

# AN OASIS OF ONE'S OWN

*Dreams of outdoor entertaining on sultry summer evenings become a reality for this Newtown family*



Foliage atop high walls creates a private haven amid the busy suburban location.



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While inner-city living has a unique charm made up of a mix of convenience and quirky character, homeowners often have to pay a high price: losing the luxury of personal outdoor space. Most of Sydney's iconic terrace houses have access to handkerchief-sized back gardens, but these are often messy and challenging to landscape. Add an energetic family dog and young child to the existing pool of potential users and this Probert Street terrace in Newtown needed some serious optimisation of available space. Enter landscape designer Steve Warner and the team from Outhouse Design.

"This amazing inner-city terrace had recently been fully renovated with a modern kitchen and dining experience at the rear of the home," Steve says. "But as so often happens, the creativity ended at the back door, with no connection to the courtyard garden. Old paving combined with a mismatch of garden pots and a clear view to the car was creating the wrong focal point for our clients."

Warner and project manager Simon Munn



Pops of bright red bring a playful aesthetic to the space.



*"We wanted to make sure we connected with the senses and worked with the formula of 'right plant, right place'"*

from Urban Garden appreciated the rare inner-city commodity that is a personal parking space, so didn't want to compromise this particular benefit. But they needed to find a way to create a safe, low-maintenance space suitable for pets and young children, while still delivering a sense of green and architectural interest to complement the refined internal finishes of the home. "Entertainment was key, but more lounge style rather than the traditional seating function."

The resulting area is a modern, easy-to-maintain courtyard that makes clever use of vertical design elements to add texture and points

of interest without sacrificing any floor space. One of the key design elements that hold the space together are the beautiful bespoke vertical screens that blur the sight lines to the garage. Made from lightweight powder-coated aluminium for easy access and long-term minimal maintenance, the screens feature a pattern that allows air and light to fill the space, and becomes an artistic fixture when lit up at night.

"We fixed the laser-cut screen to the existing garage structure," Steve says. "It acts as a foundation for our overhead planters, created by PO Box Projects. In this way, we could bring a sense of green into the space without creating

additional ground-level garden beds, which may be too much of an enticement for our four-legged friend!"

The illusion of space is maximised by the use of lightweight concrete, creating a visual flow from the barbecue area to the seating solution [courtesy of Set in Steel]. The oversized paving features a finish that facilitates a seamless internal/external connection, and the inclusion of both vertical and under-seat storage makes life that little bit easier when space is at a premium.

Unexpectedly fun additions to the space are the bright, striped orange-red external cushions





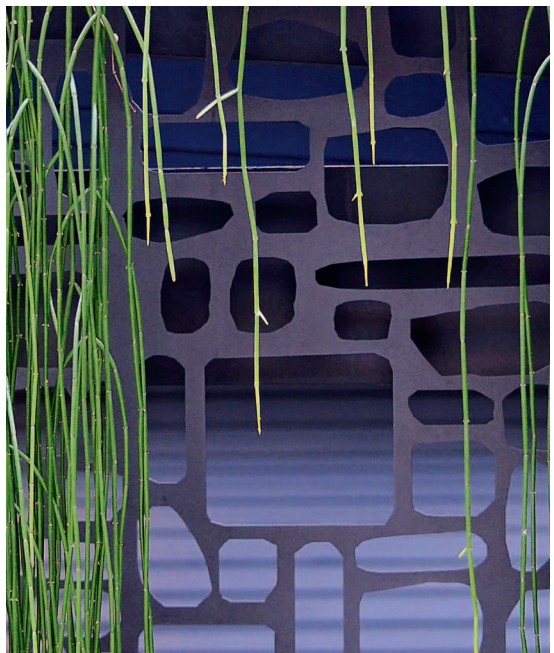
The bespoke aluminium screens not only block views to the garage, but add a moody ambience to this beautiful garden.



“Entertainment was key, but more lounge style rather than the traditional seating function”



DESIGNER GARDENS



**LEFT** The soothing sounds of the water feature create a tranquil space for relaxing.

**TOP** *Sansevieria trifasciata* are the crowning glory of the garden wall, providing texture and additional privacy.

**ABOVE** Hanging plants soften the metal screen.

that add comfort to the seating solution. Not only do these cushions create a pop of colour, they also complement the shades of lush green that fill the raised planters.

There’s an emphasis on sustainability in the choice of plantings. The design was created to maximise the existing bamboo and complement it with a combination of waterwise succulents. Keen green-loving eyes will pick out a clever mix of *Liriope muscari* ‘Big Blue’, drought-tolerant *Westringia* ‘Aussie Box’, *Arthropodium cirratum*, *Rhaphiolepis* ‘Snow Maiden’, *Crassula* ‘Max Cook’, *Sansevieria trifasciata*, *Rhipsalis* and

*Grevillea* ‘Cherry Cluster’. Fragrant climbers and groundcovers such as star jasmine and *Viola banksii* complete the floral picture.

“We combined different textures, scents and foliage to create year-round interest,” Steve explains. “In essence we wanted to make sure that we connected with the senses and worked with the formula of ‘right plant, right place’. This enables maximum performance and limited pest-care maintenance.” The cherry on top? A charming self-reticulated water feature that nestles in one corner and aims to take the edge off the inner-city noise.

Outhouse faced two main challenges while creating Probert Street’s courtyard: ease of site access and the need to minimise on-site construction time to a minimum. This was overcome by manufacturing items off-site and in module form, allowing for easy access and a bolt-together application.

The overall design adds character and charm to the home, drawing attention from the moment you enter the front door. It entices visitors and family members to gather, whether for an evening of entertaining or a simple, quiet family day of relaxing. [outhousedesign.com.au](http://outhousedesign.com.au)