



Light and *shadow*

A house on Queensland's **SUNSHINE COAST** is a bold mix of tropical modernism and Australian vernacular. **PAUL MCGILICK** shared a visit to this arcadian retreat with its architect, **DAVID TEELAND**.

TEXT: PAUL MCGILICK PHOTOGRAPHY: LARET FOWLER



The vision of *Habitus* as a regional magazine of the Asia-Pacific is driven to an important extent by the recognition that there are key climatic and cultural affinities between Australia and its northern neighbours in South and South-East Asia. At the very least the region shares an all year round benign climate and to a certain extent a tropical and sub-tropical climate. This is conducive to an outdoor lifestyle, connection between indoor and outdoor living, and living in the landscape.

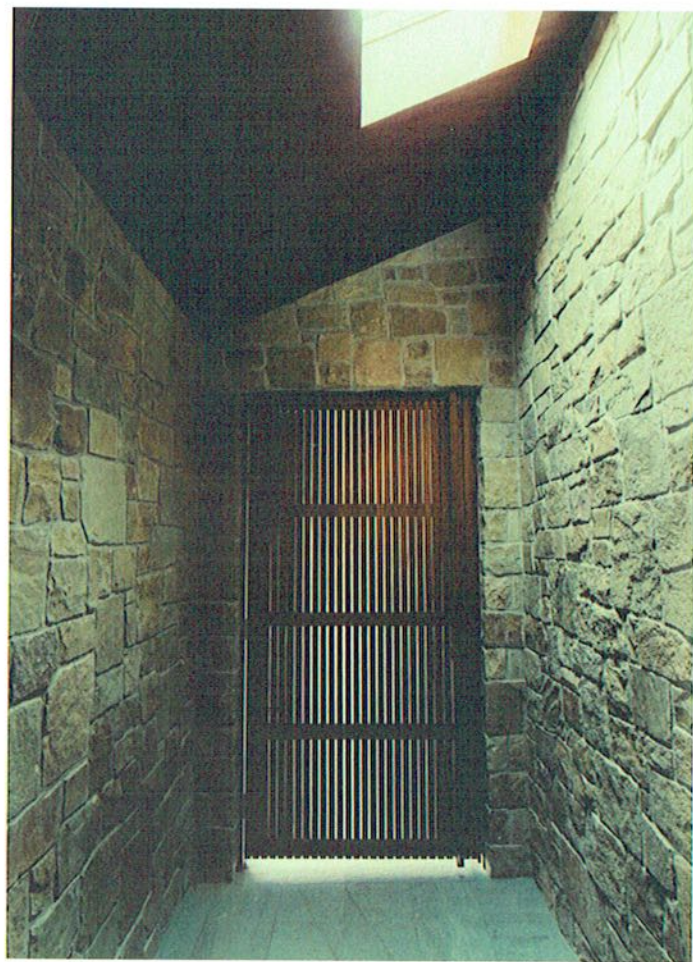
In recent years, architects throughout the region have looked to traditional architecture for inspiration. Initially, this was a largely sentimental quest. But architects quickly realised there were things to learn from traditional strategies which would help us to live with the climate, not against it, leading to the extensive adoption of passive strategies for cooling, ventilation and the use of natural light.

While tropical modernism may be mostly associated with the architects of South-East Asia, its equivalent has been strongly in evidence in Australia. In the more temperate parts of the country, names like Glenn Murcutt and Peter Stutchbury are familiar. But in the tropical and sub-tropical northern parts of the country there are plenty of familiar names: Troppo in the Northern Territory, and Queenslanders such as Gabriel Poole, Rex Addison, Kerry and Lindsay Clare, Shane Thompson and John Mainwaring among others. As early as 2000, Peter Hyatt celebrated Australian tropical modernism in his book, *Local Heroes – Architects of Australia's Sunshine Coast*.

