

50 pages of kitchen & bathroom  
brilliance!

# beille

Meet the  
Interior Design Awards  
*Kitchen and Bathroom*  
FINALISTS

Names, names, names...

BRENDAN WONG

*Christian Lyon*

David Flack

DYLAN FARRELL

*Fiona Lynch*

JOHN WARDLE

William Smart

# Virtual INDULGENCE

FASHIONABLE HOMES FROM  
AUSTRALIA'S TOP TASTEMAKERS







IN HIS 1984 BOOK *BIOPHILIA*, American biologist Edward O. Wilson defined the titular concept as “the urge to affiliate with other forms of life”. Biophilic design is about bringing nature into the urban environment, connecting us with the well-known health and wellness benefits that greenery, sunlight and fresh air produce. And as the impact of the coronavirus global pandemic continues, it is proving crucial in providing a living, breathing salve to the stresses of life in this unprecedented time.

“We know that being present in nature can provide respite when we are feeling stressed, overwhelmed or isolated,” says Suzie Barnett, managing director of biophilic design firm Junglefy. “Bringing plants into our habitat can help restore calm, protect mental health and create a greater sense of wellbeing.”

Junglefy is one of a number of firms across Australia and around the world doing just that, through a range of innovative projects comprising forests of city gardens, office oases and public parks. “It’s about creating a green grid whereby people can traverse a city and be connected with nature along the way,” she says. “As humans, we need nature and are happier when we can see, touch and smell it.”

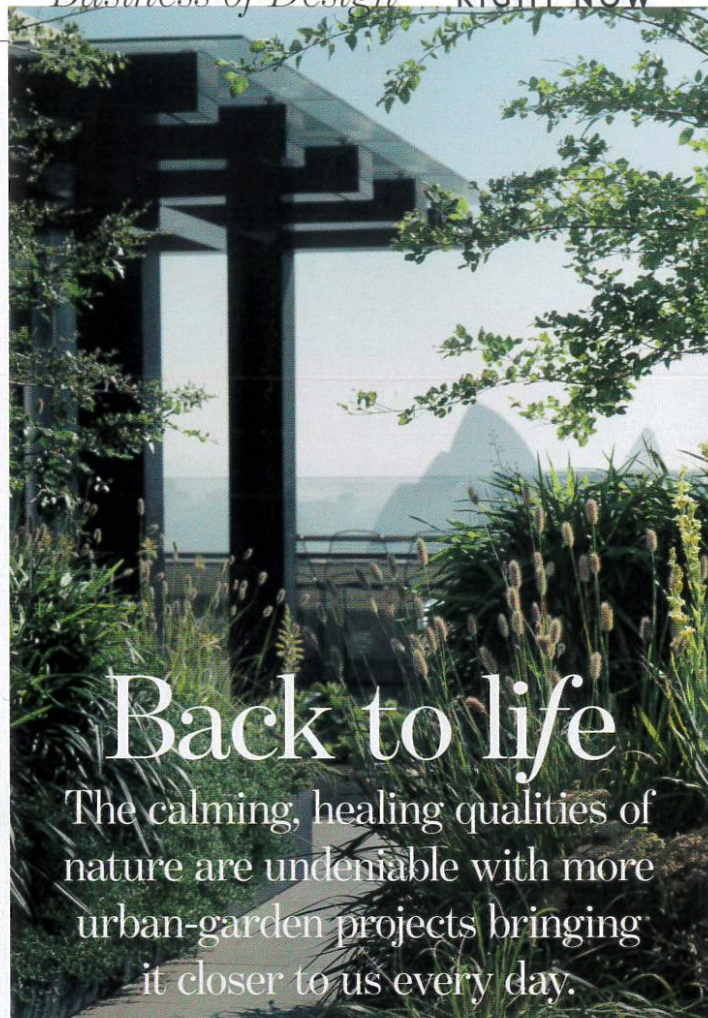
In Sydney, the aptly named Secret Gardens was commissioned to design and install a rooftop oasis for the employees of Platinum Asset Management at their offices near Circular Quay. Briefed to create an outdoor garden terrace inspired by The High Line in New York, the bold and imaginative public park built on a historic elevated rail line, Secret Gardens managing director Matthew Cantwell transformed what was a vast, barren area into a series of inviting ‘rooms’. “The client wanted to use the space for meals and more casual meetings for various groups, so we created green rooms for different numbers of people, from one to 12,” says Matthew. “Some people just wanted to go out there and have a sandwich by themselves, so we made sure there were more private areas, but if they were ‘open for business’ on the roof, we set up spaces that would communicate that, too.”

