



# Courting success

A warm and welcoming outdoor room featuring a Canary Island beauty







# designer landscapes

You would be hard pressed to find a more magnificent specimen than the amazing Canary Island date palm that claims centre stage in the rear garden of this Melbourne property. So it's not surprising that when the owners decided it was time for a complete courtyard transformation, this statuesque palm was to be *the* main feature.

In addition to featuring the palm, the owners' wish list included the need to make the 12m x 17m space more functional and easier to maintain. Hardy plants were a must-have as was the inclusion of natural materials with earthy colours.

Constructed by Stanbrook Outdoor Creations to a design by Ben Bentley of BJB Designs, this modern new outdoor living area now ticks every box.

In effecting such a dramatic transformation, Stanbrook was able to re-use some existing elements. An exposed aggregate concrete slab, for example, was revamped to provide a sound base for the new 600mm x 600mm Desert Sand sandstone-calibrated pavers. Sealed to prevent staining, these pavers have proven the perfect choice for the barbecue/entertaining area.

The perimeter fences were able to stay, too, and have been camouflaged with merbau timber slat screening. This durable hardwood, which is resistant to termites and decay, has also been used to construct the decking and planter boxes.

The plants, which include grass trees (*Xanthorrhoea* sp.), yuccas (*Yucca elephantipes*) and bird of paradise (*Strelitzia* sp.) require minimal attention and look amazing set against the backdrop of the timber screens.

To keep them healthy during dry spells, there is a basic inline drip system.

The final flourish is a sculptural water feature standing proudly in one corner. It gives the courtyard a fresh feel and introduces the soothing sight and sound of moving water.

This small outdoor space has been beautifully transformed by Stanbrook Outdoor Creations into a totally functional alfresco room that belies its actual size.



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