

## TERRAGONG – A POTTED HISTORY

A local landmark and a wonderful example of Georgian Colonial architecture, Terragong House is included on the Register of National Estate with the Australian Heritage Commission, as well as on the Register of the National Trust of Australia (a 'Classified A' Listing - Terragong House), which is described as:

*"A charming small house of late Georgian design, two storeyed with a slate hip roof and built of cedar cut from the property with stone walls of blue metal mined in the area. Six French windows on the lower floor open on to the front and side columned verandahs and the interior is dominated by the extensive cedar woodwork, including a winding staircase master-crafted and built with only a hammer, chisel and saw, anchored solely at top and bottom, but rock solid without visible means of support."*

The mature trees, including Magnolia Grandiflora, Morton Bay Figs and Norfolk and Bunya Pines, are also of heritage interest and provide an idyllic setting for the home.

The 12 acres which now make up the estate and on which Terragong house stands was originally part of a grant of 500 acres made in 1830 to Malcolm Campbell, an overseer of convicts at Coolangatta in the Illawarra, for services rendered. He built a typical slab hut (still standing today) on the land, placed a man by the name of Black in charge of the property, then moved to live in Sydney.

In 1837, Campbell was found dead, sitting in the parlour of James Moody Marks' hotel, The Steam Packet Inn at Market Wharf, Sydney. Two claims were entered in connection with his estate, one by James Marks for board and lodging, and the second by Ewen Campbell, as next of kin. 250 acres went to Marks in 1843 with an annual 'quit rent' of two pounds, 1 shilling and 8 pence, and Ewen Campbell was allowed the other half on similar terms.

In 1842, the Marks family moved to Kiama and transferred their business interests from the Sydney hotel to Kiama's second inn, which they also named The Steam Packet Inn. Later, James was to divide his combined land holdings between his sons John and James, and in 1858 John called tenders for the construction of Terragong House.

Terragong House was built as a gentleman's country residence by The Hon. John Marks MLA, MLC and the property was farmed with paid labour. When John returned to live in his Sydney property ('Glenrock' at Edgecliff, now Fiona House at Ascham School), he leased Terragong to his brother Samuel, who continued in the same vein and resided for 30 years on the property, running it as a dairy farm, also with hired help.

Upon Samuel's retirement to Sydney, his only son Ernest John Marks acquired the property for the sum of one thousand pounds from Mrs Elizabeth Preston Marks, his aunt and widow of John; as the property was entailed and could only be owned by a male Marks in direct line of inheritance, the transfer of ownership was referred through the Equity Court.

At this time, the Holz family was employed to work the farm and Ernest Marks directed his activities and concentrated his attentions on stock market investing. In turn, the property was willed in equal proportions to Ernest Marks' three sons - Brian, Eric and Cedric, all of whom spent their entire lives

living on and farming the property. Following the death of Eric in 1974, his brothers carried on with the help of Cedric's sons Gary and Wayne.

In 2014 - and after ownership by seven generations of the Marks family - Darryl Gordon and Simon Milner purchased Terragong from the Marks family, and a new chapter in the history of Terragong commenced.

## **THE RENOVATIONS**

In 2015, Darryl and Simon commenced what would be a two-year program of renovations and refurbishment to the house. Both extensive and sympathetic in nature (working to advice outlined in a 390-page conservation management plan commissioned from Conacher Architects, Wollongong, in 2007 by the Marks family), works included construction of a new kitchen and family room annex as well as the addition of en suite facilities for three guest rooms, which are located in the single-storey weatherboard wing, dating from the late 1800s (the original weatherboard cottage, constructed in 1840, was razed in a kitchen fire in 1879. A charcoal sketch of the original cottage and extant slab hut is in the Mitchell Library Collection, Sydney). Other additions include a master bathroom and dressing rooms on the first floor of the main house (in the owners' private quarters), installation of a saltwater swimming pool and pool terrace.

Extensive restoration work was undertaken throughout on woodwork, casements, floors, pressed metal ceilings, electrical wiring (the house wasn't connected to an electricity supply until 1948, mains water in 1952), employing highly trained craftspeople, with a 'mend first, but replace with like if need be' approach to the project (e.g. c1850 float glass was sourced from restoration specialists in Sydney to replace cracked/missing/broken panes throughout the house, and replacement wood work was hand-carved from the same species of wood where needed to replace rotten or missing elements).

