

GRAND DESIGNS

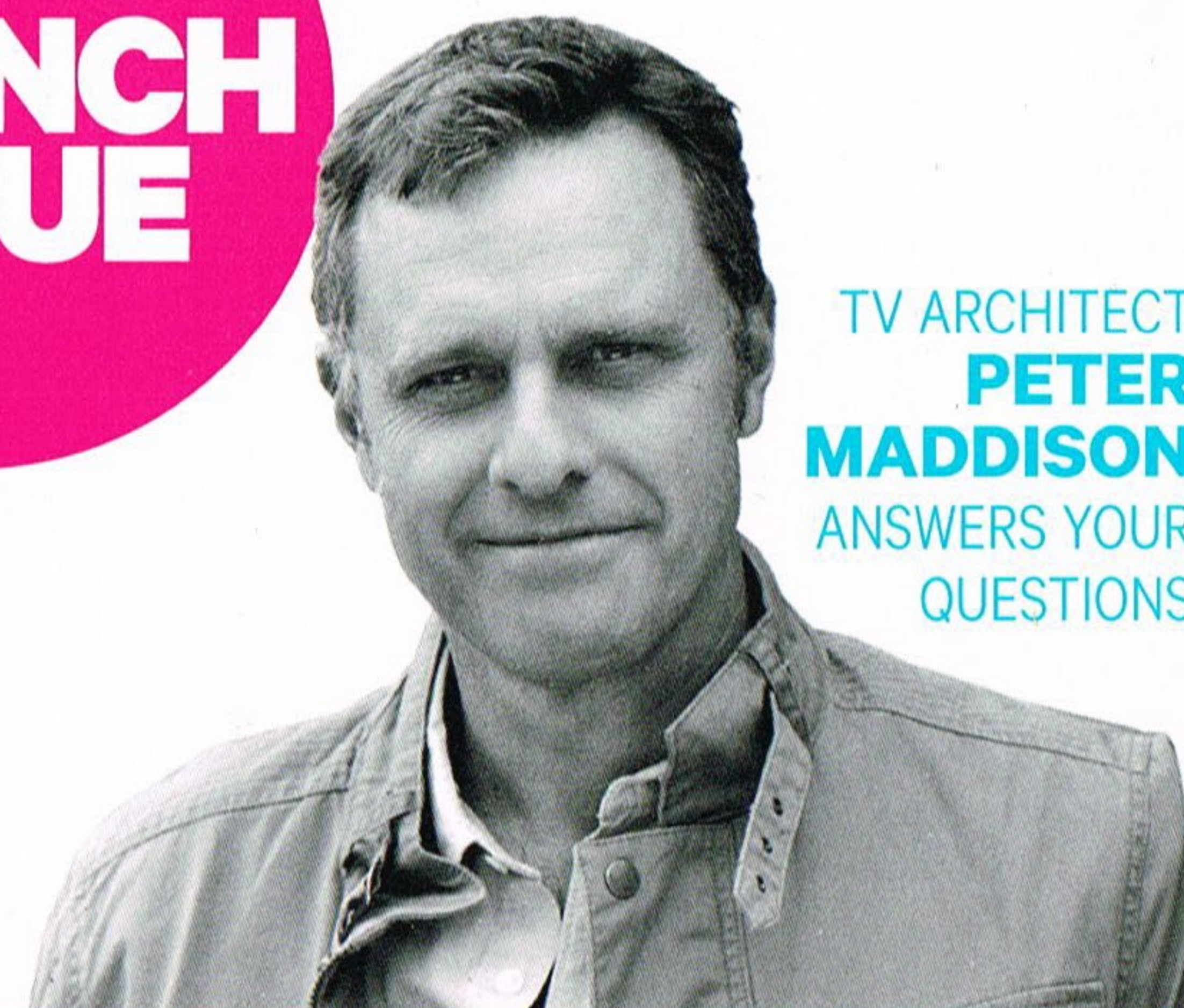
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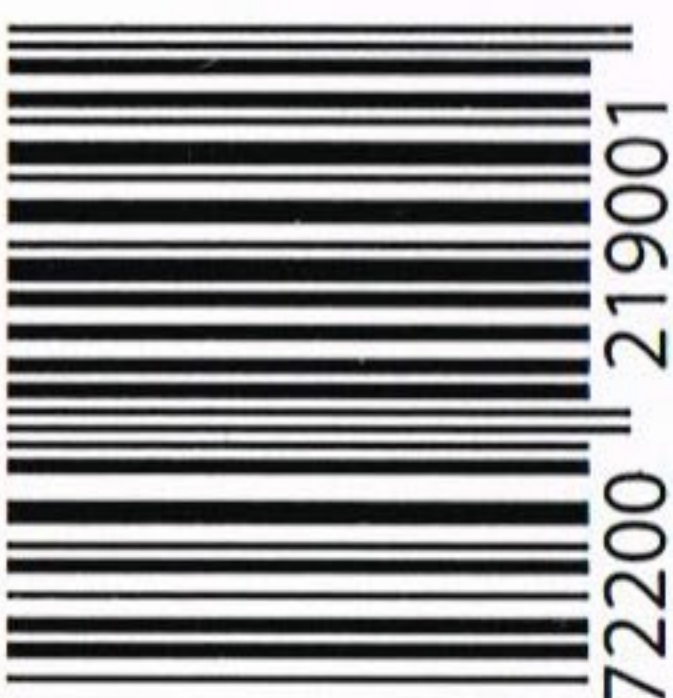
