

From the comfort of the spa, you can look out over the landscaped yard and see the upstairs deck.

BEFORE & AFTER

Piece of paradise

This radically remodelled Brisbane backyard is now a tropical-style retreat, complete with a spa

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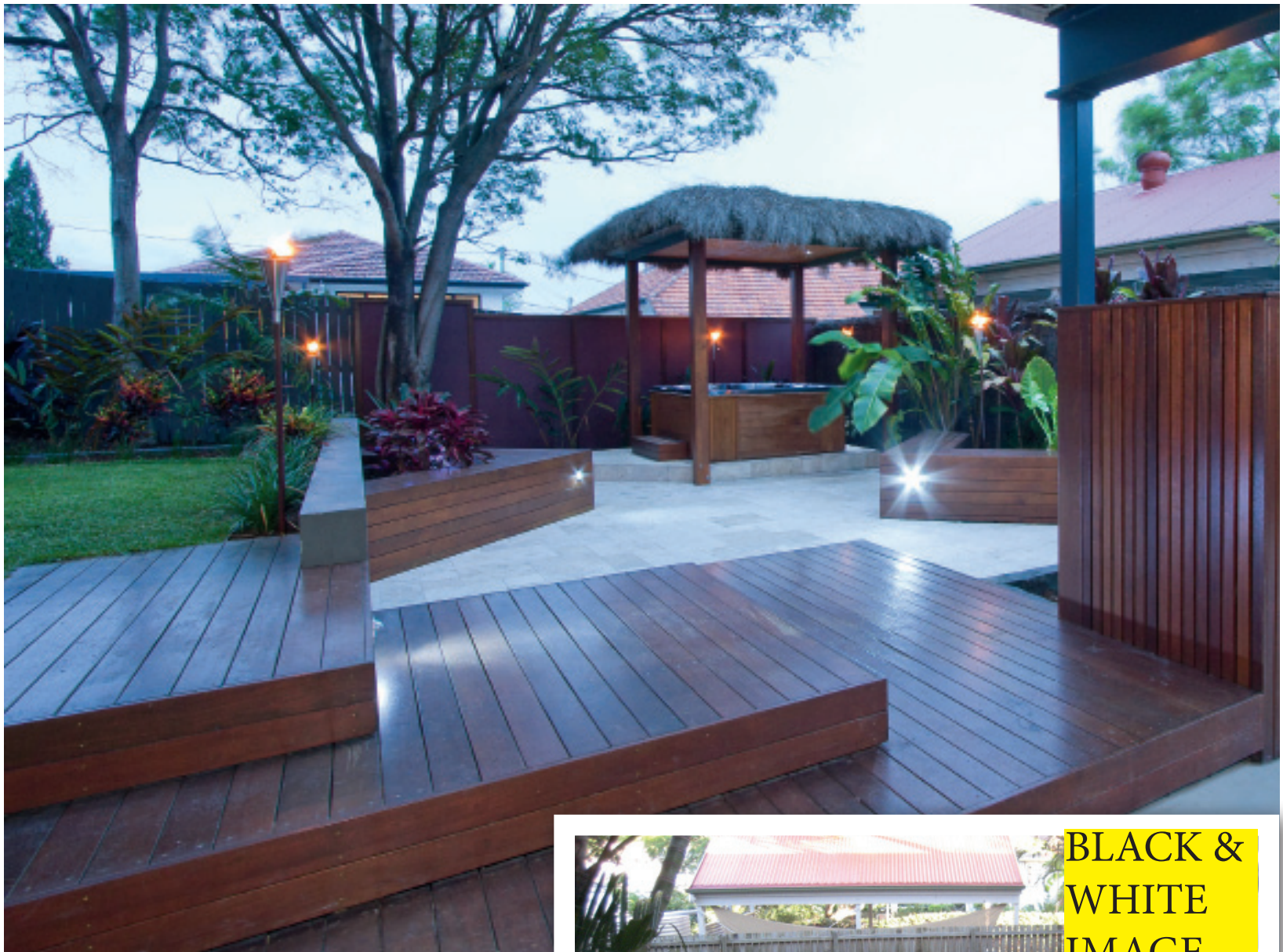
One of the advantages of owning a multi-level home with an outdoor living area upstairs is that you can use your ground-level space to create a garden room or alfresco area that serves an entirely different purpose. In this

instance, the owners' desire for an outdoor spa proved the perfect motivation to redesign and upgrade their unappealing backyard.

The upstairs deck looked down onto a very ordinary, seldom-used sloping backyard. This had remnants of previous structures and a timber retaining wall which didn't quite make the grade. Although the space was relatively

small, we felt we could easily create a spa area with an adjacent lawn which would look visually stunning when viewed from the deck above and provide a lovely vista of the landscaped grounds from the spa itself.

I decided to structure the backyard using two levels that would work in conjunction with the existing steps from the deck above.



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ABOVE A series of overlapping timber platforms leads from the elevated lawn level down to the courtyard.
OPPOSITE TOP The lawn area is a space kids and dogs can enjoy and features a built-in timber bench seat.
OPPOSITE BOTTOM The spa sits atop a platform in the corner and enjoys the protection of a gazebo.

The upper level feeds from the steps to form a lawn space surrounded by colourful tropical plantings. This level features a timber bench seat which looks down to the spa area.

You continue down the steps to a set of timber platforms which lead to a courtyard paved in tumbled travertine, where you will find the spa area and two more timber bench seats, each facing the other for a more social experience. The area is surrounded by more colourful tropical plantings with a raised basalt garden edge, and the timber retaining wall was

replaced with a rendered block wall painted Woodland Grey to highlight the plants in front.

I used the existing boundary fence to create interest wherever you looked from the spa. The section behind the spa is highlighted with a purple feature wall with timber cover strips, the side fence was covered with brushwood fencing, and I designed a new timber battened feature screen with cut-out windows to allow glimpses of the garden from the space at the side of the house. The plants sit in front of the fences and screen and will eventually mature to provide a

distraction from the neighbouring carport.

The spa, however, is the piece de resistance and, ultimately, the reason to venture into the new area. It sits beneath a thatched gazebo with a timber ceiling and when the garden lighting is switched on, the ambience is perfect. Could there be a better place to spend the evening or a weekend afternoon?

Aaron Worth is a landscape designer and founder of Utopia Landscape Design, a Brisbane-based landscape design and construction business.



BLACK & WHITE IMAGE



BEFORE & AFTER

