

*With the editor's compliments*

AJ 6.10.71

THE ARCHITECTS' JOURNAL

9-13, Queen Anne's Gate, Westminster, S.W.1

### Architecture and society

*Living in Australia* by Robin Boyd. Pergamon, £4.20

In a country which has a habit of throwing up men and women of outstanding talent Robin Boyd ranks with the best in his chosen field. But he is not just one of the more talented among Australia's rich crop of post-war architects: he occupies something of a unique position. For he not only builds, but also writes. In *The Australian ugliness* and *Australia's home* as well as numerous magazine articles, his commentaries on architecture and the society in which it flourishes are written with insight and understanding. In this latest book he returns to the theme of the home, using examples of his own work for illustrations. The text is divided into five parts: living and architecture; surface; space; structure; spirit. Robin Boyd is probably better known for his writing than his architecture. It is to be hoped that *Living in Australia* will help redress the balance. What comes out strongly in the book, superbly illustrated with the photographs of Mark Strizic—also responsible for its layout and design—is that Boyd is no slave to style: a characteristic of his work, so to speak, is that it is not characteristic.

Boyd's own account of the motivations behind his designs and the illustrations themselves will give any reader who is a stranger to his work a pretty clear picture. But David Saunders' *afterword* adds the kind of detail that one could hardly expect the author to supply about himself.

*Living in Australia* is in a sense the kind of book that would grace any smart coffee table. But it deserves more than this. It is a highly readable, richly illustrated account of the work of a talented architect, and tells the reader a great deal about Australia and Australians.

G. C. A. TANNER