

space





top deck

A small home lets in the sky via giant windows and an open roof terrace.

Words Sandra Killen

Uncovered roof terraces are an unlikely trend in Brisbane's subtropical climate. But several new homes, such as this one in inner-city Teneriffe, can now be seen with top-level decks.

Michael Latham's four-level home, designed by Shawn Godwin of Base Architecture on a 229sqm allotment, sits comfortably in its narrow, one-way street lined with a mix of old and new buildings. It's on a subdivided block, sitting in front of the site's original worker's cottage, which Godwin renovated into a contemporary two-bedroom house – also with a roof terrace – three years ago.

Godwin says it was important to open up the new house “both physically and visually, wherever possible”. “Areas such as the rooftop terrace and a water garden allow the house to breathe.” The water garden, a large, shallow fishpond off the kitchen on the first level, helps cool the house through a wall of ►



louvres and captures the colourful reflection of the red tin roof of the house on the other side of the street.

Huge low-level windows in the spacious middle-level lounge afford privacy as well as a view to the treetops below. "It's like a sea of green, which is unique for an inner-city block," Latham says. "It's a soothing, tranquil house."

Glass louvres in the bedroom and ensuite on the third level allow breezes to be directed where needed. "It's my favourite part of the house," Latham says. "I can turn off the lights and lie in bed and have an unobstructed view of the city lights."

Stairs lead up from this floor to the roof terrace. Latham says that while the terrace is undoubtedly hot in the midday sun, it's "magic at sunset for a drink or dining under the stars". On the ground level are two more bedrooms, a bathroom, laundry and a double garage, while the grassy, private back yard serves as a playground for Latham's trusty labrador Jessie. ■

This house is an entrant in the Australian Institute of Architects 2010 Brisbane Regional Architecture Awards, announced May 21.



Views from the top ... (clockwise from left) Cocktail hour on the rooftop deck; bold lines break up the side elevation; the house's dramatic rear aspect; and (opening pages) the lounge is flooded with natural light through a range of different windows.