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Photography: Caitlin Mills

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## A Seaside Refuge at Ocean House in Lorne

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BY TACEY RYCHTER 09th April 2015

*One of Australia's most exquisite architectural stays is only a couple of hours along the Great Ocean Road.*

Just where the Great Ocean Road starts to blur with dark greenery as you move into the edge of the Otways you'll find this striking home in North [Lorne](#).

Architect Rob Mills explains he's used to tailoring luxury homes for his clients, but Ocean House was his own dream house.

"When you design for yourself there are no boundaries. The only thing that limits you is your own skill."

This is more than a dream home, it's a castle. It actually is, though – not just in the obvious elements (the thematic grey, spiral staircases and a fortress-like lookout), but in its character. Without being imperial or imposing, it exudes strength and endurance. It is built to withstand fire, howling storms and generations to come.

Aside from a couple of furnishings, this place is virtually unbreakable. The floors – the very foundations the house is built from – are raw concrete. The rest is raw timber, glass and steel.

These elements should feel cold and industrial, but it's the opposite. The warmth is in the details – timber softened with a whitewash, textured stucco concrete. The sunlight comes in everywhere, casting long shadows that fall artfully around curved walls at certain times of day.

As Mills explains, the limited and soft palette of materials, "Allows your eye to travel over the space without stopping and starting. You don't get that staccato effect. That's what I think creates a very calm and serene environment."

With five bedrooms, the house can sleep up to 10 people. Because there are separate living areas across two storeys, including a fully equipped kitchenette on the lower level, the house can also be rented as self-contained apartments for smaller parties. While the upstairs living room is the gem, the "round room" is the nucleus, a safe and cocoon-like sleeping experience.

While the house is an architectural masterpiece (and one of the most exquisite boutique luxury accommodations in the country) it gives itself over to the true star – the natural beauty of its surrounds. Standing on the mountainside, you can look directly through the house into the ocean, framing a postcard of a perfect cerulean paradise. Switch sides, and the house is a window to the wilderness of the Otways.

The triumph is The Sky – the panoramic outdoor lookout at the top. This is where the duality of the two scenes bind together, and it's stunning. As you absorb the ocean waves and native bird calls, you might see a kangaroo bound out of the woods and down to the secluded shore over the road. At night, you can see Lorne Pier glowing in the blackness.

The Ocean House is a bastion between you and the outside world, a serene refuge, and an idyllic fantasy you won't want to rouse from too soon.

*Ocean House is available to rent. Packages are available including helicopter transfers and reservations at [Brae](#).*

Broadsheet was a guest of Ocean House Lorne.

[oceanhouse.com.au](http://oceanhouse.com.au)  
[robmills.com.au](http://robmills.com.au)