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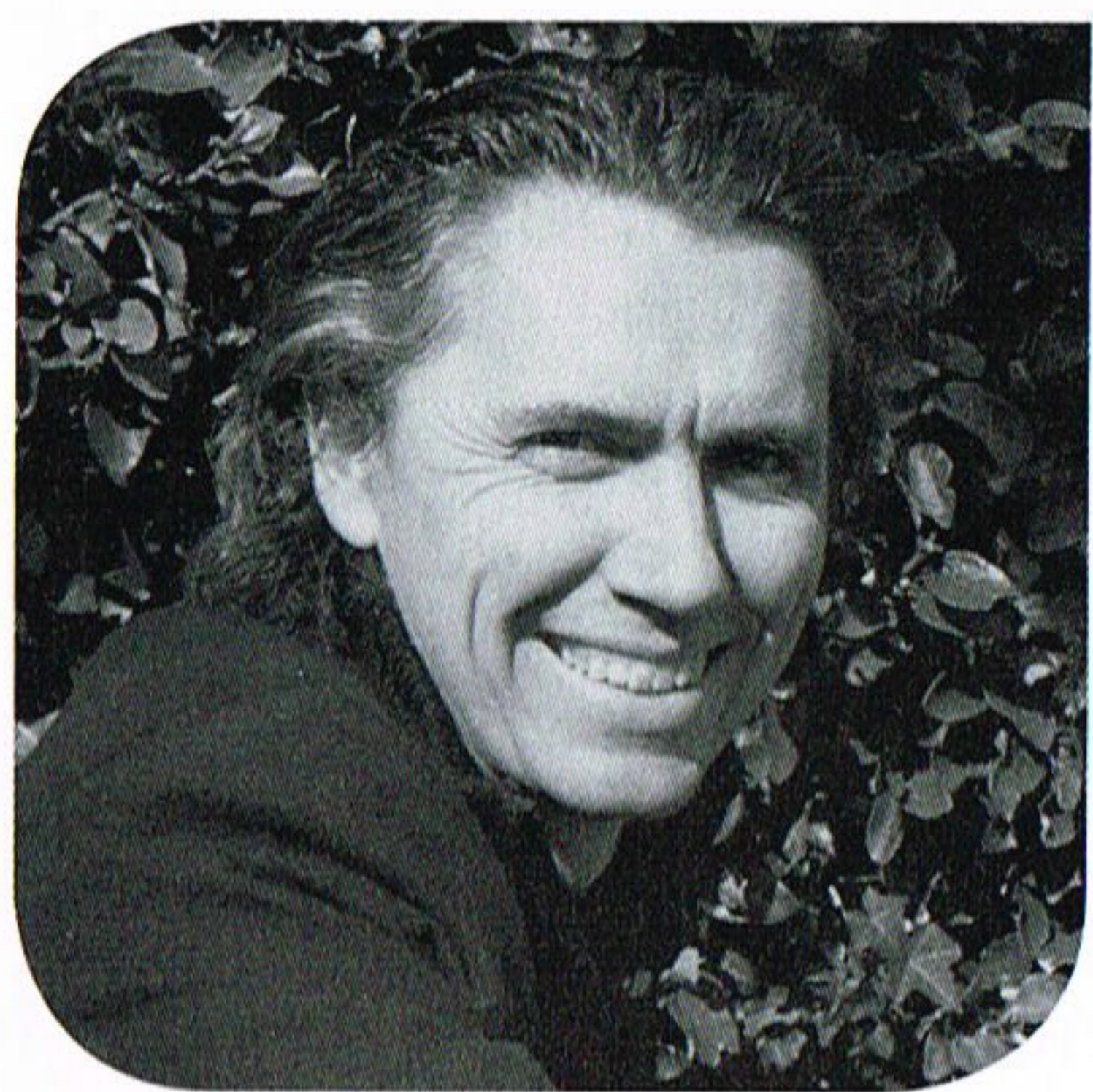
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LIFESTYLE