So, it is always a good idea to check up on what architects are doing on the Sunshine Coast. Teeland Architects' Stone and Timber House is an intriguing recent addition to the story: a house which responds to the sub-tropical climate of the Sunshine Coast with an engaging mix of tropical modernism, a dash of Asian aesthetic and a lashing of traditional Australia country style.

On arrival, the impression is anything but South-East Asian. This is a very large property and from the road the house sits somewhat in the distance on top of a rise. There are two man-made lakes (for flood mitigation), home to large numbers of wild ducks, and the property is ringed by a conservation eucalypt forest. In short, this is a very beautiful location.

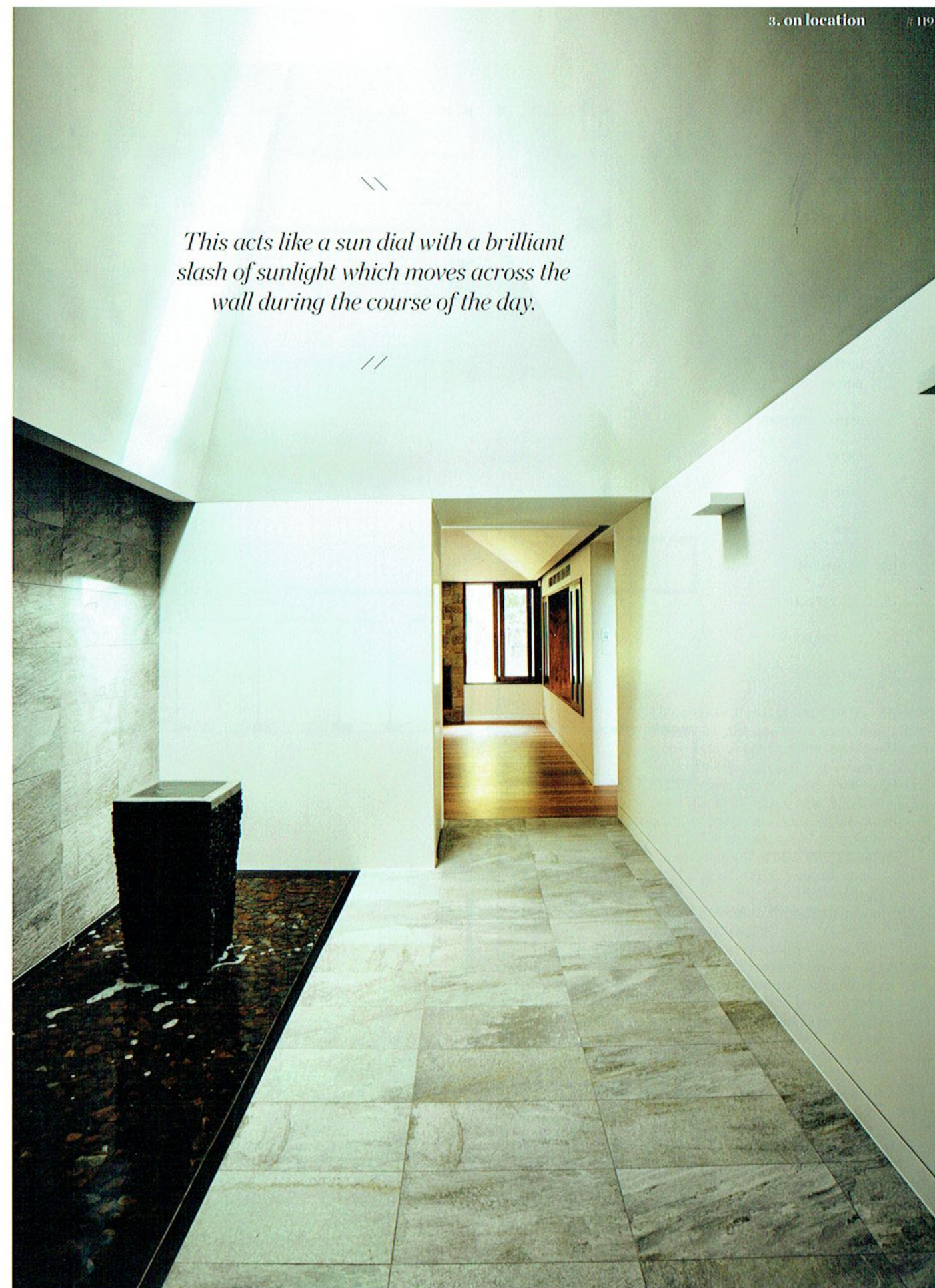
Things change as we get closer. The house has a strongly linear form which derives from the fact that it consists of an original house (the eastern wing) now linked to a new central living/dining/kitchen space and new western wing. The house and its two open north-facing courtyards are inflected by lovingly cultivated sub-tropical gardens.



