

AUSTRALIAN

HOUSE & GARDEN

Think big! *Creative ways to make space*

DECORATING
ON A BUDGET

Gorgeous outdoor
living rooms

Paddock to paradise
A country gardener's
journey of discovery

50+
STORAGE
SOLUTIONS

Home office blitz
Tidy tips from
Shannon Lush



02
acp
magazines

FEBRUARY 2009 *\$6.95 *NZ\$7.90 (*incl. GST)

TOP AUSSIE WINE REGIONS + SEAFOOD BBQ RECIPES

Outback tucker

There is perhaps no more practical addition you could make to your backyard than an outdoor kitchen. Elisabeth Knowles unearths some expert tips on how to create the perfect open-air prep area, from the humble to the grand.

THE KITCHEN PAVILION

When you're entertaining outdoors, there's nothing more frustrating than having to pop in and out of the house to prepare food or stock up on drinks – especially when you have tricky terrain to negotiate, such as on this steep block in Sydney's eastern suburbs.

This self-contained pool room, designed by architect Luigi Rosselli in conjunction with landscape designer Will Dangar, is the ultimate grown-up cubby house. It has everything you'd ever want to spend hours entertaining friends in the garden – without needing to disrupt the flow of festivities by clearing plates. The space includes a separate shower area and changing room for the pool, as well as a dining room and kitchen with microwave, sink and integrated fridge. A lime-yellow Marblo resin splashback and benchtop brightens the area.

"The real benefit of the pool house is its openness," says Rosselli. "Vertical louvred walls allow it to open or close to the elements and make it feel connected to the garden." ▶



CONSOLE COOKING

This custom-made barbecue unit (above left) was designed by architect Philip Abram to be sympathetic to a garden by Spirit Level Design. The all-in-one console is especially striking due to its cantilevered design.

"We wanted to keep the garden flowing under and around the barbecue without affecting its functionality," says Abram. "The cantilever achieves that."

To protect the plants around the unit, stainless-steel lids were custom-built by A&G Stainless. "The lids protect the foliage from grease and flames from the grill-top," says Abram, "and they also protect the commercial-grade Zanussi equipment from the elements as they were not specifically designed for outdoor use."

The practicalities don't stop there. A Rogerseller mixer features in the plumbed sink, which is fitted with a cutting board that can be placed over the top for extra bench space. Copper downlights from Lumascope provide spotlighting.

MEDITERRANEAN MENUS

The Italianate design of the courtyard garden area, above right, is given Mediterranean appeal with large pavers, citrus trees and a stylish wrought-iron furniture set with comfy upholstered cushions.

But the showpiece of the garden is the handmade natural-stone wood-fired oven. While you may not have access to either the budget or the stonemason to build one just like it, Liz Keogh from Mediterranean Pizza Ovens in Fremantle, WA, offers a more affordable, prefabricated alternative.

"Wood-fired ovens are perfect for Australian backyards because they are cool on the outside so they don't pose a fire risk," she says. "You can cook anything in them that you can cook in a regular oven, such as curries, meat, fish, poultry, breads, desserts – and, of course, pizza. They make attractive garden features and in winter, they double as heaters."

The ovens cost between \$990 for a DIY kit and \$7900 for the commercial variety.

THE FAMILY GET-TOGETHER

Good design is often dictated by the simplest of needs. "The brief from this young family was to create a contemporary outdoor area that they could entertain in – they wanted everything outside," says Matthew Cantwell of Secret Gardens of Sydney.

To that end, a sink, barbecue and fridge were installed galley-style along one fence, an arrangement that maximises both traffic areas and leisure space. A separate dining zone features white sandstone paving and a Dedon Marrakesh dining setting from Domo Collections.

The timber-slat awning, which was built around an existing date palm (*Phoenix canariensis*), gives shade and privacy while maintaining optimal airflow in that corner.

"When we started, the garden was a typical overgrown suburban backyard, complete with a Hills Hoist," says Cantwell. "The palm was one of the few original features that remained when we'd completed the renovation."

Photography by Maree Homer (barbecue, opposite), Picture Media (wood-fired oven). For Where to Buy, see page 172.