SEEKING DESIGN ADVICE

—
WORDS *Julian Brady*



If you're designing a new home or planning major additions and alterations to your existing one, you'll probably need to rethink your landscaping design. Here's how to get started

Today, landscaping is more about creating outdoor rooms, which effectively are extensions of indoor living to the outdoors to best suit our lifestyle and site conditions. Landscape architects and landscape designers are professionals who can best assist you with landscape design advice. A landscape architect is a university-qualified professional and a landscape designer is a TAFE-qualified professional. Both can provide expert landscape design services with high-quality results.

When selecting a landscape architect or landscape designer, always do your homework. First, take a good look through the designer's website for examples of completed projects that appeal to you. The designer's website will provide you with some insight into their work, design philosophy and types of services offered. Give the designer a call to discuss your requirements over the phone and to gain some more information about the designer's experience and capabilities.

Once you have selected a shortlist of three, set up an on-site meeting with each designer to discuss your design brief in detail. The design brief should capture all your requirements that the designer will need to address in their scope of work and ultimately deliver during the design process. If you're unsure of your specific design requirements, don't worry; the designer will be able to assist you through the briefing stage by asking you specific questions. For example, "Do you enjoy cooking and dining outdoors?" or "What style or theme of garden appeals to you the most?"

The first site meeting with the designer is a valuable opportunity for you and the designer to

meet face to face, and for the designer to make an initial assessment of the site's opportunities and constraints. Some designers will offer some verbal design ideas at the first meeting to show you their creative abilities and knowledge. You need to be comfortable with the designer's approach and style.

Following the on-site meeting, the designer will prepare a fee submission to design your landscape. The fee submission letter should clearly state, as a minimum:

- Your contact details and site address.
- Scope of work — a summary of design brief and extent of work.
- Scope of services — this section should list all the services you are engaging the designer to prepare. For example, "Prepare a sketch/concept landscape design".
- Timeline — the anticipated due date for scope of services.
- Fee schedule — often quoted as a lump sum.
- Terms and conditions.

You are now ready to make an informed decision and engage your designer to provide you with advice. Enjoy the process and see how the right professional can transform your garden to best suit your lifestyle and site conditions.

To find suitability experienced and qualified landscape design professionals in your locality, the following institutes have directories and information on their websites:

Australian Institute of Landscape Architects:
aila.org.au

Australian Institute of Landscape Designers & Managers: aildm.com.au

Alternatively, ask your friends, family and work colleagues for a recommendation. 🏡