



# NEW ORDER

It seems like a contradiction – a structured garden with loose planting, but here it works like a dream.

Photographs SIMON GRIFFITHS Words GEORGINA REID



This page The rear garden is dominated by a large paved entertaining terrace flanked by four linden trees (*Tilia cordata*). Opposite page This garden is very much about textural contrast and form.



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This page Random-cut Castlemaine slate tiles surrounded by creeping thyme (*Thymus serpyllum 'Alba'*) lead to the rustic potting bench in the rear garden, flanked by tall hedges of weeping lily pillly (*Waterhousea floribunda*). Opposite page, from top Kate Seddon's design intention for the entry was to provide a sense of arrival, while maintaining a feeling of warmth and creativity. Stepping stones in groundcover are used throughout the garden as an alternative to paving, creating an overwhelming sense of being enveloped by greenery within the space.



A garden should be used and enjoyed. That's my intention," says Melbourne-based landscape designer Kate Seddon when speaking of an elegant and eclectic garden she designed in South Yarra. It's a gorgeous space, flanking a 1930s Marcus Martin-designed home with a recent rear addition by architects Powell & Glenn.

Kate was invited by the client to undertake the garden design during the process of the house renovations. The brief was to maintain the feel of the existing garden – consisting of stone walls, raised beds and an Edna Walling vibe – while integrating it with the strong architecture of the revamped house.

"The clients requested that the garden sit somewhere between informality and formality. They wanted quite a bit of structure, but looseness in the planting," says Kate. She achieved this by maintaining a simple geometric layout, drawing from the lines of the house, and also through the use of plants as structure. "Nicole de Vésian's garden in Provence was an inspiration for us," says Kate. "We wanted to create definition within the planting and contrast this with more flowing forms and mess. All gardens need a bit of mess!"

The property's entry garden consists of a simple slate-paved pathway flanked by cloud pruned lily pillys (*Acmena smithii*). A low fish pond sits at the centre of the space, surrounded by a mix of different toned gravel and low sculptural planting, including Japanese pittosporum (*Pittosporum 'Miss Muffet'*) and cloud







This page, clockwise from top left The clients love their garden, and have added their own touches to the design through elements such as the chinoiserie-style ceramic stool. Low maintenance plants such as Japanese pittosporum (*Pittosporum 'Miss Muffet'*) provide sculptural interest without the need for regular pruning. A fire pit sits at the centre of the rear entertaining area, encouraging the use of the garden throughout the cooler months.



pruned box (*Buxus microphylla*). “It’s a lovely garden to enter,” says Kate. “It has a sense of grandeur, yet it’s also warm and inviting.”

The rear garden consists of a large entertaining area paved with random-cut Castlemaine slate. Four linden trees (*Tilia cordata*) punctuate the hard surface, framing views from the house into the garden. Providing a backdrop to this area is a low stone wall with clipped box plants, clumps of *Agave attenuata* and cotton lavender (*Santolina chamaecyparissus*).

A curved stone staircase leads up to a low terrace behind the stone wall where an additional small seating area is provided, with a backdrop of mother-in-law’s tongue and a bird sculpture, sourced by the client, sitting in a bed of mondo grass.

What I like about this garden is its personality. It’s not a space contrived entirely by the designer, but it’s a designed garden that’s been added to and loved by the owners. They’ve filled the space with their own – often whimsical – sculptures and furniture, and maintain it themselves. It has a warm, lived-in feel.

Plants and materials are beautifully balanced in this garden. The spaces are generous and practical, and enhanced by the lush and textural planting design. The buildings, the walls, and the floors are all draped in plants, softening strong lines and providing the clients with a wonderful, inviting garden to spend time in – which, clearly, they do.

“At the end of the day the owner will come home and get into the garden. He even prunes at night by torch-light! He’s very passionate about it,” says Kate. “The best gardens are the ones that are tended by the owners.” I couldn’t agree more.

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