



ROOFTOP REVOLUTION

This inviting plant-filled balcony garden is a year-round oasis of calm for the owners of a top-floor apartment in Sydney's bustling inner city

OUTHOUSE design believes landscape architecture can be delivered differently and that's why it has teamed up with PO Box Designs, Australia's leading specialist fabricators. "Together we are driving the 'rooftop revolution', turning hot, exposed and windswept rooftops and balconies into beacons of green," says Steve Warner, principal designer of OUTHOUSE design.

"Whether you want to create a green getaway, grow your own produce or reduce your carbon footprint to make this world a better place, we're with you. Our highly

skilled, award-winning team specialises in rooftop and balcony garden design for both residential and commercial projects. Through our site-specific approach we understand the complexities of bespoke design and are well versed in the intricacies of working with strata requirements and elevated installations.

"We appreciate the idea of creating a rooftop garden can be overwhelming, with strata, planning, engineering and access all posing as potential obstacles. But engaging with OUTHOUSE design from day one will make sure it's feasible. Thanks to our innovative yet simple solutions and our team of specialist

service providers, such as PO Box Designs, we can make even the trickiest projects a reality."

OUTHOUSE design also appreciates that every rooftop garden dream is different, so its designs are always unique to you and your location. The company's longstanding relationship with the quality craftsmen at PO Box Designs enables it to create bespoke elements that fit any space and lifestyle, fashioning a private and personalised space that's uniquely yours.

"Our dedicated project manager and qualified installation team will install your new green space safely, quickly and to the highest

standard," continues Steve. "Our tailored after-service care program will ensure your garden settles in and goes from strength to strength, giving you the confidence to sit back, relax and celebrate being part of the rooftop revolution. Just like the owners of this award-winning rooftop, maybe it's time you joined the rooftop revolution, too."

The brief from the owners of this inner-city property to Steve and senior landscape architect Katrine Mardini was to convert their unused, exposed top-floor balcony into a place of shelter — somewhere they could relax and entertain.

To bring the drab space to life, Steve, Katrine and the team designed a clean-lined modern courtyard-style space that provides a visual sense of unity with the interior of the apartment and features a bespoke pergola to provide protection and shade. "The overhead structure with its Vergola insert is a standout feature," says Katrine. "It introduces an interesting organic shape that shuns sharp corners and draws you into the wider garden."

The striking sculptural pergola was custom-designed by PO Box Designs to envelop the louvered roof section and cover the expansive entertaining space. Built using lightweight powdercoated aluminium, the colour of the



pergola was chosen to match the apartment building. "This was a major factor in the design as we wanted to complement the existing development and create an easy flow from the upper balcony to the lower garden," says Steve. "Also, as nothing could be bolted or fixed onto the existing tiled floor, the pergola was used as the key connecting point to the main building."

Previously, the far end of the balcony had been covered in white pebbles, making the space unusable and difficult to maintain. The pebbles were replaced with timber decking, complementing the new seating and providing a cleaner more contemporary look.

As the apartment was on the top floor, the OUTHOUSE design team had to contend with limited access for construction. All items had to be dismantled into sections so they would fit in the elevator and then be reassembled on the balcony. The structural engineer also imposed weight-loading restrictions, which the team dealt with by favouring lightweight aluminium for key elements, such as the pergola and planters. To ensure minimum impact on the floor tiles and manoeuvrability, the individual planters have commercial-grade casters.

"All key garden beds, including the main one that wraps around the seating area, were raised from the ground using commercial rubber feet to allow for drainage and the flow of excess water into the existing drainage points," adds Katrine.

For sustainability and reduced maintenance, all plants are drought-tolerant and happily rely on natural rainfall alone. Of the plants, Steve says, "A clean planting palette was created to deliver strong, bold, architectural contrast to the striking overhead structure and privacy screen at the side." Among the plants chosen are *Rhaphiolepis indica* 'Oriental Pearl', *Dichondra argentea* 'Silver Falls', *Westringia* 'Greybox', *Strelitzia reginae*, *Cupaniopsis anacardioides* and *Sansevieria trifasciata*.

The upshot is a welcoming and sheltered architectural balcony garden, one in which the homeowners can relax and entertain — and one that requires almost no upkeep. Perfect!

more info?

OUTHOUSE design
Studio 9/43-53 Bridge Road, Stanmore NSW
0415 764 775
outhousedesign.com.au