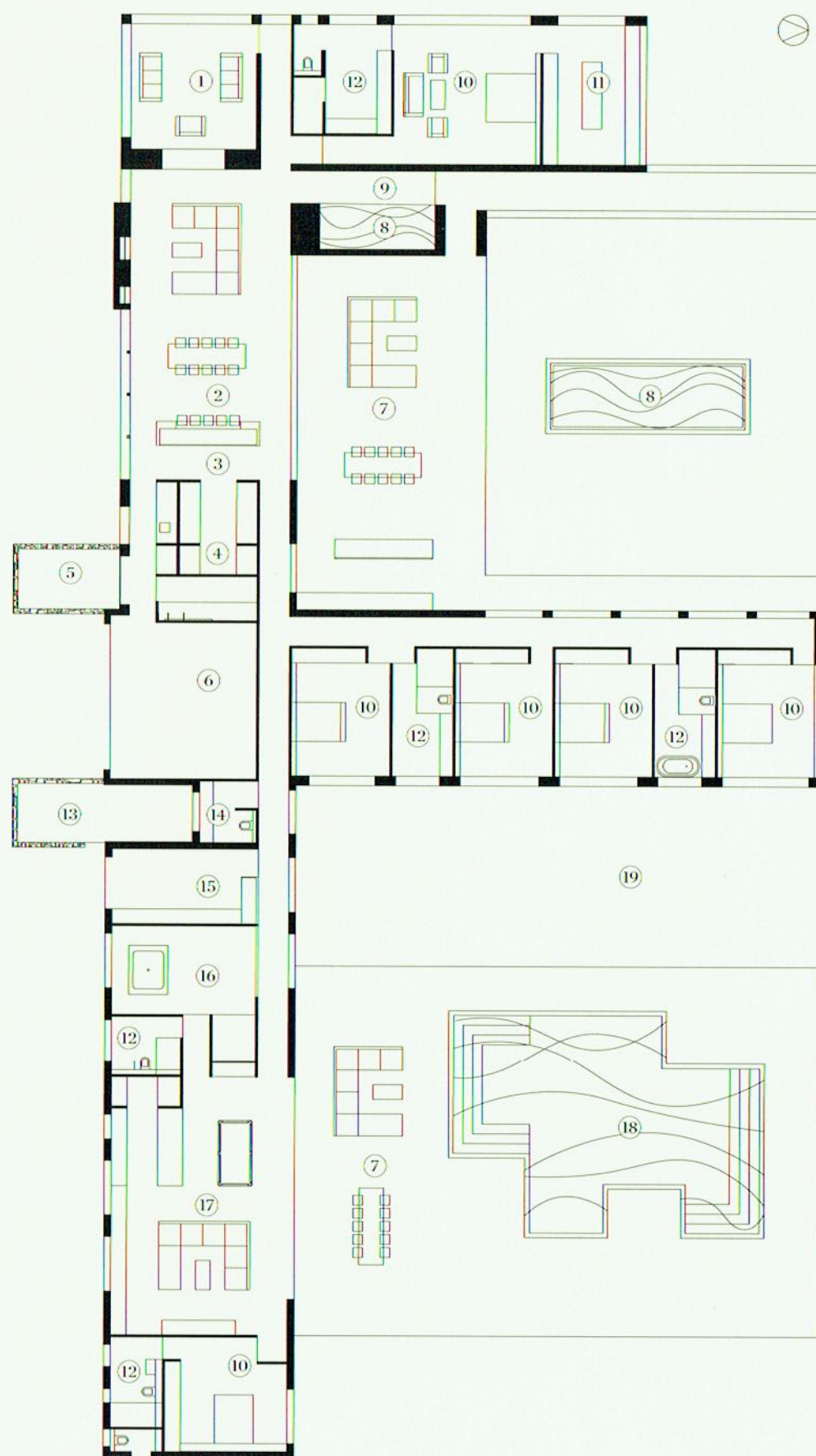
This hint of Asia is picked up with the entry sequence, an extended journey of arrival. From the driveway drop-off, we walk down a path of natural stone. On our left is a spotted gum batten screen, filtering the north-eastern sunlight and partially screening off the main courtyard. At the end of this path, visitors can turn left and enter the courtyard or continue to the formal house entry. If they do this, they will pass through an exquisite transitional space with a small pond and the calming sound of a fountain. This space has a high pyramidal-shaped ceiling with a skylight at its triangulated apex. This acts like a sun dial with a brilliant slash of sunlight which moves across the wall during the course of the day.