With the objective of minimising the environmental impact of day-to-day living, an extensive 10kW solar array has been installed (which powers the house and swimming pool plant, feeding excess energy generated into the municipal grid), water tanks have been installed to harvest rain water (used for the laundry as well as flushing of all toilets), and a FujiClean septic system has been installed to manage all waste water onsite. Other steps include low-voltage lighting and heating throughout the home, no air conditioning (we rely on ceiling fans and fly screens/open windows for cooling), a composting system and rigorous attention to recycling wherever possible.

Following site visits and initial consultations in late November 2014, we engaged the services of Myles Baldwin Design to complete the landscape master plan for Terragong. Incorporating elements such as drainage, swimming pool and terrace, reintroduction of a farm orchard, a walled kitchen garden, existing paddocks and New Perennial Garden, the plan determines how all these different areas best link together to form a cohesive whole.

We chose Myles, the author of a number of garden design books including 'Period Gardens: Landscapes for Houses with History' and 'Rural Australian Gardens', based on his sympathetic approach to creating beautiful Australian country gardens. He was able to translate our wish for a

relaxed and informal landscape that honours the property's history as a farm into a design that can be rolled out in stages over a number of years.

As an award-winning interior designer, Terragong co-owner Darryl has brought an eye for exquisite detail to the refurbishment and decoration of Terragong. For more information regarding Darryl's design consultancy and portfolio of work, visit [www.darrylgordondesign.com](http://www.darrylgordondesign.com).

Simon has extensive experience in and a passion for hospitality and tourism, having worked for much of his career in sales and public relations for Hyatt Hotels & Resorts and marketing communications manager for Qantas/Sabre. As principal cook and bottle washer at Terragong, Simon holds current Food Safety Supervisor accreditation recognised by the NSW Food Authority.

## **THE BED & BREAKFAST**

Terragong 1858 Country House Bed & Breakfast opened to guests on the Easter long weekend, 2016.

We have three guestrooms, catering for a maximum of six in-house guests, which ensures an intimate and exclusive experience. Each guestroom is queen bedded and has a unique, tasteful and sophisticated décor - with original period details such as pressed metal ceilings and sash windows, as well as vintage, designer and antique furnishings.

Guestrooms feature en suite bathrooms with spacious showers with rain shower heads, and come complete with:

- free wi-fi internet connection
- wide-screen LCD 'smart' television
- iPod/iPhone & Android phone dock/alarm clock
- ceiling fans and heaters, underfloor heating in the ensuite bathrooms
- wall-to-wall, pure wool Belgian-weave carpet
- Italian-made pure cotton bed linens, pure wool blankets, down comforters and electric blankets (seasonal)
- down-filled pillows (hypo-allergenic, synthetic-filled available on request)
- large, thick and soft bath towels and heated towel rails
- a selection of toiletries by Molton Brown
- Iron, ironing board and hairdryer (available from the butler's pantry)

All guest rooms feature antique queen size four-poster beds and are located on the ground floor in the accommodation wing, adjoining the farmhouse kitchen, lounge and dining area; level access from the rear of the house means there are no stairs to contend with for the less mobile or wheelchair-dependent guest.

In the butler's pantry are coffee and tea making facilities, soft drinks and mixers as well as fresh, home-baked treats, all available to guests 24/7 and with our compliments. A bar fridge is also available for guest use.

Terragong 1858 is rated #1 accommodation provider (B&B/Inns) in the Kiama Municipality (TripAdvisor, 2018). We have received numerous awards since opening our doors to guests in 2016, including TripAdvisor Certificate of Excellence (2017, 2018 & 2019), booking.com Guest Review Award (2017 & 2018) and Alluxia Travel Award 'Best Regional Getaway NSW' (2017).

Our home has featured in a number of publications over the past few years, including a 10-page feature in Australian Country Style Magazine (Aug, 2016), Belle Magazine ('Luxe Coasting', Nov, 2017), The Sydney Morning Herald '52 Weekends Away' (2016) and inclusion on homestolove.com's list of '11 Beautiful Australian Wedding Venues' (June, 2017).

A two-night minimum stay applies for bookings. Accommodation tariff includes a two-course breakfast daily and an hour of complimentary wine and nibbles each afternoon served in the Library.

**Simon Milner**  
Proprietor

9 June, 2019