

out

level the field

This family garden shines with a smart zoned design

Clad in white limestone with built-in cantilevered bench seats in a sunken section, this paved area of a Sydney family's backyard, designed by Landart Landscapes, was a deliberate choice to create a different zone. Lowering the seating creates a point of interest and having steps back up to the grass area makes the space feel a little bigger. The rest of the area is clear for all manner of uses – extra space for guests when entertaining or a spot for a basketball game. Turn the page for more of this yard.

comfort zone

We break down the clever design of a Sydney garden that ticks all the boxes for family time

Plenty of fun for their kids was high on the agenda for a couple when it came to the redesign of their garden on Sydney's northern beaches. "They wanted something that looked beautiful but that also had everything set up for the children," says landscape designer Matt Leacy of Landart Landscapes who designed and built the new garden and pool out the back, and reconfigured the front garden to incorporate a green roof over the existing garage. "We focused on maximising the potential of the property," he says. "We created an entertaining area and a new swimming pool, with a strong visual connection between them, plus a paved area and a generous lawn with a cubby house and trampoline. I think we've ticked all the boxes; it's an interesting and inviting garden with something for everybody."

THE ENTERTAINING DECK is made of spotted gum. "It's a dense Australian hardwood, grown sustainably, and it can either be oiled or left to silver off without splintering too much," says landscape designer Matt Leacy. A roof over the table is inset with adjustable louvres and includes downlights and a strip heater, along with a built-in barbecue with a granite benchtop. A corner features *Lomandra longifolia* 'Tanika' under a Japanese maple tree, which turns vibrant red in autumn. "The architecture of the house is squared off, so we wanted to use the planting to soften that," says Matt.

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“It’s an interesting and inviting garden with something for everybody”

MATT LEACY, LANDSCAPE DESIGNER



THE CUBBY HOUSE was already on site, but relocated and lowered to ground level then painted black. “We wanted to push it off to the side so it didn’t take up as much visual space, looking out from the house,” says Matt. A trampoline is built into the ground beside it. [Visit landart.com.au](http://landart.com.au) to see more of Matt’s work.

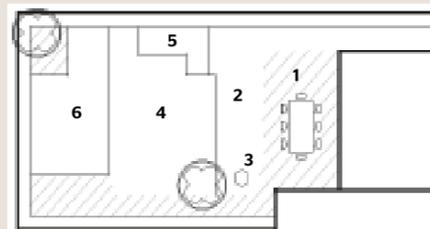
THE FRONT GARDEN was reconfigured to allow for more privacy from the street, while retaining a spacious feel. Pleached *Pyrus nivalis* ‘Snow Pear’ trees provide structure without bulk, and they are underplanted with variegated star jasmine for a looser element. Limestone steppers are interspersed with mondo grass to soften the hard surface.

THE RAISED PLANTER BED sits over the garage, so it provided its own challenges. “We only had around 300mm of soil depth, so we chose plants that could deal with it yet still grow to a reasonable height,” says Matt. “We went for a lot of textural planting including agave (*Agave attenuata*), naturally mounding plants such as Carissa ‘Desert Star’ and jade plant (*Crassula ovata* ‘Blue Bird’), along with silver foliage from the Kalanchoe ‘Silver Spoons’. As this garden is visible from the master bedroom, we wanted it to look attractive from above as well. It’s hard to stop a shallow garden from drying out, so we included a watering system.”

THE POOL is elevated slightly so that it can be seen from the house and to lessen the excavation needed. A low buxus hedge inside the glass fence sits at the level of the water. “Our intent was to remove all signs of traditional pool coping, to make it look a little more intriguing than the standard pool,” says Matt. Spotted gum decking overhangs the white-tiled pool at both ends, with grey limestone stepping pads forming a water feature on the far side.

garden plan

1. Entertaining deck
2. Paved area
3. Sunken area
4. Lawn
5. Cubby house & trampoline
6. Pool



get the look Hardy materials, modern lines and timeless tones work in tandem to create a contemporary family-friendly garden



Limestone pavers in Chalford, \$177/sqm, Eco Outdoor, ecoooutdoor.com.au.

‘Clean & Protect’ low sheen interior paint in Dark Silhouette, \$62.50/4L, British Paints, britishpaints.com.au.

Beefeater ‘Signature ProLine’ built-in hood barbecue, \$2999, Appliances Online, appliancesonline.com.au.

‘Okò’ 275cm teak outdoor table, \$5859, Mamagreen, mamagreen.com.au.