



UTTERLY URBAN

This inner-city sanctuary provides a spa-like experience



Reminiscent of a spa retreat, this bijou inner-Sydney garden refuge offers the ultimate luxury courtyard experience. Simon Munn and the Urban Garden Enrichment team were charged with building the new garden, which was designed by Steve Warner from OUTHOUSE design, and the result is picture-perfect.

"The landscape architect Steve Warner was commissioned to design a private garden oasis in a popular inner-city location. It is a very small space so it was imperative to achieve a balanced look that emphasised clean lines and seamlessly linked elements. Working with quality materials was equally important," says Simon.

"The brief required an outdoor dining zone and a built-in barbecue with a benchtop linked to a bespoke built-in sunlounger. A low garden edge wall was designed as a visual link leading to a more secluded space with a raised sun lounge deck, tactile planting and sunken spa bath, creating a place of sanctuary in the middle of a bustling city."

Urban Garden Enrichment's list of construction accomplishments includes the concrete bench customised by Set in Steel for the installation of the barbecue, and the carpenter-built seat and under-



bench shelves and doors. Sharing equal prominence is the complex, built-on-site curved daybed and the customised accoya timber sunlounge with ambient lighting installed under the seat.

"The decking was customised to meet the curves around the spa and planter boxes and created so it could be removed for access to the spa services, drain outlet and irrigation inside the planter box," adds Simon. "The customised metal planter boxes, as well as the metal retaining wall around the spa, which were fabricated

off-site by PO Box Designs and installed on-site, were a vital component of the design.

"Each travertine paver was cut individually off-site to create organically shaped stepping stones and glued to the prepared concrete blocks; the exposed render was then painted black. A customised sliding rail and hook was installed to store the spa cover."

The planting palette is perfection itself. The landscape architect sourced a frangipani as a feature plant, which is complemented by five towering *Cyathea cooperi* tree ferns, for some privacy from the street above.



"To create more privacy, assorted succulents were chosen for the upper wall area, and to add more greenery, stainless-steel wire rope was bolted to the wall to grow *Stephanotis floribunda*," says Simon. "Rhipis excelsa and bromeliads were retained and reused in the fresh new planting."

This space-enhancing garden won the 2022 NSW Landscape of the Year and Best Courtyard/Small Garden awards. Of the project, one of the judges said: "The execution of the many landscape elements is done very well. There is a lot going on in such a small space, but the materials and colours are well balanced giving the garden an overall harmonious, lush feel. The plant palette is well balanced and provides the feeling of an oasis in a concrete jungle."

NSW

THE DETAILS

URBAN GARDEN ENRICHMENT

Website urban-garden.com.au

Overall Winner NSW Landscape of the Year
Category Winner Best Courtyard/Small Garden

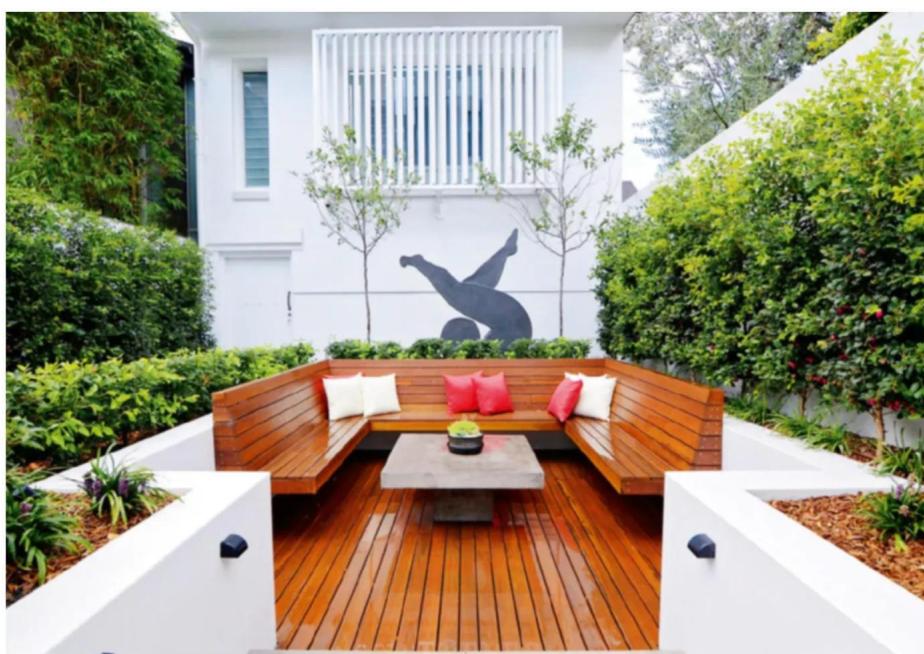
NSW LANDSCAPE OF THE YEAR AWARDS | WINNER



SIMON MUNN
Director,
Urban Garden Enrichment

WORK OF ART

This garden is a testament to construction excellence



Having downsized and bought this inner-Sydney home, the owners had a clear vision for their rear garden. It was to be easy to maintain, so the existing pool area had to be repurposed, and it had to be modern and visually interesting. They also craved an open-aspect entertaining area that would be protected from the sun, an intimate and private entertaining space, and a sense of connection between the garden and the studio above the garage.

