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# backyard

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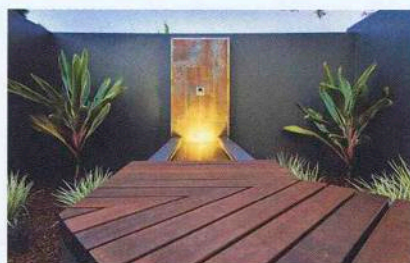
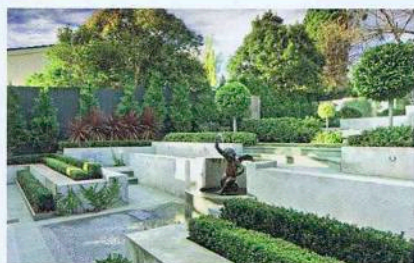
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A NEW ORDER HOW TO DESIGN A FORMAL GARDEN



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# *One of a kind*

A unique feature wall creates a stunning backdrop for this revamped Brisbane backyard

Words: Aaron Worth  
Photos: Glenn Weiss



*"Year-round outdoor entertaining  
with family members and friends"*







**L**ike many people who have lived in the same house for a period of time and have witnessed their children growing into young adults and embarking on their own lives, the owners of this home realised that the time had come for a change. Sometimes this happens in a dramatic way but often even a small change to the “castle” will do.

For the owners of this home in Carindale, in the eastern suburbs of Brisbane, a new entertaining area and courtyard-style garden was the order of the day. They had already completed some building work to extend their covered entertaining area and had replaced their back fence with a new block wall ... but then they were stuck. To complete the area, which would be seen from many rooms of the house and become an entertainment centrepiece, they realised they needed professional design advice.

My first goal was to extend the undercover space to integrate with a sitting area. To achieve a seamless effect, I used the same floor tile. Family and friends can now sit comfortably near the cooking area or the outdoor dining area rather than being separated, as is often the case. The large bench seat is constructed using a combination of rendered concrete block and a removable timber top for easy maintenance. It defines the space, invites use and leads the eye

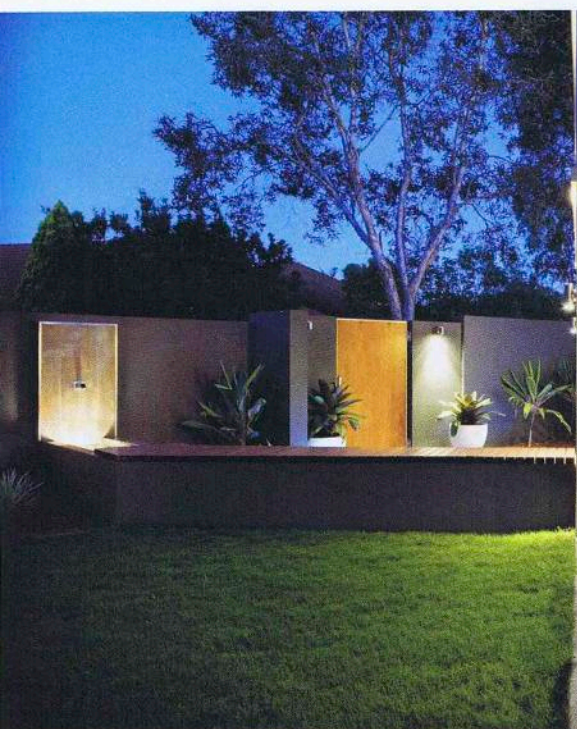
to the garden and the features beyond.

Fittingly, the block wall had been painted to match the house, but the creamy yellow colour wasn't right for the new landscape. The colour was changed to something sophisticated and understated (Colorbond's Woodland Grey)

that would harmonise with the paving, and I decided to turn the wall into a design feature in its own right. Three feature panels were custom-built for the wall. Each was designed with a stainless-steel frame and feature tiles with a metallic copper appearance. Each →







