



**Garden designer:** Adam Robinson,  
Green Rooms Gardens & Landscapes  
**Garden location:** Fairlight, New South Wales  
**Photographer:** Peter Brennan

# INDOOR- OUTDOOR

Positive energy and an easy indoor-outdoor flow are the keys to this garden's success

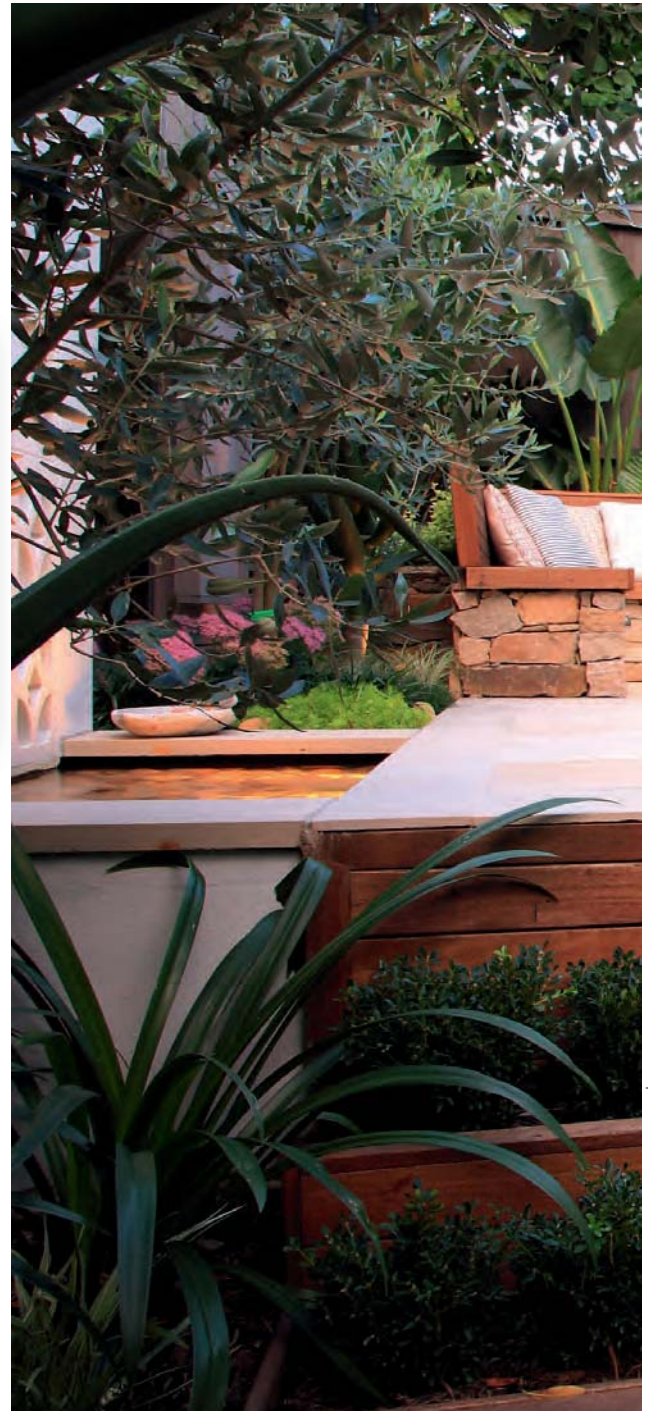
This contemporary design was influenced by the gorgeous weatherboard residence, the coastal suburb in which it's situated and the relaxed persona of the owners. The design consists of a minimal palette of natural materials and neutral colours that are easy on the eye and prevent the space from appearing cluttered.

I believe this outdoor space is an excellent example of how a garden can be given a relaxed ambience that's perfect for dining, pondering or playing with the kids while also having a strong link to the interior of the home.

On first arrival to the property, it was clear that the home interiors had been dealt with very beautifully, but it was the garden that held the property back from being a standout. The interior showcased a lovely palette of soft whites, lime-washed timbers and stunning choices of furniture. It was made clear in the brief that this style was to be carried through to the garden to create a seamless flow.

First things first, it was clear this little garden needed opening up to lose the closed-in feeling it had and maximise the use of the timber bi-fold doors that open up to present the house to the garden. This was essentially achieved by raising the levels of the backyard and creating a series of levelled areas that guide you through the space with smooth transitions.

Coming down from the upper deck of the house it's only three steps down to the main entertaining area. As space wasn't on our side, built-in bench seating was used to maximise utility. The bench was made from natural stone and timber and heavily back-planted with drought-hardy plants. For a tranquil touch, a water feature is used





at ground level, giving off a subtle sound of bubbling water. As this area is lowered, it allows the feature to be seen from the residence, either catching the sunlight of the day or reflecting the pond lighting at night.

There is a smooth transition from the dining area to lower deck, with planting incorporated into the steps for further softening. This area consists of a gorgeous teak day bed, giving the impression of a more relaxed area to enjoy a cheeky wine after dining or to catch the morning sun. Once again, this area, consisting of a large array of hardy plants, was heavily planted to give an idea of being drenched informally in green. Decking boards that run up the wall were used to cleverly form storage cupboards for children's bikes and gardening equipment.

