

Modernising the existing swimming pool and surrounding area was a key part of the garden renovation.

Garden of plenty

With its abundant plant life, this Sydney garden feels like a lush tropical-style resort



“An abundance of interesting and colourful foliage plants to ensure year-round interest”

ABOVE This elevated area offers a bird's-eye view of the garden and an Orbit daybed in which to relax. **OPPOSITE PAGE TOP** Modern square-edged limestone coping and paving has given the pool area the major lift it needed. **OPPOSITE PAGE BOTTOM** The plants were specifically chosen to create colour and texture variation throughout the landscape.

WORDS: Karen Booth **PHOTOS:** Richard Birch

Tropical-style gardens continue to be popular, and for very good reason. While there are many spectacular flowering tropical species, there is also an abundance of interesting and colourful foliage plants to ensure year-round interest. And when teamed with the right decor, garden art and lighting, a tropical-inspired planting palette makes you feel like you're vacationing in your favourite resort.

“The owners of this Sydney home wanted a tropical-style garden with plenty of colour and plant variety, and they

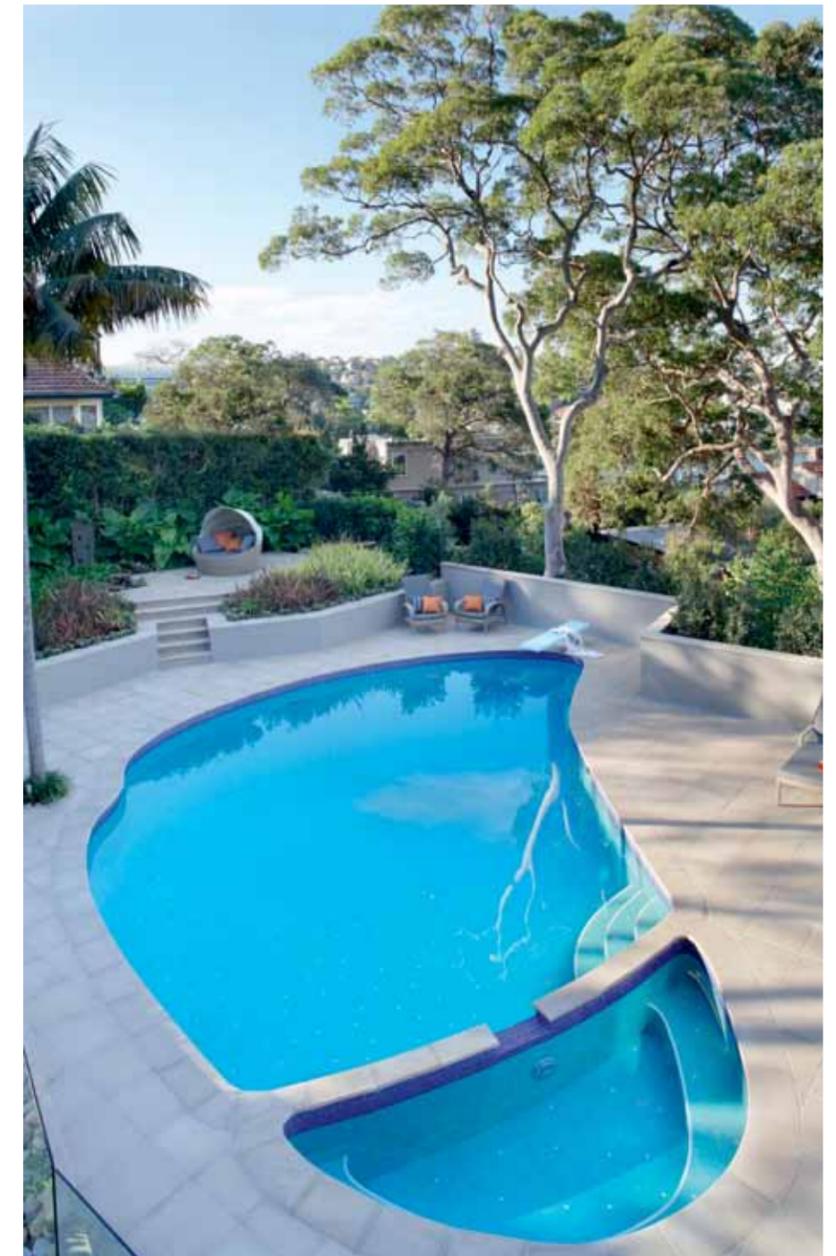
wanted their swimming pool modernised to complement their contemporary house, which had just undergone a renovation,” explains Amanda Elboz, director of Space Landscape Designs.

Bringing the large, organically shaped pool into the 21st century was top of the agenda. “Renovating the pool with square-edged coping gave it crisp, clean lines and ensured a modern look. The surrounding area was paved in limestone from Eco Outdoors to give the space texture and character,” says Amanda. “An upper-level terrace was created overlooking the pool and surrounding gardens, which was also paved in limestone to provide some uniformity in the design,” she adds.

The main design challenges were minimising the number of new structural elements to be introduced into the space, and working with the existing mature trees while achieving the goal of creating a tropical-style garden.

“The existing sandstone path which flows through the garden was maintained, thereby avoiding the need for any new retaining walls,” says Amanda. “Along this path, garden art, statues and water features were all carefully placed amid the new fresh foliage to engender a lush tropical feel and create focal points along the journey. Careful selection of plants ensured the existing trees, which provided a good canopy and shade to the garden, would blend into the new design,” she continues. “Plants were chosen and then combined to ensure a range of size, form, texture and different foliage colour.”

The planting theme was designed to create colour and textural variation throughout the garden so there would be year-round interest. To achieve the lushness typical of a tropical garden, the planting plan consisted of mass plantings of species. As you stroll through the garden, you will spy large-leaved plants, such as cordylines,)





bird of paradise, philodendrons, along with those featuring variegated foliage, such as variegated star jasmine and variegated shell ginger.

Where possible, water-wise plants were used in the design and to maintain moisture in the soil, groundcovers and mulch were used and large areas of paving avoided.

Summing up, Amanda says: “My approach to a landscape design always begins with listening to the homeowner, followed by careful planning. The design

must be a reflection of the owner’s wants and needs to make it unique and special to that person. A garden is a place to live in, not to be admired from afar,” she adds. “It must have an holistic connection to the environment and engage the senses, which is what we have achieved here. This new design has created a sense of calm and provided the owners with a garden that is full of surprises for guests – the perfect environment to share happy times and make good memories.” ■

TOP Frameless glass fencing keeps the pool safe from youngsters and helps to open up the rear garden.

ABOVE A water feature nestles amid the lush foliage. In the background stretches a green expanse of lawn.