

Wow factor

This sublime garden design takes art into the wild

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Garden sculptures usually take the form of a delicate water fountain or friendly gnome, but this epic garden design takes outdoor art to the next level. Featuring a 16m, three-dimensional, sculptural ribbon, the underused side of this Vaucluse home was transformed into an artistic marvel.

"At my first meeting with the client, it was made very clear that 'wow factor' was the catch phrase for this project," says Steve Warner, principal landscape designer at OUTHOUSE Design. "A key question for me was to understand what happy moment in the life of the client stood out."

That happy moment was the recent wedding of the client's daughter and the music that was played on the day. This beautiful selection of music became the inspiration Steve and his team needed to transform the once overgrown side garden.

By creating a sound wave using the music, we could create a piece of sculpture that has meaning as well as function," says Steve. "The lower parts of the sound wave create the seating option — providing a quiet space for reflection or chatting — and from here the shape morphs into an organic skeletal structure that modulates along the boundary and then out, creating a connection between the upper and lower garden."



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ED'S FIVE

The impressive sculpture

STEVE WARNER



Creating this visual treat along the garden wall was no easy feat for Steve and his team. Over 270 individual slices were cut and installed by Polygenic and Urban Garden Enrichment to create the 16m-long structure.

Before installation, the garden had a makeover, with all existing fences, including battens and rendered walls, painted using two coats of Dulux 'Luck'. This allowed the planting and sculpture to really pop and unified the whole space. Oversized bluestone pavers were used to create an organic connection from the upper deck to the pool enclosure, which also complements the soft lines of the sculpture and returns of the deck.

Both the sculpture and deck were created using accoya timber, which is dimensionally stable, durable and, most importantly, sustainable. It also creates a seamless connection to the flooring inside the home. The sculpture itself folds around custom planters to support additional greenery, with soft round shrubs planted within.

Feature shrubs within and under the sculpture that create year-round interest, flower structure and foliage contrast are *Ajuga reptans*, Bugle; *Ligularia reniformis*, Tractor Seat Plant; *Viola hederacea*, Native Violet; *Agapanthus praecox orientalis*, Agapanthus 'Snowball', *Rhaphiolepis indica*, Indian Hawthorn; *Philodendron 'Xanadu'*; *Liriope muscari*, Turf Lily; *Sansevieria trifasciata*, Mother-In-Law's Tongue; and *Crassula ovata*, Green Jade.



Seasonal colour and interest within the main garden include a feature tree — *Cercis canadensis*; and boundary screen planting — *Elaeocarpus reticulatus*, Blueberry Ash; *Tulbaghia violacea*, Society Garlic; *Pittosporum tobira*, Australian Laurel; *Daphne x transatlantica*, Pink Fragrance; *Ajuga reptans*, Bugle; *Ligularia reniformis*, Tractor Seat Plant; *Viola hederacea*, Native Violet; *Agapanthus praecox orientalis*, Agapanthus 'Snowball'; *Rhaphiolepis indica*, Indian Hawthorn; *Philodendron 'Xanadu'*; and *Liriope muscari*, Turf Lily.

"A key factor for any sustainable space is the correct planting selection in the first place. This ensures minimal maintenance long term," says Steve. "Less watering, fewer bugs and therefore increased planting performance."

The view from the kitchen out to the garden was also vital to the client, so Steve and his team created a smaller version of the sculpture that is seen via the sliced kitchen window, with both pieces lighting up in the evening.

"I wanted this space to feel like an extension of the internal living space — to engage with us both visually and physically," says Steve. "So it was simple for me; all I needed to do was create an emotional connection."

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