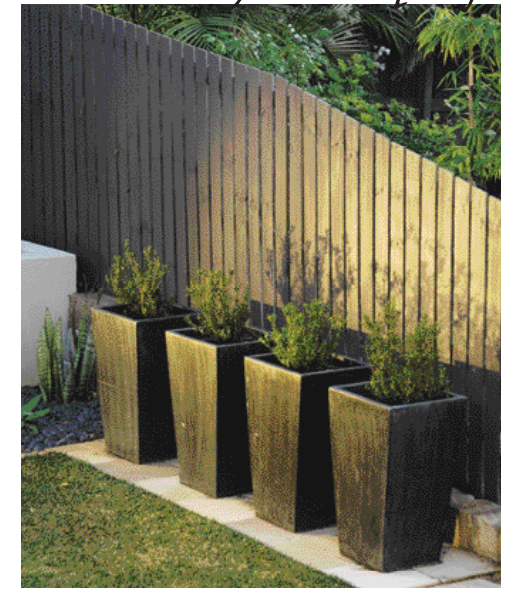


LAYERED EFFECT

A series of gradual terraces has turned a Brisbane yard into an inviting outdoor haven

Words: Aaron Worth
Photos: Glenn Weiss



The demands of a busy work life and the desire to create a better outdoor area for their young family saw the owners of this relatively new home in the Brisbane suburb of Bardon seek professional design assistance.

The home is a replica Queenslander set on a narrow block. At the rear is a very usable, elevated deck. As with many blocks these days, the amount of space in the backyard was limited. Before we stepped in there was just a concreted area below the deck and then nothing to speak of, except a rough lawn that sloped up to the rear boundary. The area was

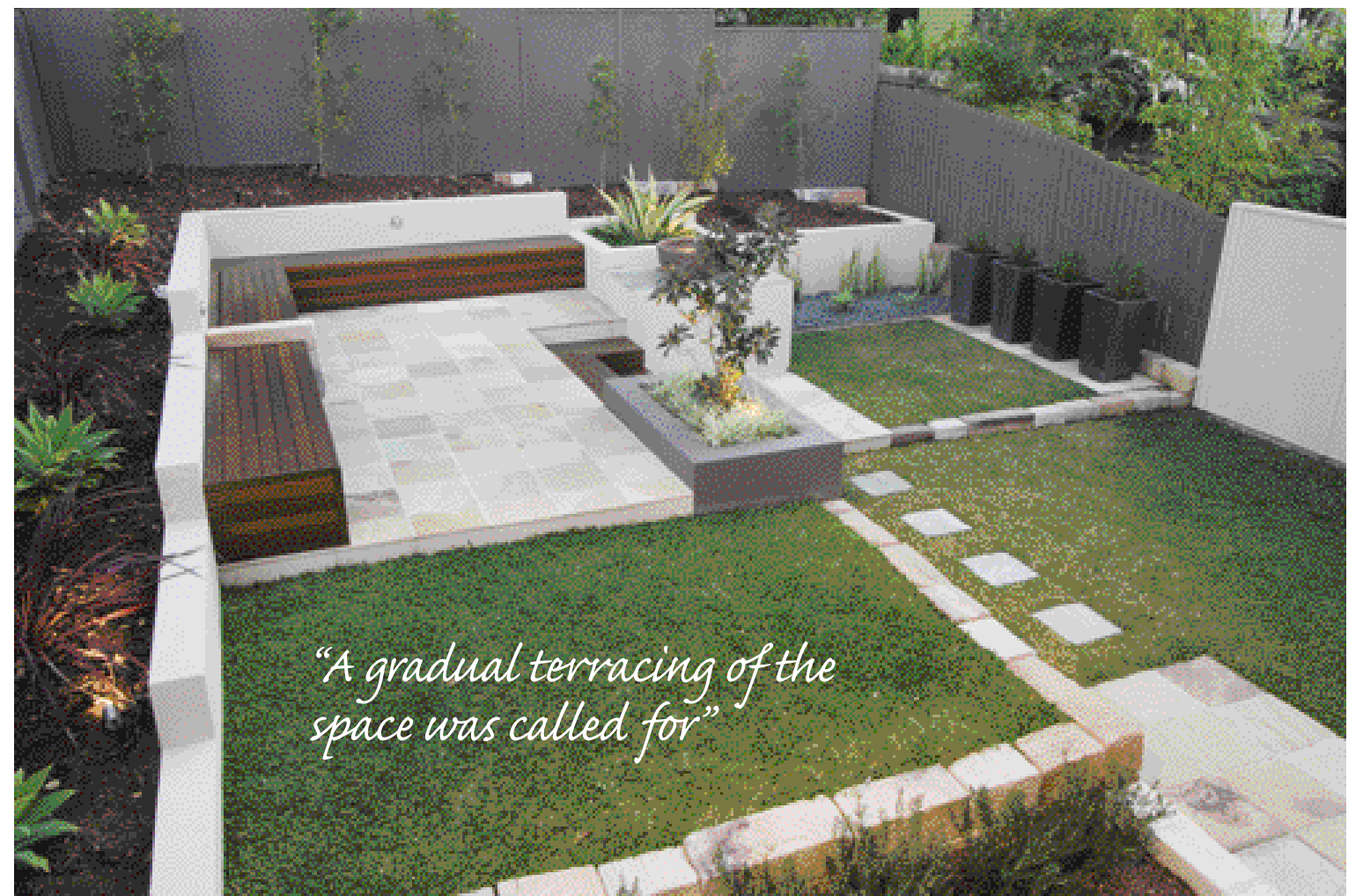
too steep to use in a practical way, whether it was for family gatherings or children's play.

