

The Daily Telegraph

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Class of 2012

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Awards

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NSW's top building awards 12

Display Alicia by Alkira Homes 7 **At home** Sunrise's Melissa Doyle 22





\$1 MILLION-\$2.5 MILLION

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It has been dubbed the Invisible House but, for builder Mark Tam of Dimark Constructions, this property (also pictured on the cover), west of the Blue Mountains, is very real.

He spent two back-breaking years working on the magnificent project overlooking the majestic Kanimbla Valley, blending concrete, black steel, glass and water in a very contemporary way.

Mark says it was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, but so extravagant in design he was initially concerned about how to begin.

“You couldn’t print what I thought when I first saw the plans,” he says.

“I was apprehensive to even price it as it was such a technical job. I had to study the plans for quite a while.”

He says the job was definitely a labour of love and his team faced multiple challenges along the way.

“Our biggest concern was the climate. This property is about 1200m above sea level, it’s actually higher than Katoomba and in winter we would get wind chills of minus 13 (degrees). On a construction site, that’s less

than ideal. The guys that worked with me, their heart had to be in, otherwise they would only last a couple of weeks.”

Getting materials delivered to the site also proved problematic due to its isolation, with Mark and his team forced to pick up and deliver the goods down the 800m driveway to the side of the mountain.

Despite the hardships faced on site, Mark says, “the job was well worth it”.

What was formerly a 160ha sheep farm is now a show-stopping home.

The cantilevered concrete design extends more than 3m from the supporting walls and is filled with water to reflect the sky; this makes the house “invisible” from the west.

Ned Kelly-inspired boxes of black steel sit atop the concrete construction, acting as bedrooms and light boxes. Other design features include curved ceilings, which were made from rough-sawn oregon.

As the home is primarily concrete, heating was also a serious consideration. In addition to the underfloor hydronic heating, a geothermal system was installed which comprises 60cm pipe running three metres underground where the temperature is a constant 12C. This air is pumped through the house ensuring that in sub-zero temperatures, the house is never cooler than 12C.

