

Englehart Homes, one of Melbourne's most recognised luxury housing brands, is celebrating its 35th anniversary.

A market leader and innovator since its first home design became an instant hit in 1980, Englehart Homes has established an enviable reputation for luxury home design and construction in Melbourne's inner-east.

The Englehart Group also includes Lucas Morris Homes, which Englehart was associated with in the late 1970s and acquired in the early 1990s. While Englehart Homes delivers individual luxury designs in the \$700,000-plus range, Lucas Morris focuses on project homes, also for the luxury home buyer, but with a more affordable price tag, in the \$400,000 to \$700,000 range.

Typically, the group is not resting on its considerable laurels. It has won more than 100 industry awards, but managing director Ron Englehart and his team continue to drive growth and set new benchmarks.

"At the end of the day, we're only as good as the last home we have built," he says.

Englehart Homes' latest award-winner, The Saville, will represent Victoria in next month's national Housing Industry Australia awards. HIA Victoria has already judged it the state's top project home for 2014.

Englehart attributes the growth and success of the business to the approach he had from the start, capitalising on a background in construction and marketing for national and international companies.

"The plans and strategy we put in place in 1980 are just as relevant in 2015. It's all about satisfying our buyers," he says.

"Since 1980 we have been working to offer intelligent design and quality materials and craftsmanship at a value-for-money price. Our approach is working as well today as it did when we started 35 years ago."

Englehart says the group is stronger than ever, continuing to grow and increase turnover. Having



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the right people, products, designs and management processes is critical to success.

"Over the years, I've seen many builders come and go, but we've survived because our creativity and quality is consistent and dependable," he says. "We are always researching and securing the best designers, trades and craftspeople so we can continue to innovate and meet our own exacting standards."

Another factor is the importance the group places on market research.

"We talk to everyone who visits our four display homes and I sit in on our sales meetings to listen to their feedback. Careful evaluation helps us formulate the right products and designs for our marketplace," Englehart says. "We know exactly what is most important to buyers in our market – whether it's beautifully integrated indoor and outdoor living with zoned kitchen, dining and family living or the fact that there's little interest in having a separate dining room these days. It's all important."

The group is having particular success with the growing numbers of Asian buyers in the luxury home market. Englehart says Asian buyers tend to be exceptionally discerning, attracted by classical design, and to seek quality of craftsmanship and construction, value for money and rigour in management processes.

"We have excellent systems. Every day I can see exactly what progress has been made on all of our building sites, which trades have been on each site and if the build is on track," he says.

"The system means we can anticipate and prevent



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"IT'S ALL ABOUT SATISFYING OUR BUYERS"
- RON ENGLEHART

issues before they arise and we can track, measure and evaluate all of our projects."

One of Englehart Homes' most spectacular successes has been La Provence, an architect-designed double-storey home with grand provincial French styling that has captured the hearts of many buyers with its mansard slate roof, double casement windows, exacting, elegant symmetry and wrought-iron cresting.

La Provence is one of Australia's most awarded display homes, having won seven awards, including the Master Builders' Association national display home of the year and HIA's best kitchen in a display and best bathroom overall.

The Saville, inspired by American architect Frank Lloyd Wright, is a contemporary single-level design with wide sheltering eaves, a recessed front entry and integrated indoor to outdoor living.

It is divided into two parts, the front half having an impressive lobby, study, formal living area, powder room and three bedrooms, including a hotel suite-sized main bedroom with en suite and dressing room. The rear family living zone is revealed beyond a pool and courtyard, with an expansive kitchen, dining and living area effectively doubled in size by the adjoining terrace.

The Englehart Group is a member of the HIA and the MBA, and Ron Englehart was inaugural chairman of HIA Victoria's planning, environment and development committee and was also HIA's first national GreenSmart leader. \

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