Urban Garden Enrichment was charged with building the new garden, designed by Steve Warner from OUTHOUSE design, and Simon Munn and his team set about transforming the space. The first task was to remove the pool and stabilise the area, then the garden was divided into two zones.

Level one is the entertaining and dining area featuring a custom concrete bench for the barbecue and bar fridge, a built-in seat, garden beds and a pergola with a louvred roof. The area is paved in Andorra limestone tiles as are the steps leading down to the next level.

The second level, its design inspired by a 1970s-style sunken lounge, is a place for cosy gatherings. Spotted gum was used



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to build the sunken lounge and deck area, its warm tones complementing the lush green of the surrounding plants.

Considerable technical expertise went into the construction of this garden. "To begin with," says Simon, "the original pool structure, which was not square, filled the majority of the backyard area so it was important to try to retain as much of the existing pool support structure as possible.

Other major construction jobs included the adjustment of the levels in the back

area to allow for paving, the construction of garden beds and the sunken area; also the installation of new retaining walls in what was formerly the pool area.

"To build the steps, we core-drilled multiple holes into the garden bed retaining walls, installed heavy-duty galvanised angle bars that spanned the space and glued tiles on top of the bars with a gap between the tile and the wall to allow for slight movement on the steps. By doing this, we were able to evoke a floating effect."

The two spaces feel unified due to the use of the same large-format paving and the single-species (*Syzygium australe*) boundary planting. For a low hedge around the sunken lounge, there is *Viburnum tinus*. Elsewhere, you'll find *Rhaphiolepis indica* 'Oriental Pearl', *Malus atrosanguinea*, *Ajuga reptans* and *Dichondra argentea*.

The garden is also the perfect showcase for the owners' outdoor sculpture, with the sculpture at the end of the garden setting the tone for the overall design.

Winner of the Best Sloping/Multi-Level Garden in the NSW Landscape of the Year Awards, the garden has also won awards from The Landscape Association as well as the Landscape Design Institute.



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THE DETAILS

URBAN GARDEN ENRICHMENT

Website urban-garden.com.au

Category Winner Best Sloping/Multi-Level Garden



ONE OF A KIND

This urban courtyard is a delight for all the senses

Creating a private garden oasis on a cramped city-fringe plot complete with a dining zone, barbecue area, sun lounge and spa was a daunting task requiring ingenuity, expert design and quality materials to complete.

The popular and bustling harbourside suburb of Woolloomooloo in Sydney features narrow streets, scarce parking and high pedestrian traffic. While the norm for residents, the narrow one-way street leading to the site of this apartment building complicated matters for the team at Urban Garden Enrichment.

To add to the access issues, the site is 3-4m below street level, with no access to lifts. All tools, materials and deliveries had to be lowered into the site and removed via a scaffolding ladder. Heavy materials, plants and pre-constructed elements needed to be lowered in via crane. Considering the limited

space, materials and tools could not be stored on-site overnight, meaning extra work for the team as they had to be brought in and out each day.

Showing their true colours on a project that required millimetre-perfect measurements and afforded no room for error, the expert team from Urban Garden Enrichment were able to pull off a miracle garden transformation that satisfied the design brief, despite seemingly insurmountable challenges along the way.

Noting the tough site conditions and the outstanding work done, the judges stated, "The attention to detail on this job is incredible. The landscaper has taken the concept design and complexities of the site, which were many, and created an incredible space. Every single aspect of this construction is technical, bespoke and incredibly well done."



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This inner-city sanctuary is calming for the soul and a delight for the senses. Tall ferns were chosen to welcome local birds. Lower-level planting was designed to encourage insect colonisation, and additional plants were selected to provide privacy from the overlooking street and other apartments.

High-quality plants were sourced from various local nurseries, with the highlight being a massive tropical frangipani tree. Other lush foliage adds to the courtyard's shaded, rainforest-like feel.

At just over 36 square metres, you might expect each element to fight for attention in such a small area, but this is not the case. From the paved pathways to the built-in elements that serve as seating and retaining measures, the cohesion and balance on display is a testament to the high quality of the construction carried out by the team from Urban Garden Enrichment.

Expertly showcasing a secret garden path, sun lounge and deck, outdoor spa and shower, barbecue area, dining table and lush greenery, this multi-award-winning, space-defying project, designed by OUTHOUSE design, really is one-of-a-kind and a testament to luxurious, sustainable inner-city, small-space garden design and construction.



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THE DETAILS

URBAN GARDEN ENRICHMENT

Website urbangardenenrichment.com.au
Category Winner Residential Construction
\$70,000 to \$150,000

