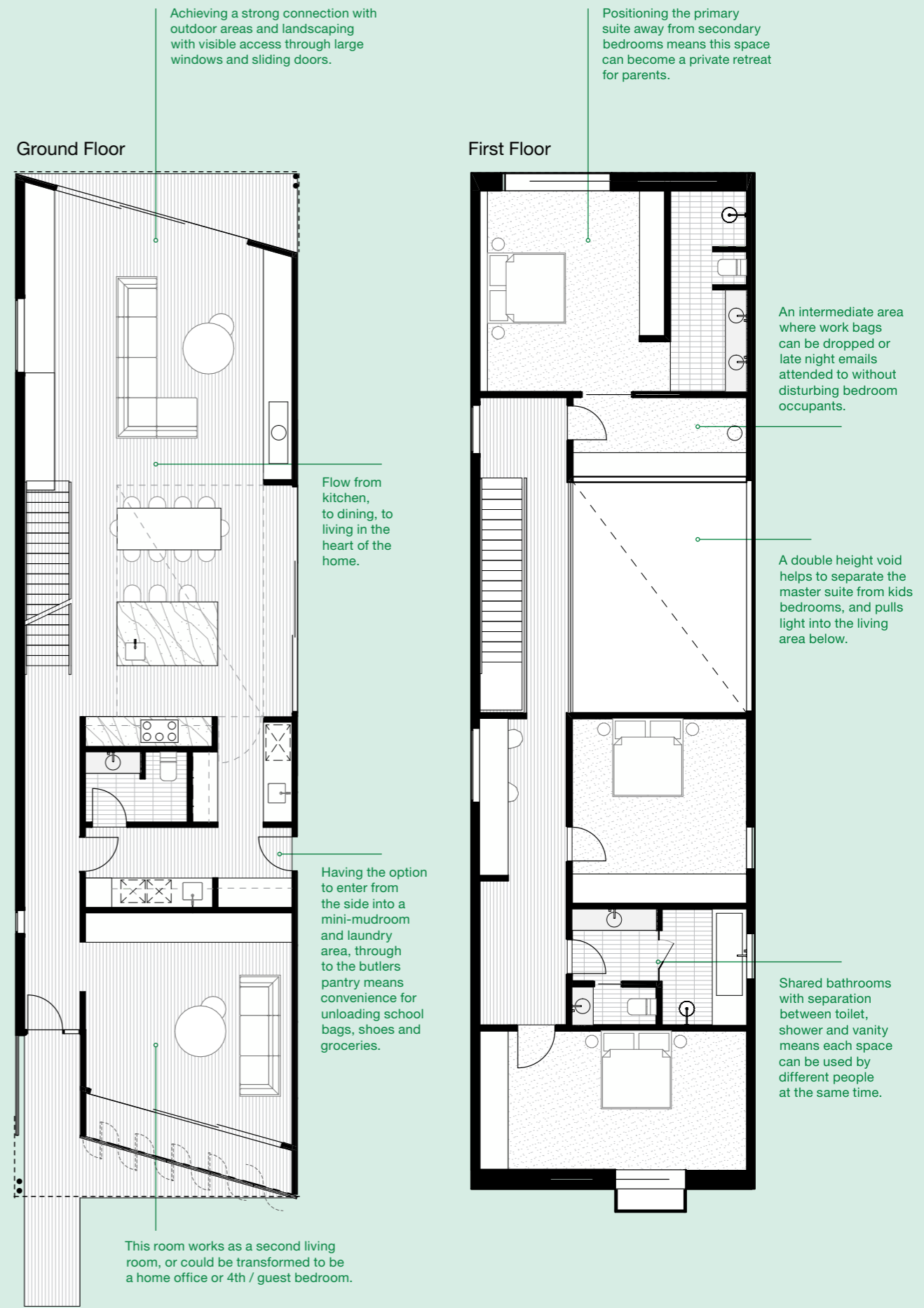
Why it works

Circulation is efficient and pragmatic in a layout like this. Everyday routines are supported by positioning the mudroom, laundry and butlers pantry directly next to the parking area, so arrivals, bag-drops and household tasks happen without interrupting the main spaces. Clear zoning, simple geometry, and carefully-placed thresholds ensure that public and private areas stay distinct yet accessible.

The Barn form itself contributes to functionality, with height bringing in light, air, and a sense of volume. Light-weight and cost-effective cladding allows these proportions without relying on expensive engineering or construction.

