



SMALL WONDERS

Limited space doesn't have to mean limited outdoor panache.
We take a look at some clever courtyard ideas

Words Sunny de Bruyn

One of the greatest benefits of a small area is that it doesn't take a lot to make it look wonderful. Nor does it take as much effort to maintain as a large yard. And there's the cost-saving, too — a little goes a long way.

MAKE THE MOST OF IT

The keys to a good-looking courtyard are tidiness and order. If it's dirty or cluttered, it will look terrible. Remember that in small spaces, you can get away with a lot less mess and there's nowhere to hide things, so being organised and keeping it neat are a must. You don't need a lot to have a picture-perfect courtyard. There are three important factors to getting it right: content, colour

and materials. Content is what you put in it and the basics are some good outdoor furniture (either a lounge setting or a table and chairs), a few pot plants and a couple of extras, if you have the space. These can include a market umbrella or shade sail, as well as a chiminea or brazier for functionality and aesthetics. A water feature is also a nice addition, if there's enough room, and simple inexpensive ones can be installed against a wall or in a flowerbed. Think vertical (such as a waterfall-type feature) rather than width (a traditional round pond or fountain). Colour is vital as light colours give the illusion of more space and, adversely, dark colours can make an area seem smaller than it is. So it goes without saying that you want light (or bright) colours to allow light to reflect and to make the area seem



Built-in planter boxes and bench seating maximises the space in this courtyard. Design by Outhouse Design, www.outhousedesign.com.au