

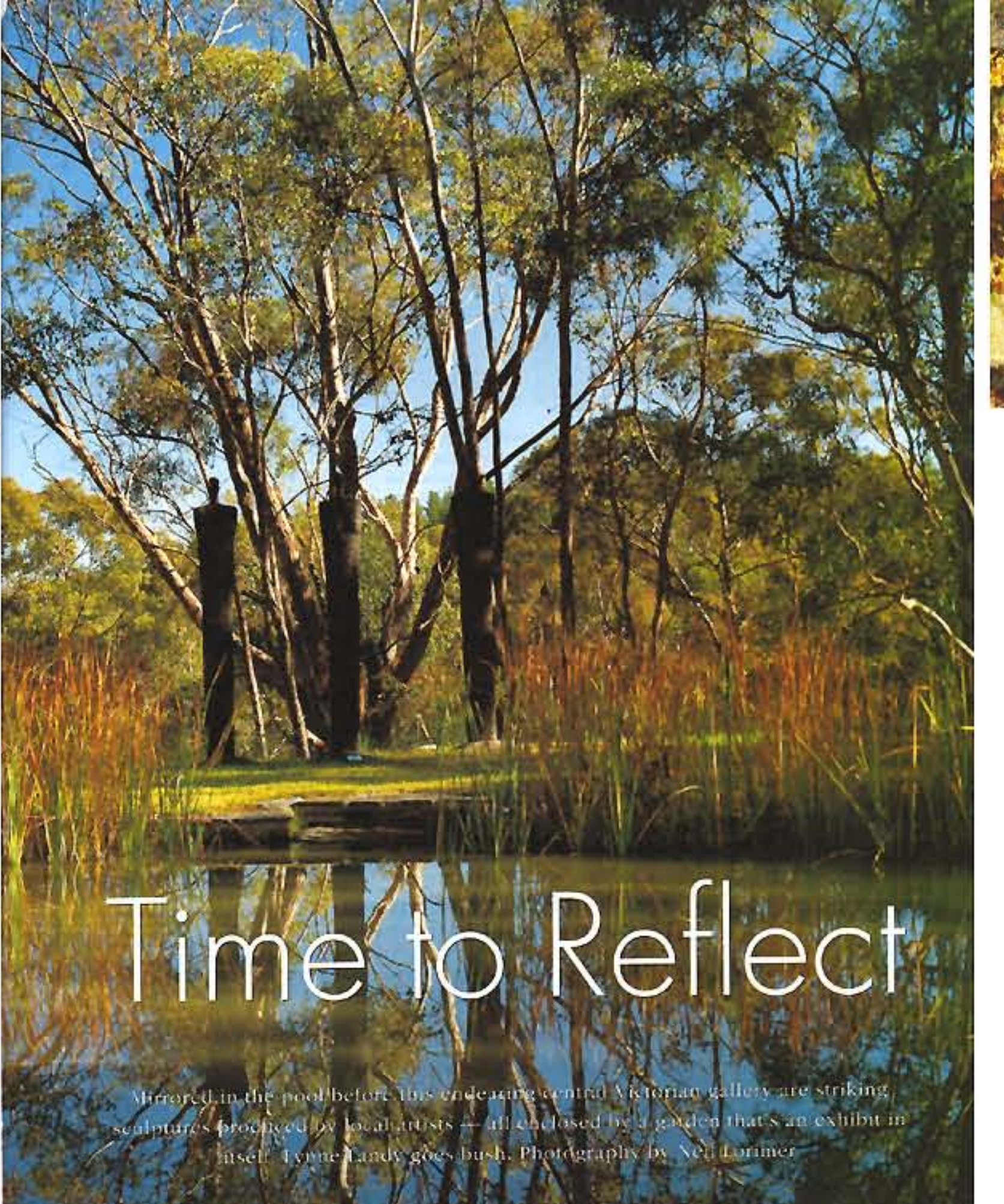
