



AHEAD OF THE CURVE

An innovative design makes the most of the space in this inner-city courtyard

The homeowners' brief to Steve Warner, principal of OUTHOUSE design, was crystal clear: make the garden feel bigger, create a connection between indoors and out, and ensure the space offered flexibility when entertaining, be it a small, intimate gathering or a large holiday catch-up.

"They love to entertain and potter in the garden at weekends, but they also like to travel and are busy people so creating a low-maintenance space you can lock up and leave was key. We also needed to create storage and cover for a motor bike, push bikes, bins and tools, plus find space for a cook's barbecue, a place to grow herbs, and, well, the list goes on," says Steve.

The design features clean lines, intriguing curves and a modern, edgy feel — including pops of colour to appeal to the clients' aesthetic — and an innovative layout.

"The layout set the tone and established the design platform from which everything else rolled," says Steve. "People with tight courtyards tend to place planters and garden

beds along boundaries, we see it all the time. What you need to do is step back and consider how you can best maximise the space. As this courtyard design shows, laying out the garden on an angle can be very effective. This allows deeper garden beds and visually stretches the space, making it feel bigger. And by using rounded shapes you ensure an easy flow."

To provide storage for the motor bike, create privacy from neighbours (important given the built-up inner-Sydney location), and offer sun protection, the OUTHOUSE team designed a curved overhead structure. "This can be moved if needed so isn't deemed a permanent structure on the boundary, which would have triggered planning obligations," says Steve.

"The structure was fabricated by PO Box designs from lightweight aluminium that was painted and clad on-site. Heavy-duty industrial casters allow it to be repositioned. This really does show that in small spaces, bespoke objects can deliver beyond your expectations, without breaking the bank."

Accoya timber, rated Cradle to Cradle Certified® Gold, is a recurring element throughout the space, used to clad the face of the planters, overhead screen and seating. The paving is a modular split-stone tile from Eco Outdoor, called Lichen. Its earthy colours create a visual connection with the internal timber flooring of the home, helping to establish a seamless indoor-outdoor flow.

The homeowners constructed the garden themselves. "This is a really great example of a landscape design giving someone without prior experience the confidence and knowledge to enjoy the process and feel a sense of accomplishment," says Steve. "Of course, our design office guided them all the way and it was a real pleasure to see the garden take form."

more info?

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