To keep the design consistent, both front and rear areas are presented with the same materials and colour selections. As the front of the property has a classic feel to it, I used →



## *garden gallery*



typically classic plants, such as Japanese Box topiaries, michelias and conifers, and complemented these with some contemporary plantings such as succulents, ornamental gingers and dracaenas.

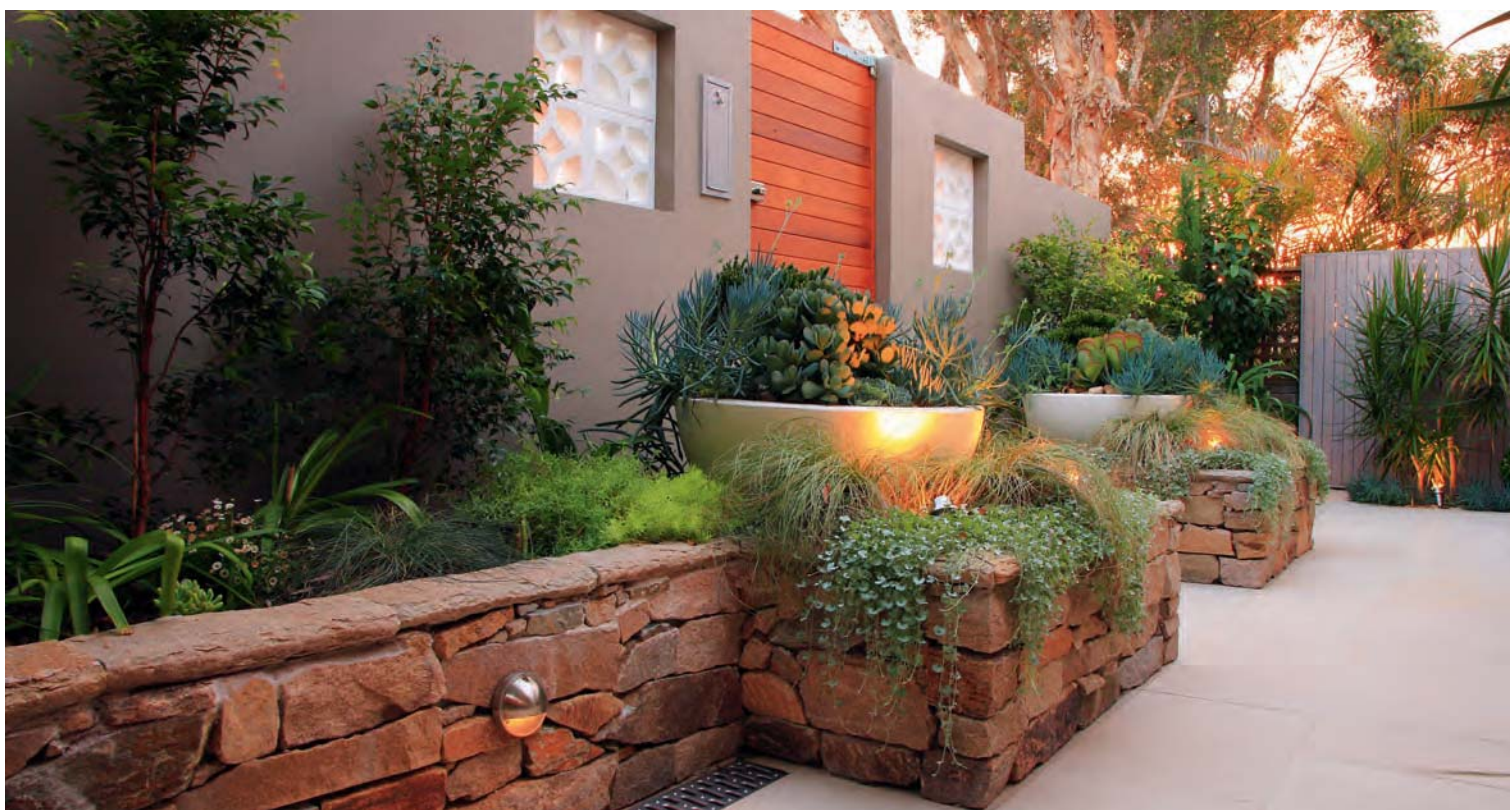
Colour was essential in creating mood and to bring the space together. A mysterious grey was painted on all existing paling fences to give depth to the garden and to also facilitate the foliage of the plants as the focus. White paving stones and lime-washed timbers were also used to create the coastal feeling while these soft colours were complemented with deep green and silvery coloured plant choices.

As for the plants, there was a big push not to fall down the path of using all tropical plants. Instead, large aloes were used as the feature plants and olive trees were planted on

either side of the water feature. These tough plants are then complemented with strelitzias, helichrysums, agaves and dichondra.

My favourite part of this design would have to be the feature Besser block inserts used in the front boundary wall and also the wall of the water feature at the rear. On entering the property you are welcomed by the feature blocks at the front. If the front door is open, you are also able to see these block inserts in the rear water feature wall. This gives the visitor an instant impression of continuity of materials and clever design.

My philosophy is to create gardens that have a positive energy and are very much a reflection of the client and their style of living, which is what I have been able to achieve here. ■





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*“My philosophy is to create gardens that have a positive energy”*