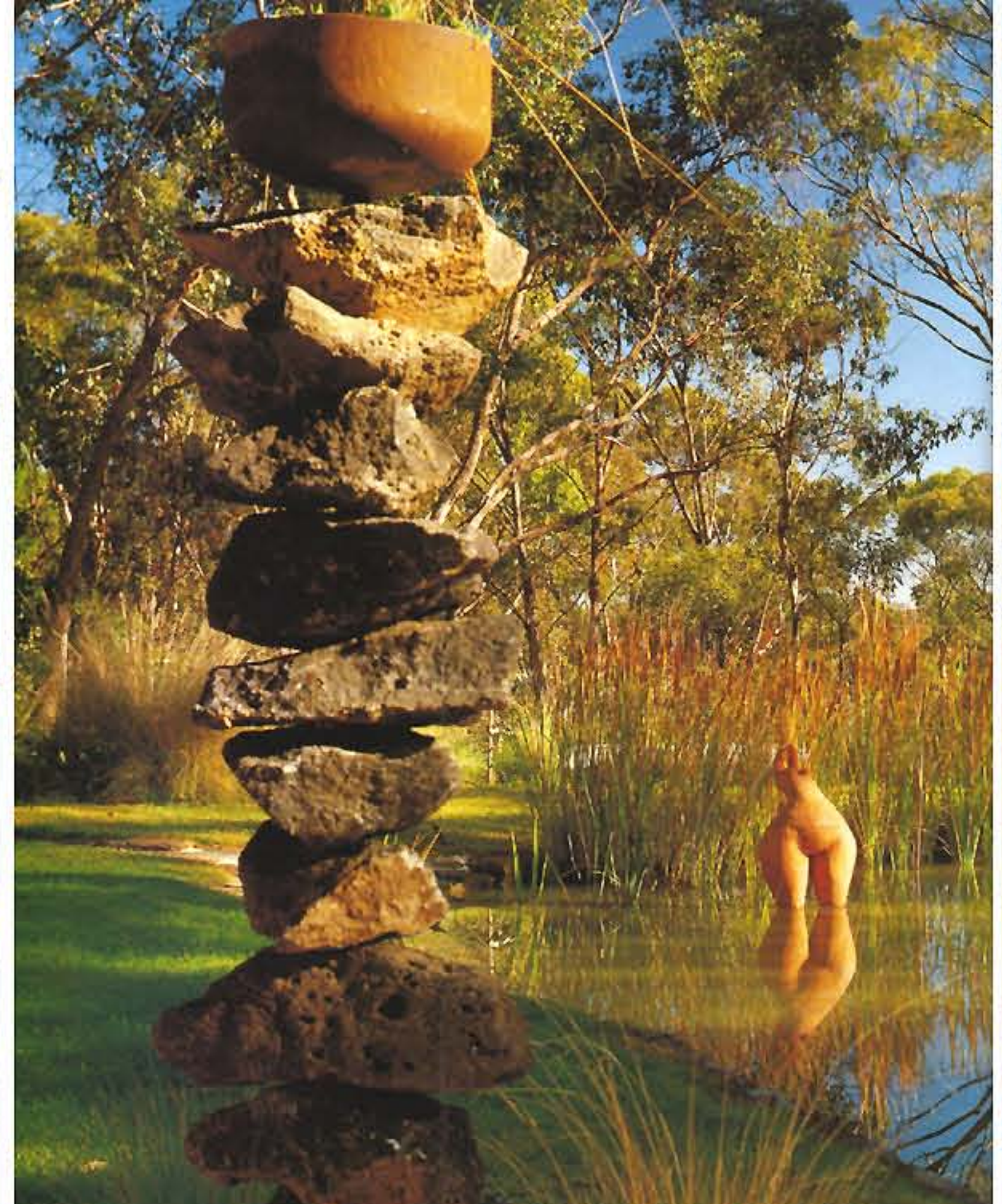
Romantic Notions