In the introduction to Jun'ichirō Tanizaki's wonderful reverie, *In Praise of Shadows*, Louis Kahn is quoted as saying, "The sun never knew how wonderful it was until it fell on the wall of a building." This play with sunlight – the house has a series of naturally lit gallery spaces – is made possible by the need to pitch the roof at a minimum 25 degrees to cope with the heavy sub-tropical rainfall.

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- ① READING ROOM
- ② LIVING/DINING
- ③ KITCHEN
- ④ LAUNDRY
- ⑤ DRYING COURT
- ⑥ GARAGE
- ⑦ OUTDOOR LIVING/DINING
- ⑧ REFLECTION POOL
- ⑨ ENTRY
- ⑩ BEDROOM
- ⑪ ROBE
- ⑫ BATHROOM
- ⑬ UTILITY COURT
- ⑭ POWDER ROOM
- ⑮ ART STUDIO
- ⑯ GYM
- ⑰ GAMES ROOM
- ⑱ POOL
- ⑲ GARDEN



*The material conversation between
timber, stone and the garden landscape...*

This spacious, flowing linear interior of the house – basically, just one room deep, thus allowing ample natural lighting and cross-ventilation – continues the material conversation between timber, stone and the garden landscape which gives the house its subtle South-East Asian quality. Long corridors and high-pitched highlight windows amplify this by offering framed glimpses of borrowed landscape.

The roof form extends into generous overhangs which provide shading. The rain runs off these gutterless overhangs into the side gardens and swales.

The western wing is the private domain. Apart from the master bedroom and bathroom, it includes a private sitting room. Here a series of finely customised rosewood windows begins, to continue around the rear elevation and the main living room. Private it might be, but it wouldn't sit quite right in this wonderfully open house if it remained entirely private, hence, the intriguing opening, like a service bay, which simultaneously connects and separates the sitting room and the living room.

An enticingly long corridor connects the new house with the original house. Along the way is a new eastern wing of guest bedrooms which helps frame the main courtyard leading from the living and kitchen area. This courtyard is



the heart of the house with its sheltered terrace looking past a water feature and out to the panorama of the grounds and the forest.

The original house is now mainly a games room, leading out to the secondary courtyard and swimming pool. With its bar, pool table, kitchenette and additional guest bedroom, it makes the whole guest wing effectively a self-contained unit.

Ultimately, this house is all things to all men. While it has the delicacy and meditative aesthetics of Asia, it is equally a modern version of a country homestead with all its typical informality and roominess. On the one hand, the house is perfect for large gatherings and entertaining. On the other, it has many intimate spaces, offering privacy and escape from the mob. And, while it has the ruggedness of a homestead, it also enjoys a delicate materiality with an understated conversation between a variety of materials, highlighted by some beautifully wrought finishes and craftsmanship.