Adaptations

The modular form of the Barn allows it to expand or contract as life changes. The upper floor can become a retreat with its own entrance for guests or multigenerational living, and additional wings or studios can be added with ease. Spaces can be reallocated without altering the outer walls, ensuring the Barn can evolve across decades. Careful orientation supports passive solar, maximising natural light and enhancing comfort year-round.



Design features

1—Dramatic roofline

Elevated, high set gable roofs with a pitch of 35 to 45 degrees create a bold, graphic silhouette. This dramatic roofline evokes rural tradition while supporting passive design for natural light, airflow, and comfort.

2—Expressive eaves

Oversized or absent eaves add visual drama and shade to entrances and alfresco areas. This expressive detail enhances the Barn's striking form.

3—Layered materiality

Vertical or horizontal cladding, especially in the board and batten look, creates an artisan finish. Natural-look textures add tactile depth to the facade.

4—Rectangular windows

Long, rectangular windows and sliding doors accentuate the dramatic height of the Barn, flooding interiors with natural light and framing views of the landscape for a strong connection to nature.

5—Interiors

Interiors are uncluttered and comforting, with soft textures, natural-look materials and simple barn doors. Layered finishes and organic colours create a sensorially rich, restorative environment.



Bravo House by Hazelwood Home Builders and Altereco Design. Photography by Marnie Hawson.



Cladding solutions

The Barn’s adaptable structure supports numerous cladding treatments, allowing for personalised aesthetics that suit different environments and tastes.

Single profile

For a unified look across your entire home, use one cladding profile en masse. Vertically oriented boards will accentuate the height of your pitched roof, suitable for either a single or double storey build.



Hardie™ Oblique™ Cladding

Evoking the look of standing seam metal, this cladding can be installed either horizontally or vertically, creating a striking effect that complements robust Barn shapes. Available in 4200mm lengths, it’s ideal for achieving the tall, dramatic heights of Barn-style architecture.



Mixed cladding profiles

To inject texture variation, create more visual interest and accentuate architectural form, use two complimentary cladding profiles. Different profiles can be used to distinguish ground floor from upper levels.

Hardie™ Brushed Concrete Cladding + Hardie™ Axent™ Trim

Hardie™ Brushed Concrete Cladding delivers an organic tactile finish on the ground floor, echoing the raw, clay-like walls of traditional Barns. It is perfect for creating the board and batten look with Hardie™ Axent™ Trim. The 1200mm panel width makes it easy to adopt consistent yet unique spacings to apply the battens typically at 300mm or 400mm.



Axon™ Cladding 133mm Smooth

Axon™ Cladding adds crisp, vertical grooves to upper levels, enhancing the Barn’s graphic silhouette and sense of scale. Its smooth surface offers a modern take on vertical-joint timber, delivering contemporary take on a rural aesthetic.



James Hardie has provided Australian-made building products for over 100 years, with a wide range of our fibre cement products being GreenRate™ Level A certified including Hardie™ Oblique™ Cladding, Linea™ Weatherboard and Stria™ Cladding Fine Texture. All Hardie™ residential exterior cladding has a standard 25-year warranty period.



Colour palettes

The Barn colour palette takes its inspiration from Nordic minimalism, with added warm feature accents to ensure a calming, balanced interior. The palette helps to emphasise the architectural simplicity of Barn style, allowing the play of light and shadow and the beauty of the Barn form to take centre stage.



From Jenny:
 'This Barn palette is all about layered, sensorial surfaces where deep, earthy tones and graphic contrasts create minimalist yet expressive sanctuaries. The colours chosen perfectly complement the Barn's use of high-performance materials and nature-integrated design.'

| | Scheme 1 | Scheme 2 | Scheme 3 |
|------------|---|---|--|
| Roof | Colorbond® steel Pale Eucalypt® | Colorbond® steel Night Sky® | Colorbond® steel Surfmist® |
| Main Walls | Dulux® Colorbond® Pale Eucalypt® Wattyl Solagard® Colorbond® steel Pale Eucalypt® Taubmans® Colorbond® Pale Eucalypt® | Dulux® Coffee Dust Wattyl® Brazillian Drums Taubmans® Sarsaparilla | Dulux® Hog Bristle® Quarter Wattyl® Astor White Taubmans® Graceful White |
| Trim | | Dulux® Colorbond® Night Sky® Wattyl Solagard® Colorbond® steel Night Sky® Taubmans® Colorbond® Night Sky® | Natural Timber |
| Front Door | | | |



Style variations

While the iconic pitched roof anchors the Barn, variations respond to lifestyle, block size and climate. Material palettes, window placement and detailing evolve to suit context, enabling expressive yet practical homes that balance bold form, comfort, performance and long-term adaptability.