The main trees used were tropical birch, which can take high levels of pollution and are used extensively throughout New York, while a mix of succulents and grasses provide lower-level foliage and create texture and interest. “The trees are deciduous to maximise warmth and light in winter; grasses such as *Dianella revoluta* and *Pennisetum thunbergii* ‘Red Buttons’ create movement; and various succulents attract birds and also flower in winter,” says Matthew. “We wanted to ensure the planting wasn’t contrived and appeared a bit wild to remove the sense of being bound in the city.”

Across town at One Central Park, one of Australia’s most striking green spaces is not removed from the city but rather a vast, permeable structure connected intrinsically to it. Created by French botanist Patrick Blanc in partnership with Junglefy, the world’s tallest vertical garden when installed (130m high, on a major Sydney street) typifies the firm’s approach to bringing nature and beauty to congested and concreted urban spaces.

“Walls, roofs, car parks, alongside highways and all the spaces in between can be planted up and become less a garden, more a jungle. It’s about reimagining our cities inside a park, not the other way

Business of Design RIGHT NOW



## Back to life

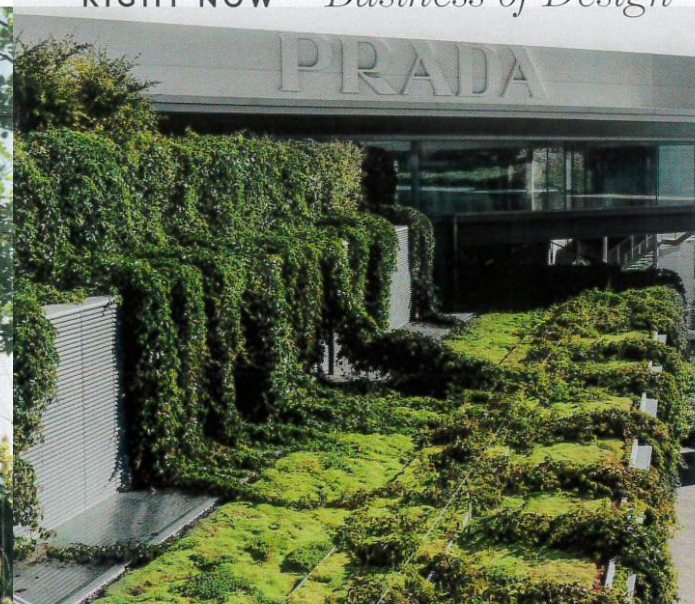
The calming, healing qualities of nature are undeniable with more urban-garden projects bringing it closer to us every day.

Words **GEORGINA SAFE**

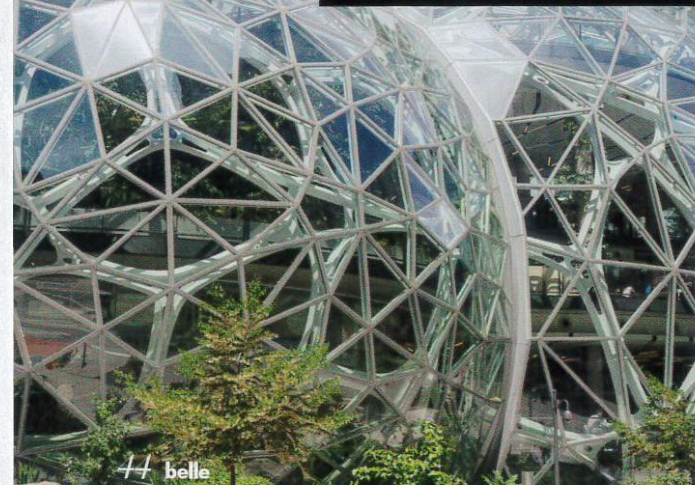
This page, from top left Matt Moran’s Barangaroo House in Sydney has 125 custom planter boxes. The rooftop at Platinum Asset Management by Secret Gardens. Mille Arbres, a biodiverse public promenade in Paris by Sou Fujimoto. One Central Park by Junglefy.



