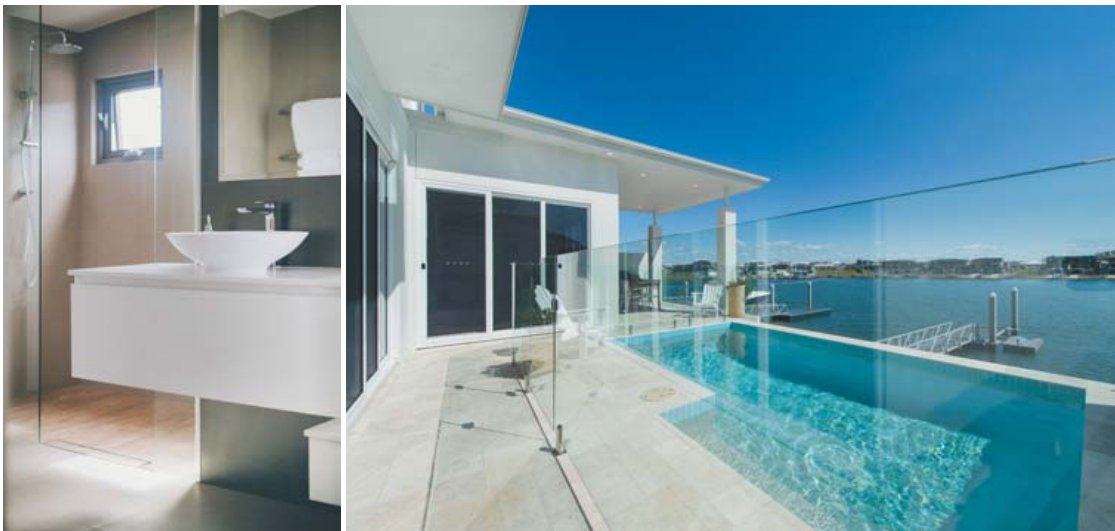




BRANDON CALDER

How custom can you make a custom built home? Chrissy Jones spoke to one of Port Macquarie's leading custom builders - Brandon Calder and his interior designer Michelle Burton about making every home individual.



How long have you been building custom homes in Port Macquarie?
Brandon: Over 15 years. Not just in Port Macquarie - we build throughout the Hastings area, You will see Brandon Calder Homes in Port, Oxley Park, Wauhope, Sancrox, Rawdon Island and further south in Harrington and Forster-Tuncurry.

Do you only build luxury custom homes?

No, we build a mixture of home types and sizes. Not just luxury custom built homes by the water, which we specialise in, we also build smaller homes for first time buyers and down-sizers to the larger family homes. Occasionally we are the leading builders for boutique residential developments.

Your custom built homes have won national and regional awards, how important is that?

Brandon Calder Homes was the winner both regionally and nationally of a Master Builders Association custom home builder award (\$500,000 - \$1 million) and this year we were voted in the top three at the NSW MBA Awards. Our homes have also won numerous regional Housing Industry Association Awards including the most recent awards in 2015 - Housing Industry Association (Northern NSW) for our kitchens and bathrooms designed by Michelle. Awards are important in that it is recognition of the extra steps we take for our clients to truly customise every home without compromising quality and style.

What's the secret to building an award-winning home?

We believe there are four key ingredients to building a custom home worthy of an industry award: having a client with vision and an open mind; the right architect or building designer to interpret their dream; the right builder who can translate the design; and the right interior designer who can give a cohesive look to the finished home.

What's the process of building a custom home? Is it complicated?

We build to a client's own plans and make the process as simple as possible. We are not project builders and we don't try to sell anyone a plan or one of our homes. We work closely with the architects or building designers and often get involved in the early design stage to add our advice as to the suitability of the design in regards to the block of land and to the functionality for all the people who are going to call it home. Once a design has been approved, we can do an accurate build cost based on the agreed schedule of finishes, for instance what type of roofing and flooring, type of doors and windows, any particular external cladding or features, type of heating/cooling, any special needs like wheelchair ramps, type of garage door. We take clients through an extensive selection list so we can be sure that we give a realistic building quote and time schedule based on the owners' wishes.

Is it always more expensive to build a custom home?

We take pride in our budgeting process and because of our meticulous pre-build planning we often build a custom-home at a project price. We always remind ourselves we are building a home for our client, not for ourselves. Once all the

major selections have been agreed along with the building quote, and the plans approved by council, the next stage is the detailed customising. This is where Michelle gets involved. We employ her company, Designing Divas, to spend time with our clients to go through the fine details of the interior of the home to reflect the owner's taste and style.

What's involved in personalised interior styling to a custom built home?

Michelle: Brandon Calder Homes is one of the few quality building firms locally who recognise the importance of interior design when it comes to a family's personal space. We have a number of meetings with clients to go over their wish list. Every client is different. Every home is styled differently. However there are a few fundamentals we always cover: overall colour palette, then colour selection room by room, kitchen design and fixtures and fitting, same with the bathroom and ensuite, laundries are also individually designed to suit a family's use. Storage needs are different for each family. Clients are really surprised at the huge choice available to truly customise their home - it's my role to steer them in a cohesive way and to advise if they are going outside their budget. Part of the Brandon Calder Homes process is to accompany clients to local tile, flooring, bathroom, lighting and kitchen showrooms. As well as presenting all types of finishes and products such as handles and door furniture at our design studio. Of course we also utilise the extensive on-line galleries. At this stage we will also discuss the outdoor landscaping and if necessary bring in our landscape designer to ensure the outside complements the

interior of the home. Getting the design right at the early stages makes for a successful outcome: a beautifully styled custom home, on budget and on-time.

You have a reputation for building quality custom homes yet you are also known as a quick builder - how do you manage both aspects?

Brandon: By listening. Listening to what the clients want from their home and making sure we only engage quality professionals at the initial consulting level - architect or building designer and an interior designer. The meticulous pre-planning not only ensures everything is budgeted for, with no costly surprises. It also means a much faster build process.

So as 2016 approaches is it looking good for custom builders?

Signs are still very positive. We will continue to strive to maintain the Brandon Calder Homes promise - highest quality, on time and on budget.

Thanks Brandon.

the plug!

BRANDON CALDER HOMES

National award winning custom builder
www.brandoncalderhomes.com.au
E: info@brandoncalderhomes.com.au

DESIGNING DIVAS

National award winning Interior Designer
www.designingdivas.com.au
E: info@designingdivas.com.au
Phone 0413 398 908