Breakfast Delights

Blissful Bed Linen

Simply Stunning Country Homes

Rambling in the Dandenongs
MAGAZINE OF THE YEAR*



Time to Reflect

Mirrored in the pool before this endearing central Victorian gallery are striking sculptures produced by local artists — all enclosed by a garden that's an exhibit in itself. Lynne Randy goes bush. Photography by Neil Lorrimer



A series of colourful signs along Specimen Gully Road at Barkers Creek near Castlemaine in central Victoria, leads the visitor to an unusual native garden and gallery that blend imperceptibly into the surrounding bushland. Peter Wallace and Wendy McClelland are the visionaries behind this project, a tranquil garden setting for sculpture and paintings produced by local artists. Peter, an artist himself, has years of experience in the gallery business, having run a successful gallery with his brother, David, in nearby Castlemaine. "We bought an old building in the town," says Peter. "I wanted a studio to display my own work and there are so many artists in the region, but very few outlets. I set up a workshop over the gallery and we had some beautiful



86 COUNTRY STYLE



exhibitions. It was very satisfying for a while but, after eight years, I needed time to reflect. It was too difficult to have the day-to-day responsibilities of running a gallery and trying to do my own work." The gallery was sold and Peter moved out to a shack he owned in the bush, starting to think about his next move. Meanwhile Wendy approached him for help in building a house on a bush block. "I was happy to build the house and then I built a studio there," says Peter. "And the outcome of all these plans is that, four years later, we are joint partners in the Wallace/McClelland Gallery and Garden. Most of the artists we represent here I knew already. It was like a cooperative but, despite the number of talented artists in the region, there was no outlet that focused on their work." The hectare of land set in the middle of a beautiful patch of native bush was connected to power and water and had a flat site for the house. And there were already two buildings on it. "There were two very ugly electricity commission cottages on the block," says Wendy. "They were really basic but Peter used them as the basis for the new house, joining them together with the kitchen in the middle. The extension is mudbrick and galvanised iron and, since



87 COUNTRY STYLE



we were working on an extremely tight budget, most of the materials were recycled. You would never recognise those old cottages now — the house is a sculpture in itself." Completed towards the end of 1998, the house has settled into its bush environment and already seems like part of the local landscape. North-facing, the living room enjoys all the winter sun and overlooks a pond that provides tranquil reflections of the ever-changing array of sculpture set on its banks. "The dam was produced from the hole Peter dug for the material for the mudbricks," says Wendy. "Once he had enough bricks, we filled the hole with water to make a pond, planted bulrushes and edged it with lawn and paving."



88 COUNTRY STYLE

Right: The view of the bush block was the pull. Bottom left: Peter Wallace in his studio with two recent works entitled 'Landscape Building and Building One'. Bottom right: Reflections of the mudbrick barbecue. The marble table will give an air of calm. Credit: Lynne Randy

Top left: The garden in late autumn. The welded steel sculpture is 'Robert' by Yvonne George, the stone is 'Dancer' by Sherry Vujan, the limestone and terracotta by Lynne Randy. Top right: Wendy, seen through the studio window. Below: The limestone sculptures flanking a door at the side of the house are by David Wallace. Previous page: Three sculptures in and around the pond. 'Chicago Black' (foreground) by David Waters, the terracotta female figure in 'Lobby' by Sue Meredith, cement female figures 'Three women observing the sunrise' by Lynne Randy.

Right: The view of the bush block was the pull. Bottom left: Peter Wallace in his studio with two recent works entitled 'Landscape Building and Building One'. Bottom right: Reflections of the mudbrick barbecue. The marble table will give an air of calm. Credit: Lynne Randy

Top left: The garden in late autumn. The welded steel sculpture is 'Robert' by Yvonne George, the stone is 'Dancer' by Sherry Vujan, the limestone and terracotta by Lynne Randy. Top right: Wendy, seen through the studio window. Below: The limestone sculptures flanking a door at the side of the house are by David Wallace. Previous page: Three sculptures in and around the pond. 'Chicago Black' (foreground) by David Waters, the terracotta female figure in 'Lobby' by Sue Meredith, cement female figures 'Three women observing the sunrise' by Lynne Randy.