The owners' brief was quite simple: create a usable space for adults and children, something that would be visually appealing when viewed from the home and rear deck. And as the rear deck faced due west, they wanted additional seating space in a protected area where they could enjoy afternoon drinks without having to face the full force of the sun.

To achieve this, we decided a gradual terracing of the space was called for to create a more interesting, layered effect to

the backyard. The design we came up with combined elements such as a large seating area for general use and entertaining; it also addressed issues of privacy. For added greenery and to provide play space, we included some small lawn areas for practical reasons. For amenity and visual appeal we added a selection of plants (some in garden beds, some in pots), a water feature, decorative screening, and what has become essential in every outdoor area, garden lighting.

The terracing and step access to the →



"A gradual terracing of the space was called for"

garden profile



space was achieved through the structural intervention of the retaining walls, a combination of rendered concrete blocks and dry-stacked local sandstone blocks. The use of two materials made the retaining walls less imposing and the contrast between the two added visual interest.

The new outdoor seating area, which is divided by a sandstone plinth, is very versatile

and draws the owners out of the house, whether it's to read the paper or a magazine or to simply sit in comfort while watching the kids. The fixed timber seating was constructed using merbau and features hinged lids that turn it into storage space for tucking yard toys and other items out of sight when they're not needed.

Surface materials have been contrasted to

great effect. Himalayan sandstone was used for the paving, steppers and step treads while the timber platforms provide consistency and a textural change between the two levels of sandstone. Completing the mix and adding some green relief is the Sir Walter lawn.

The colour upgrade to the existing fences, the construction of new screens that were finished with textured paint, and tall feature pots help to provide further interest. The inclusion of the water feature was a simple but effective touch. It is positioned on a raised podium with an Arenite tiled finish to ensure its place in the landscape as a key focal point.

Plants provide life and softness to a landscape. In this instance, dwarf Japanese box, cordylines, blueberry ash, agaves and mondo grass were the order of the day, with *Magnolia* 'Little Gem' and Bali agaves as the main planted features. Of course, good-quality garden lighting is the key to enjoying the garden at night and this garden is no exception.

The owners were delighted with the end result and the best proof of that is how much this garden is used. It's a space that is practical and appealing in equal measure. ■

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