

# SIMPLE LINES

A GARDEN MAKEOVER HAS FORMED A BACKYARD OASIS THAT CAN BE ENJOYED IN ALL SEASONS

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PHOTOGRAPHY SHANIA SHEGEDYN



CUSHIONS: THROW THE WORKS BED BATH N' TABLE

WITH VARIOUS AREAS and nooks, this Melbourne garden offers a spot to relax in whatever the time of year. From a cosy, fireplace-heated alfresco area to lush greenery, a cutting-edge floating bench, a pool and a separate space for sunbathing and lounging, this wow-worthy garden has got it all. "It's changed our lifestyle completely," says homeowner Jenni. >



**TAKE A PEW**

Casting decorative rays of speckled light onto the bluestone crazy paving is a sublime black steel arbour and floating bench seat. It is surrounded by a pittosporum hedge with a ground cover of perfumed gardenias, and is one of Jenni's favourite features in the garden. "It's absolutely gorgeous," she says.



WHETHER IT'S CURLING up in front of a crackling outdoor fire on a chilly winter's evening or spending an afternoon savouring the sights and smells of spring and summer, there's always something to enjoy in Jenni's new garden in Melbourne's inner-east.

This backyard retreat offers an array of delights year-round. "It has made such a wonderful difference to how we use our home," says Jenni. Indeed, the decision to fully redesign the outdoor area – including the pool, alfresco zone and verdant space – has opened up the garden to a tranquil new world.

Jenni, who shares her home with her partner, Wayne, and three dogs, Clemie, Jimmie and Molly, explains that the abode's original outdoor area was in dire need of a face lift. "There was no real design or flow to the garden and no shelter from the sun or cold," she says. "It was also looking tired, with sandstone-look concrete paving that had faded and turned a pinkish colour, which clashed with the house."

Calling in the expertise of Steve Taylor from COS Design, as well as Kube Constructions and Esjay Landscapes, Jenni's vision was clear. "I wanted simple lines and a beautiful alfresco area that I would be able to use right through summer and winter," she says. >

**LASER-CUT TREE PANELS** A trio of pretty patterned laser-cut metal panels from Lump Sculpture Studio, is illuminated at night by concealed LED lights (right). Dotted around the side of the garden is an array of different sized spheres of clipped box. "They are traditional plants used in a contemporary way," says Steve Taylor, the garden's designer. Black mondo grass offers softness around bluestone stepping-stone pavers.



*"I thought a real fireplace might be messy, but the ambience is incredible – and it's really not messy at all. We take a rug out and sit with a glass of red, and it's perfect" ~ Jenni*

THROW (THIS PAGE & OPPOSITE) VASE, BOWL, NAPERY, CANDLES (OPPOSITE) THE WORKS  
BED BATH 'N' TABLE, BAR FRIDGE RHINO, COFFEE TABLE, FOR SIMILAR TRY MAMAGREEN



**IT'S IN THE DETAILS**

A bespoke trio of circular powder-coated aluminium storage boxes to house firewood creates a spectacular feature. "We designed these boxes to break up the rigidity and give a sculptural element," says Steve. "It took three hours to neatly stack the timber."

**ALFRESCO AREA** Avid entertainer Jenni jumps at the chance to invite family and friends to her home for relaxed meals in the outdoor dining zone. "It's a fabulous area and gets so much use," says Jenni. The space was designed to be open on two sides. "Part of our concern was that it might make the home dark, so that's why we had the one solid masonry wall with the fireplace," says Steve. A Jetmaster Firebox is surrounded by Inax tiles (try Artedomus) and Thermofilm 'Heatstrip' ceiling panels to ensure the area is toasty on even the chilliest of nights. A recycled ironbark support post was salvaged from a wharf and brings an infusion of character. "It gives the zone a great rustic flavour and also helps with proportion," says Steve. The durable 'Stripe' outdoor lounge from Mamagreen adds a burst of colour.

**HEDGING  
YOUR BETS**

For a fast-growing hedge, pittosporum is ideal. It grows at around a metre a year, and as the foliage is quite small in size, clipping it neatly is easy. It needs little water once established, can handle light winter frost and likes full sun or part-shade. Perfect!



< The reimagined garden achieves just that – and more. Sleek honed bluestone now surrounds the shimmering pool, which has been re-lined in charcoal-hued ceramic tiles and features a stylish three-spout contemporary water feature. The expansive and carefully considered alfresco area gives new meaning to the term ‘outdoor room’, with its Caesarstone-topped bar table, comfortable sofa and fabulous Jetmaster fireplace. “The Australian way of life is now centred around outdoor living, and great alfresco zones allow you to relax and enjoy the outside,” says designer Steve Taylor. “They ‘extend’ the living space.”

Connecting to the covered entertaining space is an ingenious design feature – a laser-cut black steel arbour that extends across the garden and folds over into a bench seat framed by a tapestry of green. “The idea was that the bench, which has hidden support posts, looks like it is floating on top of the greenery,” says Steve.

Indeed, the entire outcome – and the ever-blossoming garden – has surpassed Jenni’s expectations. “All of my dreams for the backyard have been realised,” she says. “The garden continues to get better and better as time goes on.”

**POOL** Framing the rear of the pool, in front of a paling fence (above right), compact ‘Teddy Bear’ magnolia trees provide evergreen coverage. Nearby (opposite), ‘Breeze’ lounge chairs from Cane-line, grouped around a Varaschin ‘Colorado’ marble coffee table from Casualife, make a secondary seating area. “We wanted to turn the garden and pool area into a sophisticated space with a timeless feel, so it’s all about neutral hues,” says Steve of the decision to incorporate charcoal tones in and around the pool (above left). “On a sunny day, the dark pool tiles give a gorgeous green-blue ocean look to the water, which is really inviting. The sound of moving water from the water feature also helps create a lovely calming atmosphere.”

*“We’ll say, ‘Shall we go out somewhere?’... and the answer will be, ‘No, let’s just stay at home, sit outside and enjoy our beautiful garden’” ~ Jenni*

CUSHIONS (OPPOSITE), THROW, JUG, GLASSES THE WORKS BED BATH N’ TABLE. PRICES ARE APPROXIMATE AND WILL VARY. ILLUSTRATION KENZIEDSIGN.COM

LAYOUT	
SOURCE BOOK	<p>Built-in custom bar table .....\$6500*</p> <p>Bespoke wrap-over steel arbour .....\$25,000*</p> <p>Feature plants (total) .....\$20,000*</p> <p>Jetmaster Firebox (excludes installation).....\$4500*</p> <p style="text-align: right;">COS DESIGN: <a href="http://cosdesign.com.au">cosdesign.com.au</a>.  ESJAY LANDSCAPES: <a href="http://esjaylandscapes.com.au">esjaylandscapes.com.au</a>.  KUBE CONSTRUCTIONS: <a href="http://kubecostructions.com.au">kubecostructions.com.au</a>. </p>