



Custom build by Ross Squire Homes at Dunsborough. Images: Bianca Kate Photography.

Unearthing the secrets to stone

Y SABELLA SALISBURY

The inclusion of stone, as a design element carried throughout the home or as an individual feature, can create a striking aesthetic in a new abode.

Humphrey Homes Owner and Director Dean Humphrey said stone could be used as an integral part of a home's design, rather than just a decorative add on.

"In two-storey homes where you want to achieve the effect of the upper floor floating in the sky, stonework can create weight to anchor the lower level to the ground," he said.

"Flowing the external stonework from the front elevation through to the interior of the home also helps to guide visitors inside and defines the entry."

Zorzi Design Project Manager James Zorzi echoed this sentiment, saying stone is particularly effective in bold uses such as entry statements, double volume voids or feature fireplaces.

He said one of the strengths of

using natural stone as a design aspect of a build was its versatility, being easily adapted to suit a number of styles.

"It can be used just as effectively in traditional and classical-style homes, as well as in Hamptons-inspired and modern, contemporary designs," Mr Zorzi said.

Adding visual strength, texture and interest, stonework can complement other materials and elements, as well as to define key areas.

"It can be used to flow between the exterior to the interior, blurring the lines between indoors and out," Mr Humphrey said.

"Drama, texture and emotion can also be added by contrasting stone with other materials such as the use of a warm textured stone to contrast beautifully against a strong dark steel element."

Mr Zorzi said one trick of the trade was to use stone in the manner you would expect it to appear in nature.

"As most stone comes in a tile format, you need to lay it in a manner that retains the essence of it," he said.



Custom build by Zorzi at Dalkeith.

"That is, stone is naturally a heavy material and not something which one would find following intricate shapes, so try to keep shapes simple and monolithic.

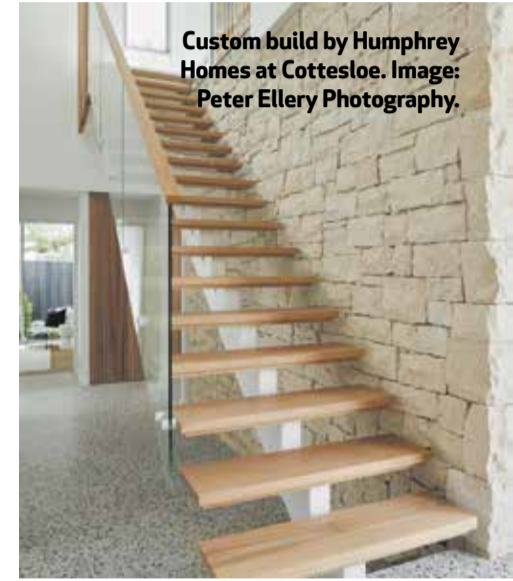
"Try and use large and simple expanses of stone and minimise corners which are costly and hard to do with stone claddings. Additionally try to use stone as a base."

Mr Humphrey said homebuilders should keep any stonework connected to the ground.

"Stonework is a visually and physically heavy material that needs to be earthed," he said.

"So it doesn't make sense for it to start on a second storey, with glazing, timber or steel below.

"If it goes to the second storey, it should be a continuation from the ground level."



Custom build by Humphrey Homes at Cottesloe. Image: Peter Ellery Photography.

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Only as happy as his last client

Y SABELLA SALISBURY

From making three-dimensional models as a child to designing and building homes as an adult, Ross Squire Homes Design and Building Consultant Pete Zivkovic has always been driven to build and create.

After arriving in Perth nearly 35 years ago, Mr Zivkovic said he was inspired to enter the building and architecture industry after seeing all the different styles of homes built in Western Australia, with his start in the field beginning during his studies.

"I was picked out by a home improvements company while I was studying, which was really beneficial for me because it was very hands on and I was able to notice mistakes in existing homes, as well as what worked and what did not, and changed it to suit the clients who were living there," he said.

"It was very good to learn from and helped to realise these things could be done better."

Fast forward to present day, Mr Zivkovic is at Ross Squire Homes, working alongside an experienced team.

"Ross Squire Homes has been operating in the countryside for more than 40 years now, and it's really great knowing that with anything we do, there is always a wealth of experience," he said.

According to Mr Zivkovic, his favourite part of the job is being able to witness his client's joy when creating a home perfectly tailored to them.

"Our standard designs are adapted to suit our client's individual living style, their needs and their dream spaces," he said.

"They really become personalised for the family, and clients love them for that reason."

Mr Zivkovic said his favourite

designs amongst the Ross Squire Homes range were the Argyle and Muresk, but it was always difficult to pick his favourite project.

"I say this with hesitation, but my favourite project is always the last one I work on because happy people getting what they dreamed of is always a favourite project for me," he said.

"Our homes and designs are meant to be for our clients – they are the ones who are going to be living there and enjoying the large spaces, the small nooks and crannies, the resort-style bathrooms, functional kitchens and the views from them.

"I always ask a lot of questions to get to know the clients better and how they live, and then advise them how to change our designs to get the most out of it or customise them completely so that the home is right for them."

As times change, so too does the building industry, with Mr Zivkovic saying bushfire prevention, sustainable designs, energy efficiency and elements creating a healthier living environment for clients are on the rise.

"We need to show clients how to maximise their blocks, our sunshine, their orientation, and then all the little bits inside the house as well such as not having wasted spaces and to use it in the best way they can," he said.

Looking to the future of homebuilding, particularly in regional areas, Mr Zivkovic said he would like to see a few more trends from the city passed on to the designs in the countryside.

"We don't want them to miss out – there are a lot of clever things for the way we live now, it's changed a lot," he said.



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Ross Squire Homes Design and Building Consultant Pete Zivkovic.



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