Asymmetric roofline
 A variation on the symmetrical pitched roof for a style that leans away from classic, into contemporary.
 Featuring Hardie™ Oblique™ Cladding installed vertically in alternating 200mm and 300mm widths.



Urban Barn
 Characterised by classic, archetypal house form and a perfectly rectangular footprint. Ideal for small suburban blocks.
 Featuring Hardie™ Oblique™ Cladding 300mm.



Multigenerational
 Can evolve with family needs, with the upper level operating as a self-contained space with private access for parents, adult children or guests.
 Featuring Stria™ Cladding Smooth 325mm.

Single story

Farmhouse influence with a cosy, private feel. Dual pavilions separate living and retreat spaces, suited to larger blocks, rural settings or acreage where space allows.
 Featuring Hardie™ Oblique™ Cladding 300mm.



Medium Density Townhouse

Townhouse or dual-occupancy design featuring clear zoning, repeatable forms and efficient, space-smart planning.
 Featuring Hardie™ Oblique™ Cladding 200mm and EasyLap™ Panel with Hardie™ Axent™ Trim.



Get the Look

Materials & textures

This is a palette defined by creamy whites and greens, layered with deep bark and soft pink, creating a deeply organic yet expressive base. Raw, clay-like walls, wooden textures with bold green tile accents enable visual depth. The abundance of colours and textures, animated by dramatic light play, enables a space that is both comforting and sensorially profound.



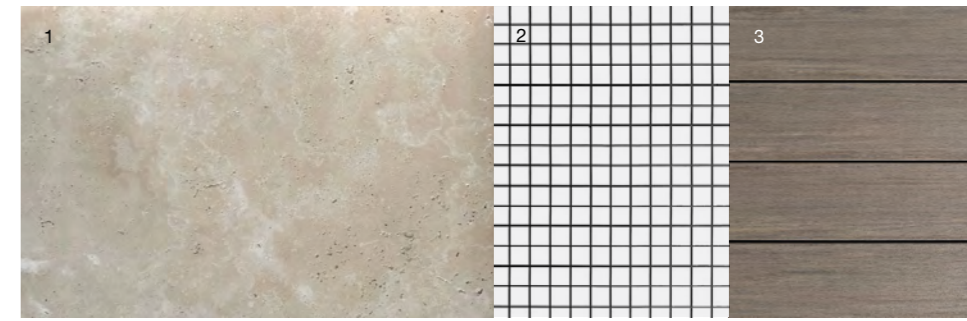
From Rebecca:

'When choosing Barn materials, it's all about balancing raw, tactile finishes with refined surfaces. Layer textural contrasts to create quiet Barn luxury, ensuring everyday spaces feel grounded, sensory-rich and enduringly beautiful.'



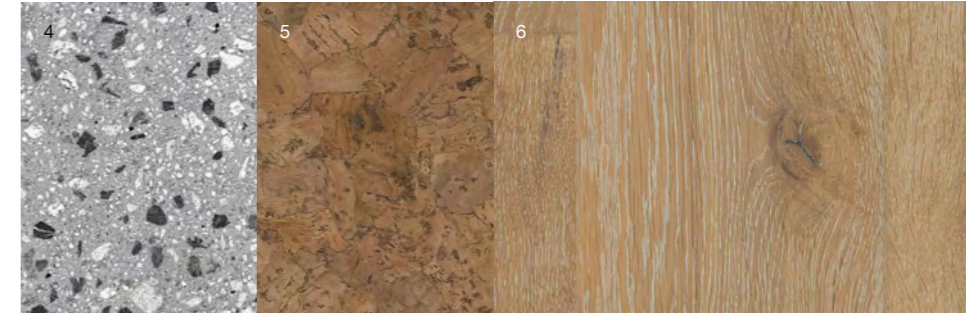
Exterior

- 1 [Travertine Tuscan Stepping Stone](#), RMS Traders
- 2 [Rapid Black Wire Mesh Panel](#), Bunnings
- 3 [PVC Decking, Vintage Collection](#), [Coastline](#), [TimberTech](#)



