

# dream come true

*A luxurious outdoor retreat designed for a family that appreciates the very best in life*







**W**hen you're designing your home and garden from scratch, you can give full expression to your imagination and create your dream outdoor entertaining area. When the owners of this property in Sydney's rural outer-west began planning their new home, they knew they wanted a multi-functional outdoor living space that would cater to the family's every need and desire. That's why they called in Justin Dibble, managing director and principal designer of Fluid Design.

"The brief was to create an outdoor retreat with a modern country-style feel. One that provided several areas for entertaining and featured a relatively low-maintenance garden to bring it all together. Essential elements included an outdoor kitchen area, a traditional wood-fired pizza

oven, ample space around the swimming pool for lounges etc, a firepit area large enough for 20 people, and a chill-out lounge space for weekend relaxing," explains Justin.

There are three buildings on the site — the house, a gym and a pool house — yet the garden feels open, spacious and cohesive. This is a testament to Justin's skill, as is the clever integration of multiple areas for entertaining and hanging out with friends. As to the look, it is contemporary yet pays homage to its rural setting.

"I particularly love the wood-fired pizza oven/outdoor bar area which also has a few old wine barrel tables that give the space a real rustic country vibe. It's a place where anyone would love to spend time with friends and family eating delicious pizza and sharing a few beverages and some laughs. The sunken firepit area is a great space, too, with

the pool's spillover wall, tiled with blue glass mosaics, acting as a stunning backdrop."

Then, of course, there is the amazing pool house designed by the architect, Luke Van Jour of Distinct Innovations, which overlooks the pool and has a huge alfresco entertaining area. It is here you will find the outdoor kitchen, built-in gas fireplace, dining table and lounge suite.

"A key element was building a 1m-high retaining wall along the back of the garden to create a level area to the rear of the home. This space has a lush green lawn, the centrepiece of which is a 1.5m-high Corten steel Sphere sculpture with an ethanol burner at its base," says Justin.

The property experiences cold, frosty winter mornings and baking-hot, dry summer afternoons, so only tough, low-maintenance plants were employed.

Explains Justin, "We selected *Viburnum odoratissimum* to create a hedge that would give a walled garden effect, with *Pyrus 'Capital'* to create height within the garden and provide some beautiful autumn colour.

"On the lower level, gardenia was used to form a low hedge, Gynea lillies were incorporated for their sculptural, sword-like foliage and brilliant red flower spike, *Raphiolepis 'Snow Maiden'* was used to border the deck, *Liriope 'Stripey White'* to border the lawn, and a series of Canary Island date palms were placed along both sides of the property. These will eventually tower over the rooftops, bringing some

scale to the buildings and adding shade."

Equal care was taken in choosing the hardscaping materials, from the tumbled travertine paving to the spotted gum hardwood decking. The result is a well-considered, versatile outdoor retreat where attention has been paid to every detail.

#### PROJECT DETAILS

Landscape design

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