

This internal courtyard has a modern feel, from the Corten lightbox to the furniture.

Having it all

Places to dine, cook and relax with friends... this garden has all the bases covered



LEFT The Acapulco chairs sit in vivid contrast to the largely natural palette of materials.
BELOW The bluestone paving from Pavers Plus gives the entertaining area a sophisticated look.



WORDS: Karen Booth **PHOTOS:** Tim Turner

Wherever you look from inside this single-level home in the Melbourne suburbs you are greeted by lush gardens and welcoming outdoor spaces. But these spaces, which include two contemporary internal courtyards and a covered rear entertaining area, weren't just designed to be looked at. They were designed to entice the family outside.

"The owners asked us to design and build for them a garden that reflected the architectural style of the newly constructed house, worked in harmony with the natural surrounds, had a functional layout and provided focal points that wowed," says Darren Wilmott of DJ Landscapes.

Given the size of the project, different design styles were used in different areas. For the two internal courtyards, DJ Landscapes opted for a very modern feel with clean-lined timber decks, laser-cut Corten lightboxes and metal climbing frames. Pendant lights hang from the black overhead beams and vividly coloured retro Acapulco chairs and occasional tables provide somewhere to relax.

"Wherever you roam in the garden you are met with picture-perfect vistas"

The rear garden, which is divided into a spacious entertaining area and a vast lawn, has a warmer look and a more natural feel. This is due to the outlook that takes in a number of large gum trees and the bluestone-clad walling and granite paving in the outdoor entertaining area.

The covered section of the entertaining space has a dining zone, located beneath a skylight, and an area for alfresco cooking. The latter features a custom-built outdoor kitchen with a built-in stainless-steel barbecue, sink, ample benchspace and a large rangehood attached to the timber-clad ceiling above. Just a few steps away, there is a stand-alone woodfired pizza oven. This has been built into the retaining wall that serves as a planter and separates the entertaining zone from the upper-level lawn area.

"The front garden is slightly more traditional, although the hero of the space is a contemporary 3m stainless



ABOVE The garden, with its large gum trees, was designed to complement the natural surrounds.

OPPOSITE PAGE A sculpture made of Corten and stainless steel rises from a bed of Lomandra Lime Tuff.

RIGHT Accessed via stepping stones, the woodfired oven was integrated into the retaining wall.

and Corten steel sculpture that emerges from a band of Lomandra Lime Tuff. From the front garden you cross the two-toned aggregate driveway to the garage," says Darren. The aggregate concretes, which had to cover a space of more than 600m², are durable and aesthetically appealing.

More than 300m² of ebony flamed granite was used in this project (for elements such as the porches, the flooring in the entertaining area, and the feature stepping pavers) as well as in excess of 100m² of sawn bluestone (to clad the retaining wall/seat around the rear of the property and the feature steps leading to the lawn).

The diverse palette of plants includes Japanese maples and 'Teddy Bear' magnolias with underplantings of *Murraya paniculata*, *Gardenia florida*, *Liriope muscari* 'Elmarco' and 'Red Wing' azaleas. In the courtyards, the feature elements of the planting are *Ligustrum indica*, *Cercis canadensis* 'Forest Pansy' and large cycads.

Stormwater is pumped into two large water tanks at the rear and is used for irrigation. The irrigation system has a Hydrowise controller that uses real-time sensors, via a smart device, to control water patterns and economical distribution to the dripper pipe in the garden beds and pop-ups in the lawn.

Wherever you roam in the garden you are met with picture-perfect vistas which at night take on a whole new look. This is thanks to the LED stainless-steel bollards and spotlights that have been integrated into the landscape design to provide the finishing flourish. ■