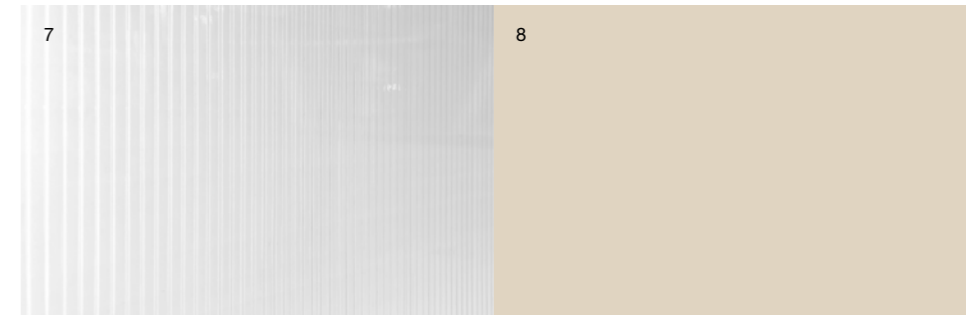
Flooring

- 4 [Exposed Aggregate Polished Concrete](#)
- 5 [Copenhagen Cork Flooring](#), Kustom Timber
- 6 [Cantina](#), Engineered Timber Flooring, Kustom Timber



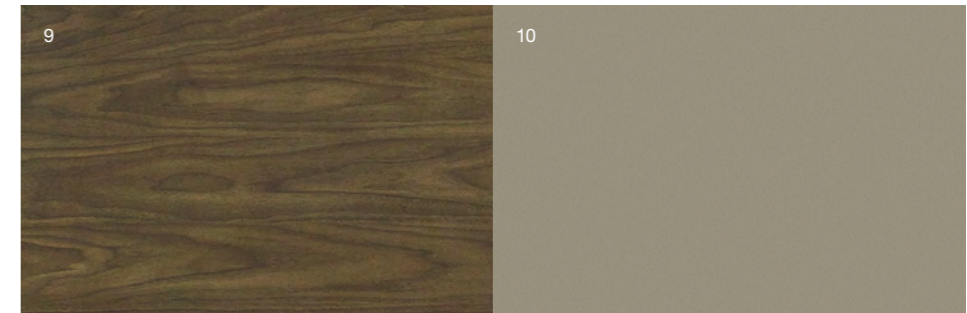
Walls / Windows

- 7 [Danpalon® Microcell Glazing Panel](#), Danpal
- 8 [Dulux Bread Crumb Interior Paint](#), Dulux



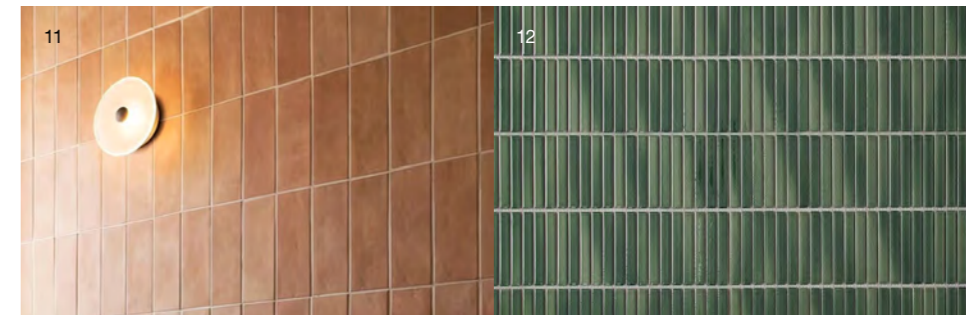
Cabinetry

- 9 [Laminex Sepia Walnut, Natural](#), Laminex
- 10 [Laminex possum, Natural](#), Laminex



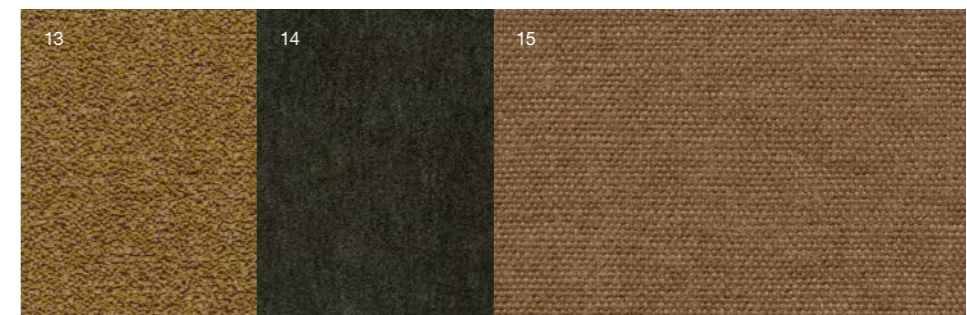
Tiles

- 11 [Northbridge Peach Terracotta Look Subway Tile](#), [Tilecloud](#)
- 12 [Coogee Antique Forest Green Kit Kat Mosaic Tile](#), [Tilecloud](#)



Textiles

- 13 [Jefferson Upholstery, Gold](#), Warwick
- 14 [Linia Kariega Upholstery, Charcoal](#), Warwick
- 15 [Wappo Linen Upholstery](#), James Dunlop Textiles



Landscaping

Landscaping in the Barn extends the home's grounded character into the landscape, using native planting, textured surfaces and layered greenery to frame bold architecture. Outdoor zones become restorative, sheltering and sensory, supporting passive performance while strengthening the connection between built form, nature and everyday living.