RIGHT NOW Business of Design



This page, from top Prada headquarters near Arezzo, Italy, by Guido Canali. Greenery climbing the walls of the CaixaForum Madrid museum and cultural centre. Jeff Koons’ flower-filled Puppy at the Guggenheim in Bilbao, northern Spain. Bosco Verticale residential tower in Milan. The Spheres in Seattle in the US are three glass conservatories designed for Amazon employees with the public welcome to visit on weekends.



around,” says Suzie, whose ‘living infrastructure’ company has also brought lush jungles to Matt Moran’s restaurant Barangaroo House and the Melbourne and Sydney offices of Lendlease. She says the benefits of gardens for employees and visitors go far beyond the aesthetic. “Gardens trap pollutants and improve air quality, capture rainwater runoff and act as natural machines to clean and cool the air. The better the air quality, the higher the productivity: if people are happier and healthier, then they’ll work smarter, make better decisions and have fewer sick days.”

Large-scale biophilic developments are also underway in Melbourne, including Skyfarm, a project to transform a 2000sqm rooftop carpark into an urban farm; and Green Spine dual skyscraper development, which when completed will be one of the tallest in the world, incorporating a range of vertical gardens and a botanical rooftop close to 350m in the air.

Some of the most striking corporate and civic gardens can be found in Asia and the US, where Amazon’s Seattle headquarters features a series of glass-dome conservatories called The Spheres. The three bubbles are home to more than 40,000 species of plants from over 30 countries and were developed after studies showed that employees might think and work more creatively if surrounded by vegetation. Fellow tech behemoth Microsoft’s Washington campus has three “treehouse” conference rooms set among pine forests, created in response to *Your Brain on Nature*, a book in which co-author Dr Eva M. Selhub found that “trees and plants secrete aromatic chemicals that impact our cognition, mental state and even our immunity in ways we are just beginning to understand”.

Singapore is marketing itself as an entire ‘green city’, including a central business district featuring multiple lush public parks, hospitals and libraries featuring vertical gardens, as well as Changi Airport, which has the world’s tallest indoor waterfall, a butterfly forest and multiple flower gardens and topiary throughout.

But you don’t have to be a big city or corporation to go green, with Australian residential garden and interior designers reporting a strong uptick in demand for foliage and landscaping. “There’s a return to the natural, and people are wanting a sense of abundance when it comes to their gardens and greenery in small apartments,” says Richard Unsworth, founder of Garden Life. “They’re also interested in growing edibles, planting herbs and vegetables, and creating true habitats for entertaining, relaxing and enjoying.” His recent greening of smaller spaces includes a garden for Sydney florist Sean Cook of Mr Cook and an outdoor courtyard for the offices of See-Saw Films’ joint managing director Emile Sherman.

Meanwhile, Melbourne interior designer Fiona Lynch has been bringing vegetation and views to a project for a landscape designer client in St Kilda. “At the start, there was a terrace area with a wonderful view looking out onto a canopy of eucalyptus trees, however a concrete balustrade below the window felt bleak,” she says. “Our client added a beautiful green wall to the terrace balustrade that blurred the inside with the outside. We then decided to bring the landscape in, taking inspiration for colours and materials from the eucalypt leaves, bark and wood with soft deep greens, creams and rich walnut timbers.”

Even if you don’t have the budget of Platinum Asset Management or One Central Park, it’s still easy to bring in the garden vibes to soothe your soul during these challenging times. “Just start growing,” says Georgina Reid, founder of online journal *The Planthunter*. “Start small and get to know a few easy-to-grow plants. Once you’re confident you can keep them alive, get some more. Ask friends and neighbours for their tips and favourite plants and share yours with them. Share cuttings, seeds and tips, and soon enough your thumb will be fluorescent green!”