



The beam is BACK

by Robin Harper

Ceilings in some homes can be treated as an underwhelming afterthought – and often greater focus is placed on the elements that sit in front of you. However, bombastic exposed beams and pitched, high ceilings in rustic-style homes have made a sensational comeback. Although the beauty of a pitched ceiling might not be everyone's cup of tea, it's hard to deny the charm it breathes into every home it occupies. *Melbourne Home Design + Living's* Robin Harper sits down with Steven Hedger, director of Hedger Constructions, to share his expert insights into the charm of rustic ceiling presentations.

Imagine yourself strolling through a new home you've never visited before. Your eyes are drawn from left to right, down and then up, up, up to the high ceilings above. What a jaw-dropping delight! This is exactly the kind of response the rustic style ceiling aims for. Instead of being relegated away to attic-type hideaways, the ceiling has been invited into the living space not just as a design quirk, but as a statement of the space. It calls itself to attention, but is well worth the lingering appreciation. We are here, my readers, to unpack the secrets behind why this particular spectacle

works when well executed, and how enthusiasts of this design can flawlessly implement this cosy look into their houses.

LAYING THE GROUNDWORK

A winners of a multitude of awards, including more than 30 Master Builders Association of Victoria Awards, and three-time recipient of the MBAV Regional Builder of the Year, Hedger Constructions is indisputably at the top of the industry and one of Victoria's most prestigious building companies. The company's many achievements are a testament to the team's outstanding craftsmanship and positive client relationships. Due to high demand, Hedger Constructions has expanded its services to include much of the state, with teams based throughout north-east Victoria, Yarra Valley, High Country, Melbourne CBD, Greater Melbourne, Geelong and the Surf Coast. With this vast catalogue of housing styles from inland to coast, Steven Hedger is no stranger to all kinds of styles and features.

Hedger Constructions is a specialist in its field. A family company that offers custom homes to Victorians across the state, it defines itself "by innovation, integrity and quality". Hedger guarantees a collaborative approach with clients to create "bespoke custom homes from concept to completion."

Often a staple of country homes, Hedger says that "rustic rooftops are characterised by features such as exposed timber beams, recycled fascia materials and timber rafters. Roof lines are often pitched, with high ceilings to create a sense of space," he says. Often these features are drawn to the highest point of the ceiling. On certain occasions, the team at Hedger Constructions has used "false aged tin over the top of an existing external roof surface to create a rustic appearance. Complemented by half round gutters to reflect rustic rooftop design," explains Hedger.

HOW IT MAKES YOU FEEL

It's all well and good to have a ceiling be the centre of attention in a room, but more than anything, a house needs an 'it' factor that makes it a home. Styles and features can help address this. Where high ceilings with exposed beams are concerned, Hedger says that the use of timber "helps evoke a sense of warmth and comfort within a home. They feel solid and masculine, natural, open and spacious, creating a relaxed ambience for homeowners to enjoy." When implemented in a deliberate manner where this feature is allocated to a particular space of the house, it can be a refreshing reprieve – one that gives you room to breathe and recentre yourself from the stresses of life.

"The popularity of rustic rooftop elements reflects a wider trend for natural material homes that feel in harmony with the surrounding environment," says Hedger. Seeing as Hedger Constructions has an impressive client base in regional Victoria, the "rustic homes are a popular choice for Hedger Constructions clients looking for a relaxed rural holiday home, or primary residences on farms or bush allotments," Hedger explains. The high, exposed beam ceilings can be a particularly effective feature when applied to more modern styles such as open-plan living, as there's been an uptrend of city dwellings looking for ways to incorporate recycled materials into their designs.

This demand for recycled materials and a more natural feel to be blended into everyday living spaces is where the exposed beam truly shines. According to Hedger, the "pitched design of rustic rooftops can minimise the visual impact of the building within the landscape, while also reflecting features of the surrounding environment, such as hills." Paired perfectly with rustic ceilings are wide windows that allow natural light to enhance the ambience and invite the beauty of the house's surroundings into the room.

VERSATILITY IS KEY

Another aspect adding to the long list of benefits of having a rustic rooftop is its versatility when it comes to the use of space. While you can choose a rustic roof to be a feature of a single room in the house, this style can also be great for areas with multifunctional purposes. Hedger notes that a "rustic, pitched roof also creates a scope for the inclusion of mezzanine levels, attics and lofts, providing flexibility in the usage of space."

Popular ways that builders elevate this fantastic feature of houses is by utilising the surrounding area. In Hedger's professional opinion, "feature windows are key, providing connection to the surrounding environment, framing views and providing abundant light," he says. The addition of a large ceiling fan and feature lights incorporated into the rustic look "bring



these elements into view, rather than obscuring them in higher parts of the ceiling," explains Hedger.

For those interested in bringing this feature into their next dream home, Hedger asserts that "the most important thing to remember when considering this material and design approach is to not overdo the recycled or rustic look. A selection of statement features in key areas creates balance and sophistication to the rustic appeal."

Whether you're looking to elevate an existing living space or want to imitate this look in your home design, consider the wise words of Hedger and ensure that your rustic ceilings are applied with purpose. Remember: a statement is only well received if it is also well executed!

Images courtesy of Hedger Constructions