From Matt:
 'What I love about landscaping Barn homes is shaping outdoor rooms with native planting, texture and shade, grounding bold architecture in climate, light and season to create restorative spaces.'

Bravo House by Hazelwood Home Builders and Altereco Design. Photography by Marnie Hawson.



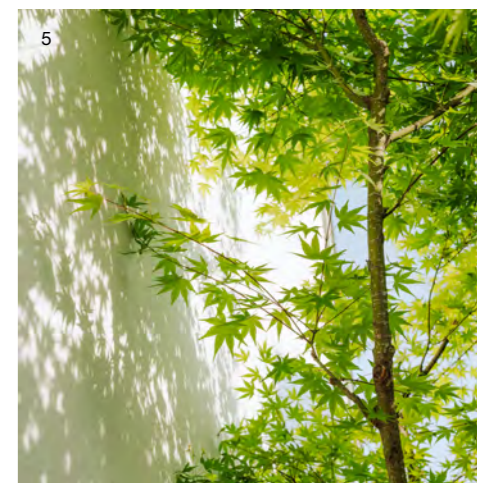
Warm Climates

- 1 Lemon Scented Gum—a tall eucalyptus with smooth pale bark and a citrus-like aroma.
- 2 Star Jasmine—a fragrant climbing plant with glossy leaves and small white star-shaped flowers.
- 3 Indian Hawthorn—a compact evergreen shrub with glossy green leaves and clusters of small pink or white flowers.



Cool Climates

- 4 Virginia Creeper—a fast-growing climbing vine with five-lobed green leaves that turn vivid red in autumn.
- 5 Japanese Maple—a small deciduous tree with finely cut leaves that emerge red or green and shift to rich autumn colour.
- 6 Cut-leaf Daisy—a low-growing perennial with finely divided foliage and small daisy flowers in white, pink or purple, commonly used as groundcover or edging.
- 7 Lamb's Ear—a low-growing perennial with soft, velvety grey-green leaves and small spikes of purple or pink flowers.



Styling

Styling the Barn centres on a restorative home environment where uncluttered, comforting interiors pair soft textures with natural-look materials and simple Barn doors. Wooden textures, raw materials and healing colours layer with organic forms, balancing practicality with playful sparks of joy while creating immersive, everyday sensory experiences.



Outdoor

- 1 Kato Wall Mounted Letterbox, Arko
- 2 Tubby Lever Entry Handle Black, Lo & Co
- 3 Bilgola Acacia Wood Outdoor Daybed, Temple & Webster
- 4 Forte Ip65 Outdoor Wall Light, About Space
- 5 Chagda Set of 2 Pot Set, Freedom
- 6 Tucson 80 Rust Fire Pit, Temple & Webster
- 7 4 Seater Otti Steel Outdoor Dining Set, Temple & Webster
- 8 Natural Woven Coir Doormat, Temple & Webster



Interior

- 1 2 Piece Nolan Nesting Coffee Table Set, Temple & Webster
- 2 Moss Nimes Linen Quilt Cover Set, Temple & Webster
- 3 Dharma Braided Jute Rug, Natural, Rugs for Good
- 4 Adela Square Cotton & Linen Cushion, Temple & Webster
- 5 Terry Premium Genuine Leather Sofa, Temple & Webster
- 6 Wall spout + Cross taps Matte Black, Yabby
- 7 Frankie Handles, Linea Standard
- 8 Sammi Led Floor Lamp, About Space





Explore the Hardie™ AI Visualiser

Visualise, customise and communicate your design vision with Hardie™ products and the latest modern home styles from the James Hardie Modern Homes Forecast 2026.

jameshardie.com.au

Follow us at [jameshardieau](#)



Copyright © 2026 James Hardie Australia Pty Ltd. ABN 12 084 635 558.
™ and ® denote trade marks or registered marks owned by James Hardie Technology Ltd or JH Research USA, LLC. All trademarks, other than those owned by James Hardie Technology Ltd or JH Research USA, LLC, are property of their respective owners.

