



SOMETHING OLD, SOMETHING NEW

A timeless modern garden with a strong personality



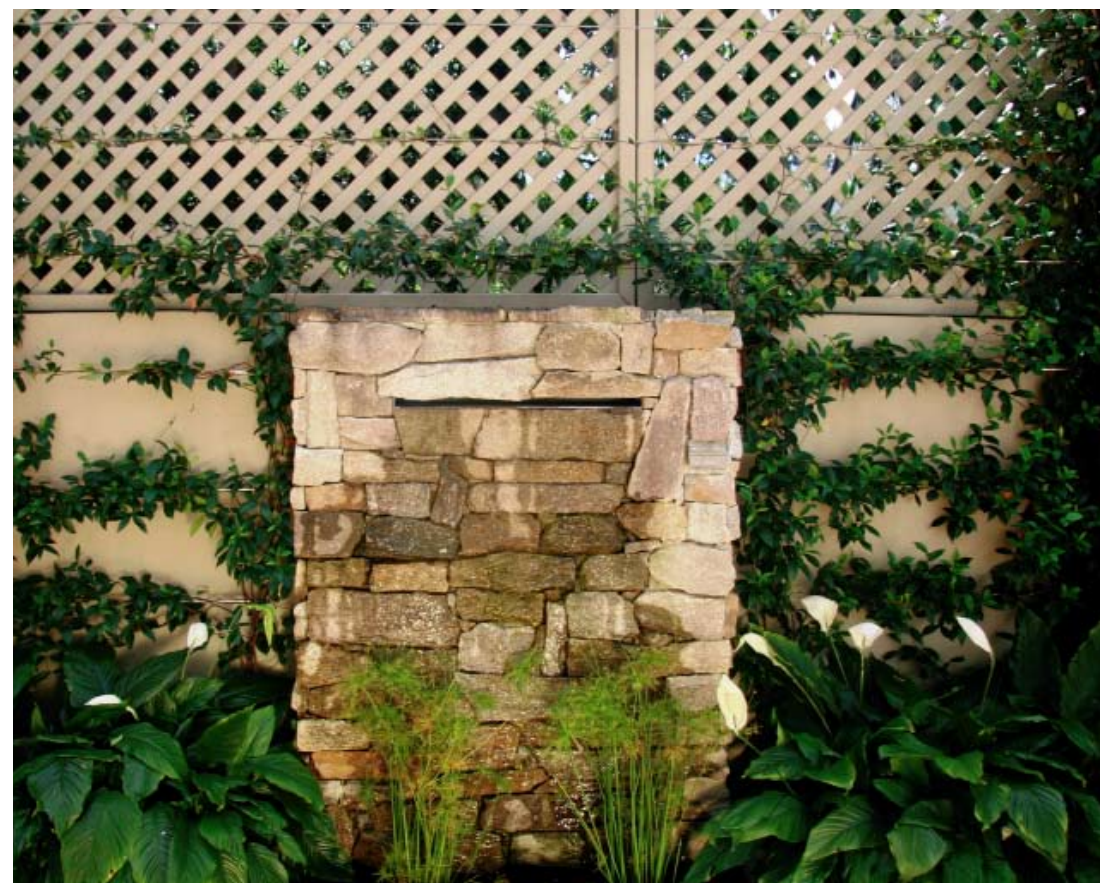
TOP Uplights were installed on the columns to highlight the space and a pond light installed for the water feature.

WORDS: Kate McKee

When the owner of this outdoor space purchased this property, the garden was neglected and used mainly as a storage space. The space was in a Tuscan style, with terracotta tiles, dated planting and a water feature that had definitely seen better days.

“The new owner is a well-respected real estate agent and, while she has impeccable taste and a clear vision for the internal space, she was at a loss as to creating a connection to the garden,” says Steve Warner, principal designer for Outhouse Design who was commissioned to take on the project.

“The owner is also very social and likes to entertain



TOP A timber batten screen was installed to hide the utility area and the same material was used for all seating tops, which also have additional storage underneath.

TOP MIDDLE To keep costs down, some of the garden's original plants were recycled such as the *Zantedeschia aethiopica* and *Cyperus prolifer*, both used to provide contrast.

friends and potential clients,” he adds, “so a garden that will complement her home was paramount.”

As an astute businessperson, Steve's client wanted a cost-effective solution and a clear return on her investment. The solution was to work with as many existing elements and keep the project as simple as possible.

In regard to the overall brief, the space needed to be inviting with minimal maintenance, if any. The property is on two levels and so the garden was required to be visible from the main lounge area as well as from the upper bedrooms.

“The client was clear that it needed to be relaxing and welcoming space in the day, but offer that entertainer's ‘wow factor’ by night,” says Steve.

The garden is a long courtyard, so it's the first thing you see when you walk into the home and can be viewed from

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all the key rooms in the house. The space needed to be open and flexible to cater for large groups, while still being soft, green and calming.

The feature rust columns are a key element in this space. They connect the upper and lower floors and when uplit they create that eye-catching element that the garden needs. The columns were constructed from lightweight external material and painted with Porter's rust paint. The uplights create interesting evening shadows and beautifully complement the surrounding planting and water wall, which in turn acts to calm the space as well as create a point of interest.

“The old water feature was neglected and leaking, but the wall surround was solid,” says Steve. “We didn't want the water feature to overwhelm the space, so the new feature was clad with natural stone and a simple water rill was installed. This would allow the water to slowly trickle down the face of the stone, creating that extra sensory element in the garden.”

With the addition of a pond uplight to reflect the natural stone and water plants, this feature gives balance to the rust columns.

A simple plant palette is key to any small space. The dwarf magnolias (*Magnolia grandiflora* ‘Little Gem’) used within the room allow for a strong scent and exquisite flower without their size dominating the space. The underside of the foliage is rust in colour, which helps complement the rust exterior of the columns. *Liriope muscari* ‘Evergreen



Giant’ was also used for its year-round foliage and spot flowers, *Viola hederacea* for its robust groundcover and pretty flowers and *Trachelospermum jasminoides* for its hardy climber attributes.

The existing paving was repaired in certain areas and cleaned and a new protective coat was applied. The earthy tones of the tile keep the space feeling light while still complementing the timber screening and internal flooring finish.

The space still needed storage as well as additional garden beds, which was constructed from block and tied into the existing low garden wall. The terracotta-tiled top was removed and all of the walls given a smooth render finish. It was then painted with Porter's Stone external paint, as the earthy tone colour choice enables the planting to stand out while complementing the natural stone of the water feature.

The owner was thrilled with the result and the way it acts as a seamless extension of the home. As Steve comments, “It offers a place to unwind, to entertain and most of all to be proud of.”

PROJECT DETAILS

Landscape design by **OUTHOUSE DESIGN**

WEBSITE www.outhousedesign.com.au