

GARDEN NOTES

King Garden

Garden designer Rick Molino will be in attendance on both days.

Design and Implementation

The 1930s original home and 1950s styling of the recent rear home extension both came from periods where informality was becoming favoured over order - there was a more relaxed approach to home and garden design which were more organic, less regimented and particularly towards the 1950s, a “less is more” approach. Gardens of the era employed variation and interest in plantings, plant structure, and always had a clear independent distinction between the elements and shapes. This garden’s design reflects this philosophy and refrains from being completely ordered and linear but alternatively a little more unpredictable, inviting, curvaceous and naturalistic in its layout.

1930s gardens generally featured classic English and Asian styled plants with a reasonable emphasis on flowers, while the 1950s moved more towards plant form and texture, employing various striking architectural foliages and distinctive shapes at the expense of flowers to add contrast and create a contemporary look. In order to give the front, rear and side gardens a connection, the front garden primarily features classic styled trees and shrubs but laid out in a more organic and juxtaposed format to reflect the 1950s style being adapted in the rear and side gardens set against the home’s recent mid-century styled additions. This more contemporary and looser placement of plants effectively integrates it with the rear and side gardens by sharing a similar layout, however as you progress through the property towards the rear garden the plant palette then gently morphs, introducing more exotic and highly architectural species akin to the 1950s era.

Flowering plants including hydrangea, camellia, iris and limonium feature more extensively in the front garden compared to the rear and side gardens which err a little more towards plant form and foliages like dwarf pine, ligularia, bergenia, brunnera and the palm-type foliage of helleborus foetidus, all being more attuned to the 1950s style.

With the house facing north and quite open to the west, the introduction of shade was vital to cool the home and outdoor living areas through use of shade canopy trees. Deciduous forms, including ginkgo, maples and magnolias were introduced and strategically located to maximise winter sunlight where required, as well as to best admire their beautiful autumnal tones.

A sunny rear garden that featured a range of hard surfaces including granite pavers, ceramic pool tiles, timber decking and wall cladding post the pool and home builder’s scope of works desperately required garden beds to be introduced wherever possible to further soften the area and reduce glare. The insertion of beds cut into both levels of the decking whose shape mimicked that of the “stepped” archway on the front porch not only satisfies the need for greenery and some colour but also discretely incorporates a key design element of the original home to the rear garden with ample interest. Conversely, to accentuate a sense of balance throughout the entire garden, the front has also introduced part of the rear garden’s sculptural ethos by implementing curve-shaped garden beds that encase a series of soil mounds softly planted with mondo grass, inspiring visions of undulating fields and giving the space a greater sense of dimension.

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Another key element to the garden's success is the long garden bed that runs along the rear of the property parallel to the new pool. Being in full view upon entry into the home, not only did it need to reflect the more modern styling of the 1950's slated for the rear garden, but it also importantly had to ensure a visual connection that complemented the front garden's styling to maintain an overall harmonious feel. The pedestrian option would have been to plant a row of the same tree species as is commonly done, creating a uniform and simplistic effect, but 1950s gardens just weren't like that. The opportunity was seized to create something more spectacular where the taller plantings are a varied, contrasting coloured group of evergreen and deciduous upright species that comprise *Elaeocarpus Reticulatis* (Blueberry Ash), Ginkgo "Fastigiata", *Magnolia Grandiflora* "Alta" and golden Pencil Pine. The ginkgo and magnolia were deliberately chosen to repeat on some of the front garden's selections, whilst the lower plantings of Dwarf Japanese Pines, *Rhaphiolepis*, *Euphorbias*, *Asparagus Meyerii* (Foxtail Fern), *Nandina* "Lemon Lime" and *Zamia Furfuracea* (Cardboard Plant) provide an eclectic mix of shapes, foliages and colours as well as mirroring species selected throughout all the individual gardens.

Today/Result

Combined with the introduction of a range of structural elements, including custom built cantilevered concrete bench-seats, large steel circular-shaped wood stack, cobble and bluestone paving, plus the placement of a formal stepped entry and pathway leading from street to front door, the garden has been able to not only respect the home's heritage but also successfully integrate elements of the 1950s styled home addition and importantly meet the demands of a busy modern family.

The outdoor space has now become a series of garden rooms that allure you to look and explore, each catering to very different needs, but importantly, still all feel as one. The front garden offers a warm welcome and gives the home a new sense of strength and presence to its surroundings, the rear garden a generous and diverse place of interconnecting dining and entertaining areas over a series of floor levels that help to define each space, the side garden, once a driveway but now a serene place for contemplation and home harvesting within the elevated circular steel beds, a thoughtfully placed and highly visible feature garden encased by the home on three sides that bridges the old house to the new and can be admired via large floor to ceiling windows in the primary rooms of lounge, kitchen and dining; and finally a lush secret garden that surrounds the bathroom, providing a relaxing outlook necessary for the space.

These notes can be downloaded from the Open Gardens Victoria website:

www.opengardensvictoria.org.au