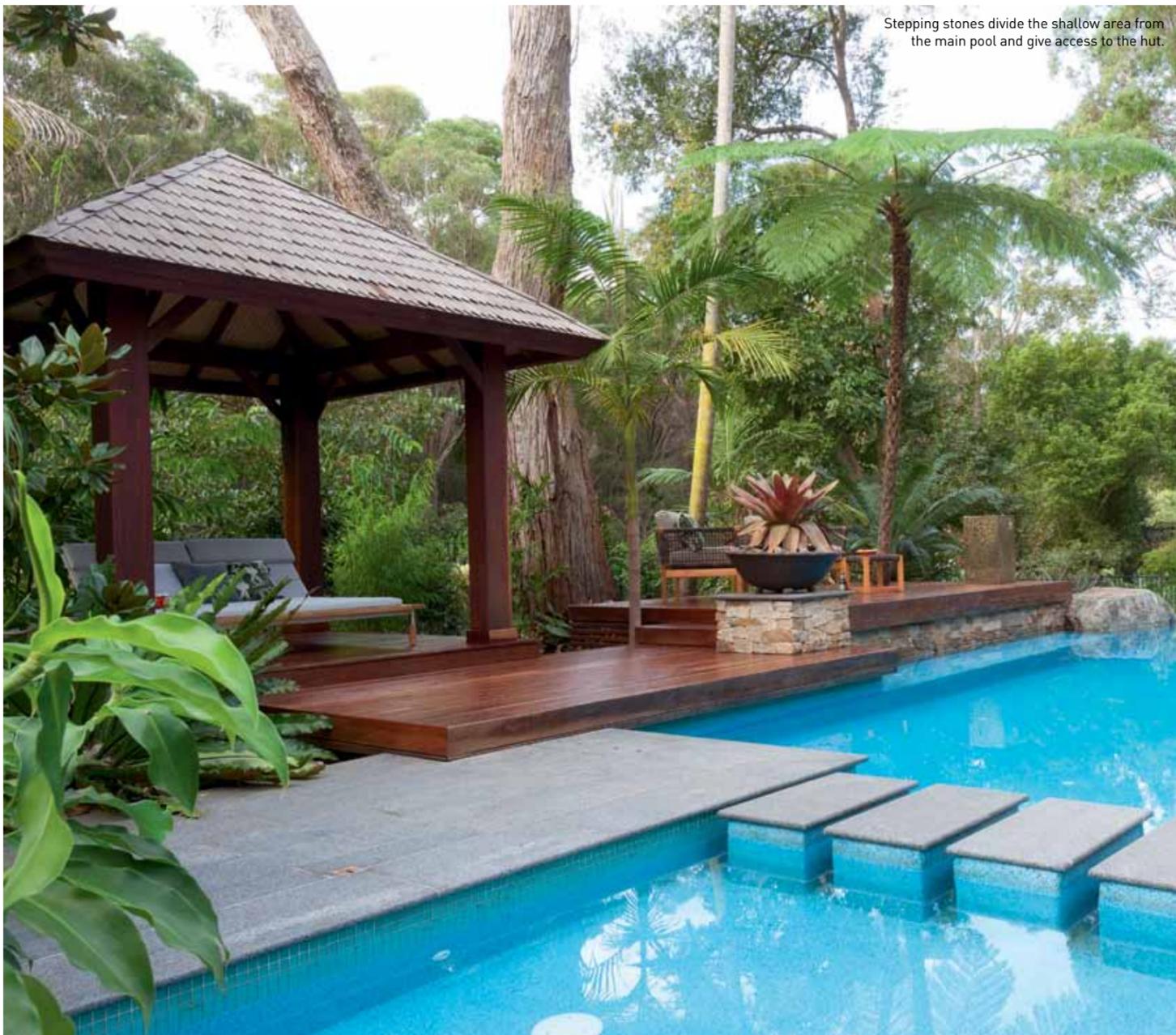


The custom-made ironbark hut houses a daybed and is the ideal place for supervising the children.



Lush & Luxurious

Inspired by a love of tropical gardens, this outdoor retreat is a haven for one happy family



Stepping stones divide the shallow area from the main pool and give access to the hut.



The cosy deck area adjacent to the shallow section of the pool is wrapped in greenery.



Alpine stone cladding was used for the feature wall, the look harmonising with the feature rocks.

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PHOTOS: BLUE POPPY PHOTOGRAPHY

Having lived in Far North Queensland, where they became enamoured of tropical-style gardens, the owners of this Sydney home craved a backyard oasis that would have the lush look and relaxed feel of a tropical resort. But there were practical considerations, too. With three daughters to entertain, they wanted a swimming pool with poolside spaces that would appeal to mum, dad and the younger clan members.

"You wouldn't know it now, but the site was originally dark due to a number of large trees overcrowding the space and completely shading the backyard," explains landscape designer Justin Dibble of Fluid Design. "While care was taken to maintain the leafy surrounds, several trees had to be removed to bring sunlight into the garden and to create space for the new pool, deck and hut."

The design of the pool fuses luscious curves with crisp straight lines and incorporates two swim-outs, a shallow area for the children (with air jets for added fun), and a wide set of entry steps. Granite-topped stepping stones, which seem to float above the water, divide the shallow area from the main pool zone and lead straight to the inviting poolside hut (furnished with a daybed) and a multi-level timber deck.

"The result is a seductive, tropical-style poolscape to delight every family member"



ABOVE This Platinum Poolsapes-built pool boasts sweeping curves, swim-outs and a wet-edge spillover. **LEFT** The mix of plants and natural materials sets this landscape, built by Eclipse Landscaping, apart.

“The custom-made ironbark daybed hut is the perfect spot for the parents to relax in while watching over the kids in the pool or for enjoying a well-deserved Sunday nap. Adjacent to the hut is a raised section of deck constructed around a mature tree fern that is ideal for sunloungers or for jumping into the deep end of the pool,” says Justin.

“At the deep end of the pool two large feature rocks were carefully placed by an excavator on a ledge inside the pool shell. The rocks, which sit on either side of the wet-edge spillover, create an effect similar to a cascading stream in a rainforest,” he adds.

A second deck was integrated into the design. This is located next to the shallow area of the pool and is large enough for an outdoor lounge. When it’s chilly, a fire pit warms this deck while an ethanol fireplace warms the lounge area of the other deck.

To create the desired rainforest-inspired ambience, Justin chose plants that would infuse the poolscape with a tropical flavour. The plant palette is replete with leafy plants, including three different varieties of palms, tree ferns, birds nest ferns, cyads, cordylines, bromeliads, gingers and clumping bamboo.

Getting the design and location of the pool right was critical to the success of this project. Says Justin: “A pool is a big investment and can be the most expensive item within a garden, so to get the best year-round value from your pool you want to be able to see it and appreciate it.

“A well-thought-out pool design should create an attractive environment for entertaining *and* provide a stunning view from the home’s main living areas. As the living areas of this home are on the upstairs level, the owners are able to enjoy amazing views over the pool, particularly at night.”

The result is a seductive, tropical-style poolscape to delight every family member.