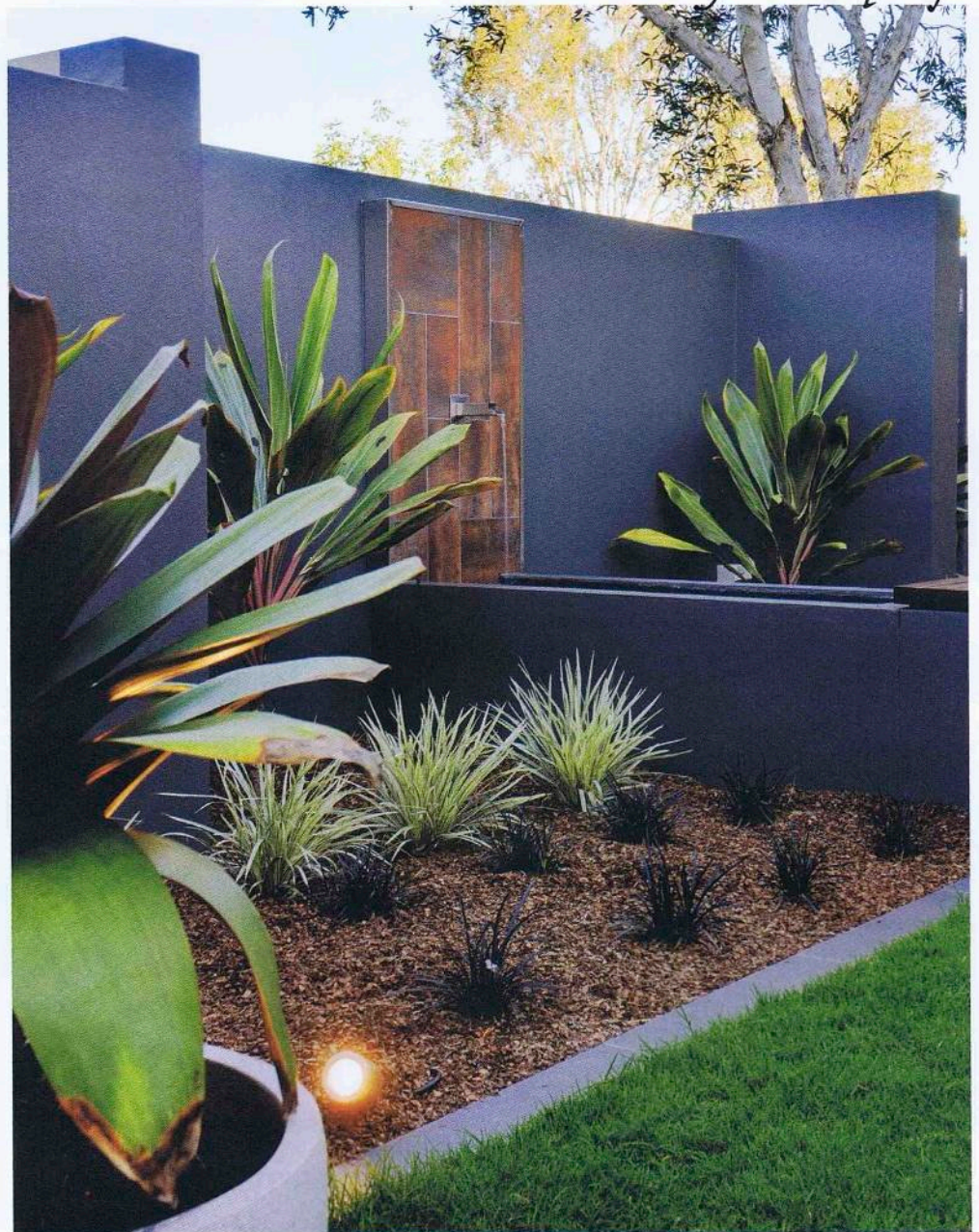
panel complements the next, although a slight variation in the tile pattern gives each a subtle point of difference.

The panel closest to the sitting area was deemed the perfect backdrop for the water feature. The sound of running water from the custom-made stainless-steel spout provides great ambience.

To strengthen the link between the landscape and the entertainment area, the same feature tile was also used for the splashback of the outdoor kitchen, while the floor tile was cut to a more appropriate size and laid on a formed concrete base for the garden edging. Two small tiled areas were strategically positioned to receive the selected pots, which look great against the feature wall panels.

While some original plantings still remain at the fringes, tropical plants such as *Cordyline 'Rubra'*, *Cordyline 'Pink Diamond'*, giant bromeliads (*Alcantarea imperialis 'Rubra'*), black mondo grass (*Ophiopogon japonicus 'Nigrescens'*) and variegated mondo (*Ophiopogon jaburan 'Variegatus'*) provide contrasts of vibrant colour and form. A large





on-site water tank supplies the automatic irrigation system, which provides peace of mind and looks after the gardens and the lush Velvetene turf.

Outdoor lighting has achieved a beautiful result in the garden and entertainment areas. The lighting scheme utilises downlights, single- and bi-directional wall lights, garden spots, underwater lighting and ground-mounted lights fitted flush with the tiling. LED fittings have been used wherever possible to minimise overheating and energy consumption.

More and more homeowners have not only come to recognise the value that a well-designed landscape and outdoor space adds to their home, they have come to recognise the value it adds to their lifestyle. For this Brisbane family, the sound of clinking glasses, laughter and year-round outdoor entertaining with family members and friends in a beautiful, relaxing space is now not only a possibility but a regular occurrence. ■

Aaron Worth is a Brisbane-based landscape designer and founder of Utopia Landscape Design.

