

DIVERSE DELIGHT

A semiformal tropical space
with a modern edge

Words Aaron Worth Photography Daniel Lewin





As is so often the case, children seem to emerge as young adults almost overnight and we find ourselves having to adapt our homes and entertaining areas to the lifestyle requirements this change brings. One minute they are happy to sit around with mum and dad, the next, they are looking for their own space — as was the scenario for homeowners Bruce and Sonya and their three daughters at their Brisbane abode.

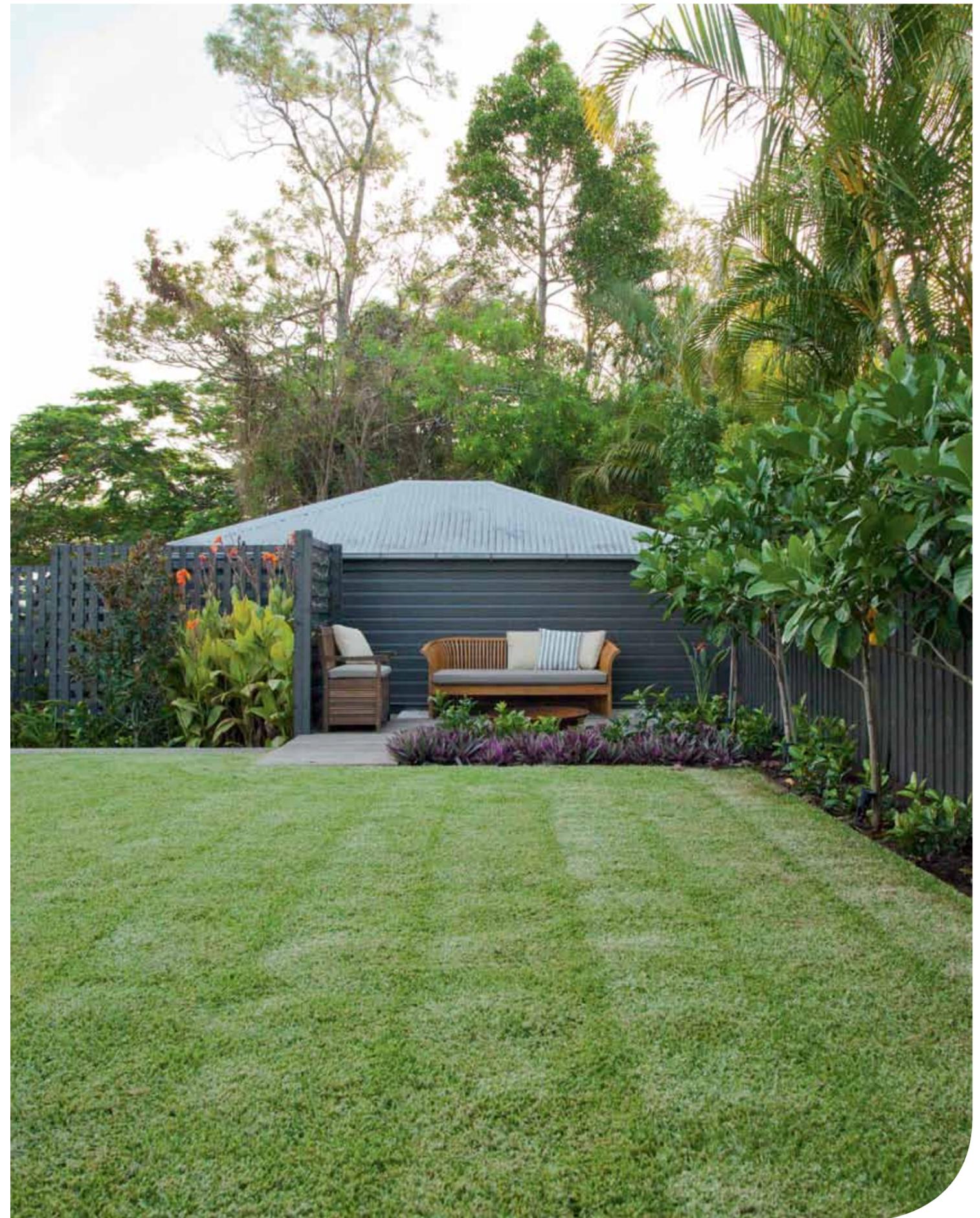
Their backyard was modest and contained a reasonably sized garage in one corner and the remainder was predominantly lawn, with a gentle slope that the girls had made great use of in previous years. However, the need for a more substantial entertaining area and a separate outdoor retreat was now desired. The owners also wanted to retain some of the lawn area for the odd game of badminton plus the addition of attractive gardens to frame the space.

The main concerns were to extend the usability of the existing outdoor lounge and barbecue area for larger gatherings in a way that provided a visual connection with a new, completely separate outdoor retreat for the girls. They wanted to give the garage minimum visibility while creating an overall sense of space.

The home is typical of the area and, like most, has been renovated to suit modern living. It maintains the original chamferboard exterior — zinc corrugated roof, traditional window hoods and so forth — with more modern elements such as rendered finishes and open-plan living. This provided Utopia Landscape Design with some great options to work with.

It was decided to locate the retreat area near the existing garage, which, along with the fences and screens, was painted a dark tone to create the feeling of depth and space. It is connected to the existing outdoor area with a boardwalk-style path that was treated to fade to a natural grey hardwood finish and also forms the main surface of the retreat, to accommodate the comfortable benches. Decorative grey gravel surrounds the fire pit, which provides great visual attraction, not to mention a brilliant addition in providing winter warmth.

The existing concrete patio area was extended and travertine





ABOVE The patio area features travertine pavers in a modular-pattern retaining wall covered with drystone cladding.

TOP RIGHT The boardwalk-style path connects the living areas and features a natural grey hardwood finish.

Decorative grey gravel surrounds the fire pit, providing a great visual attraction



tiles were laid in a modular pattern to unify the space, which was defined by a new retaining wall covered with drystone cladding. The wall allowed the previously sloping lawn to be levelled but also provided the perfect space for selected furniture that can be moved, if required, for more flexibility of space.

The larger-scale lattice already formed part of the original architecture so it made sense to employ the design in the new screens and dividers, which have been positioned strategically to offer privacy and to form a pleasant backdrop for the feature urn and vibrant plantings.

The soft landscape comprises drought- and shade-tolerant Sir Walter turf species, which have been edged with 4mm mild steel that has been allowed to rust to form an attractive patina. Plantings include rich greens and coloured foliage and comprise of native gardenia trees, Rhoeco, Croton Mammy, Ixora (Pink malay), Zoysia grass, Cordylines (Negra and Miss Andrea). Giant bromeliads, Tropicanna and Giant elephant ears were also used.

The homeowner, Bruce, is the director of building company Clarke Constructions and so, with Utopia's Landscape Design, he was able to manage the landscape construction himself. He and Sonya are both delighted with the diversity they have achieved in their outdoor living area and are very much enjoying the outcome of the design. ✨

Project Details

Landscape design Utopia Landscape Designs

Website utopialandscape.com.au