



# BIG ON STYLE

By using a few tricks of the trade,  
a tiny courtyard has been transformed

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Photos: Peter Brennan



A sense of movement is created using different angles and shapes to give the illusion there is more depth than there actually is in this inner-city courtyard. The role of Space Landscape Designs was to select the perfect combination of materials to complete this interesting design.

The main feature of this terrace house located in the inner west of Sydney is the angled swimming pool with its blue mosaic tile-lined interior. The glistening and reflective nature of the tiled surface makes the pool very cool and inviting while the blue colour is repeated in the colours of the mosaic art gracing the feature wall.

To achieve maximum impact and really emphasise the angled nature of the design, a site-specific selection of hardscape materials was used. A hardwood timber was used for the curved deck that flows from inside the house and then sits, floating, above the pool. The same hardwood timber was chosen for the bench seats to tie each end of the space together. The bench seats were designed to be daybeds, meaning the owners can lounge by the pool on the daybeds during the day and then use them for extra seating when entertaining at night.

Choosing the right ground treatment was critical for this design, so a stunning bluestone was selected for the coping and paved area. This stone paver has a light, subtle colour, which helps to enhance the bright interior of the pool and the rich hues of the timber. By

using lighter colours in the materials, the space feels much bigger and more welcoming, which was an important consideration when working with this small, enclosed courtyard.

Planting was minimal to keep the space as streamlined and uncluttered as possible. Only one species was used for the timber planter boxes, *Ctenanthe setosa* 'Grey Star', which forms the understorey planting for the mature blueberry ash trees. A couple of yuccas in tall, bright-blue pots act as focal points and appear

to be life-sized exclamation marks, highlighting where the angles of the space begin and end.

The final design tool used to gain maximum impact from this small space was to place a series of mirrored panels along the entire rear wall. The trick effectively doubles the depth of the courtyard and provides a feeling that there is much more to this courtyard than is first seen. ■

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