

Building the latest 'in' look

Recycling for rustic appeal

HIS Mediterranean and Santa Fe barn-style houses have been featured on magazine covers and his services are sought by the who's who of Brisbane.

But Jim Ruig, owner of the Big Red Shed at Milton, is not an architect.

He's a builder who, with a little imagination, creates homes with a difference which, he says, cost no more than the average brick veneer or reproduction colonial.

But rather than VJs, plaster, brick and tile, Jim uses recycled materials to create rustic homes and furniture — old pieces of timber become smooth wide floorboards, farm gates become king size bedheads and Besser blocks take on a new life under a rendered and yoghurt (it attracts lichen) finish.

It's the "in" look — a high ceillinged, huge rafter, lived-in adobe look to suit a hot climate.

"We're still very Victorian in our attitudes to architecture and people who want a new house automatically go to conventional designers because they don't know where else to go," he said.

He believes the problem is the same whether the project be a new house or renovating an old one.

Jim and business partner Stephen Hart have just opened the Big Red Shed and it's fast becoming a mecca for anyone wanting recycled building materials.

Some pieces Jim will use for existing clients, but most is for sale to the general public — a vast array of doors, windows, taps, sinks — even a petrol bowser.

Architectural antiques, such as a pair of wrought iron gates (\$7500), wood panelling from a church, and a carved fireplace, will soon find themselves in a gallery on a mezzanine level.

While Jim attends to consultation work, designing, renovating and building, Stephen takes on the more intricate work.

A sculptor with a fine arts degree, he crafts all the pieces which make a home special.

Jim and Stephen also buy materials.

Jim said anyone with recyclable materials under their homes could contact him to arrange a sale.

Inquiries to 367 2151.

— Cheryl Hayden



● Builder Jim Ruig ... converting the old into designer decor.