DROP BOX

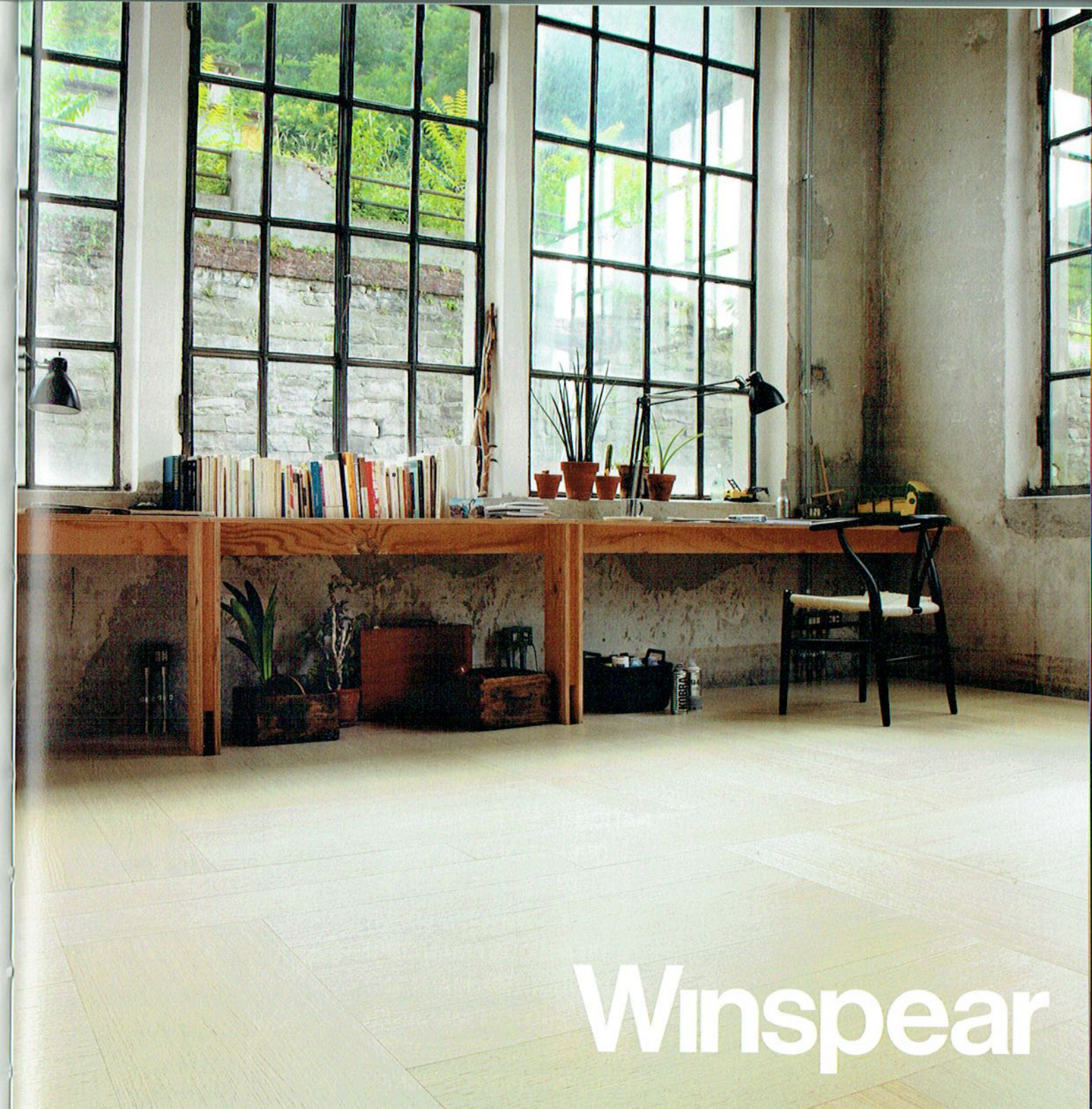
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