Right: The view of the bush block was the pull. Bottom left: Peter Wallace in his studio with two recent works entitled 'Landscape Building and Building One'. Bottom right: Reflections of the mudbrick barbecue. The marble table will give an air of calm. Credit: Lynne Randy

Top left: The garden in late autumn. The welded steel sculpture is 'Robert' by Yvonne George, the stone is 'Dancer' by Sherry Vujan, the limestone and terracotta by Lynne Randy. Top right: Wendy, seen through the studio window. Below: The limestone sculptures flanking a door at the side of the house are by David Wallace. Previous page: Three sculptures in and around the pond. 'Chicago Black' (foreground) by David Waters, the terracotta female figure in 'Lobby' by Sue Meredith, cement female figures 'Three women observing the sunrise' by Lynne Randy.

Right: The view of the bush block was the pull. Bottom left: Peter Wallace in his studio with two recent works entitled 'Landscape Building and Building One'. Bottom right: Reflections of the mudbrick barbecue. The marble table will give an air of calm. Credit: Lynne Randy

Top left: The garden in late autumn. The welded steel sculpture is 'Robert' by Yvonne George, the stone is 'Dancer' by Sherry Vujan, the limestone and terracotta by Lynne Randy. Top right: Wendy, seen through the studio window. Below: The limestone sculptures flanking a door at the side of the house are by David Wallace. Previous page: Three sculptures in and around the pond. 'Chicago Black' (foreground) by David Waters, the terracotta female figure in 'Lobby' by Sue Meredith, cement female figures 'Three women observing the sunrise' by Lynne Randy.

Right: The view of the bush block was the pull. Bottom left: Peter Wallace in his studio with two recent works entitled 'Landscape Building and Building One'. Bottom right: Reflections of the mudbrick barbecue. The marble table will give an air of calm. Credit: Lynne Randy

Top left: The garden in late autumn. The welded steel sculpture is 'Robert' by Yvonne George, the stone is 'Dancer' by Sherry Vujan, the limestone and terracotta by Lynne Randy. Top right: Wendy, seen through the studio window. Below: The limestone sculptures flanking a door at the side of the house are by David Wallace. Previous page: Three sculptures in and around the pond. 'Chicago Black' (foreground) by David Waters, the terracotta female figure in 'Lobby' by Sue Meredith, cement female figures 'Three women observing the sunrise' by Lynne Randy.

88 COUNTRY STYLE

Cottlesbridge, Victoria, which thrived in the 1960s and '70s. A trip overseas developed his talents further. He travelled through Mexico where he admired the adobe architecture, moved on to Europe where he learned the art of leatherwork and silversmithing in Denmark and found he could make a living wherever he went. Eventually he returned to St Andrews, where architect Alastair Knox and his team of enthusiasts had developed the techniques of mudbrick building and design.

Peter developed his building skills in this rural environment and went on to work as a builder as a way of funding his artist's lifestyle.

Now that the gallery and garden are up and running, he continues to occasionally build for other people but his main focus is working in his light-filled studio.

The garden, however, is Wendy's domain. She works as a nurse in Bendigo but spends every spare moment in the garden which was designed by her son Michael Wright, a landscape architect. He created the garden to complement

the house, as an oasis setting in the middle of dry box forest. "I've always been a passionate gardener," she says. "Here I wanted the garden to be in harmony with our

Bottom: Yvonne George's welded steel statue. Protecting the birds makes a dramatic sight, especially when reflected in the pond. Below: The house is filled with vibrant artworks; the large painting is a work by Paul Casell.



Bottom: Yvonne George's welded steel statue. Protecting the birds makes a dramatic sight, especially when reflected in the pond. Below: The house is filled with vibrant artworks; the large painting is a work by Paul Casell.