

Reigning supreme

Landscape designer, Jules Moore, shows a taste of elements that develops a restricted outdoor space into a design for living.

ARTICLE Jules Moore PHOTOGRAPHY Scott Espie





Great for family and friends - a petanque court is set on the top tier of the garden



The owner of this modern three-storey home, set within the steep slopes of Titirangi, is now spoilt for choice.

Due to the creative landscaping works of Matt McIsaac, Jules Moore and their team from Landscape Designer Ltd, owner Jacqui now has a garden she can be proud of. It's a garden that abounds with design, detailing and delights with an amazing outdoor entertaining extravaganza. The whole experience leaves you wanting more.

The 400 square metre section is neatly tucked into what was an extremely steep slope. Early on, a blunder from an initial builder meant that the back of the house had an oversized, engineered retaining wall that towered above the house making things seem dark and closed in. Above this retainer and sloping back to the original contour of the land was a large and unusable clay bank, covered in grass. Before the design that you see today, a redesign of this space was carried out to reduce the height of the wall by taking a massive 10 truckloads of

clay out. Once this was completed it meant there was a level platform to create another more functional area; an 'upper room', if you like, in which to entertain.

Today this oasis houses a 2.5 x 2.5 square metre Cabana or Hawaiian styled Gazebo, with a step-up deck and floating-like wooden steps.

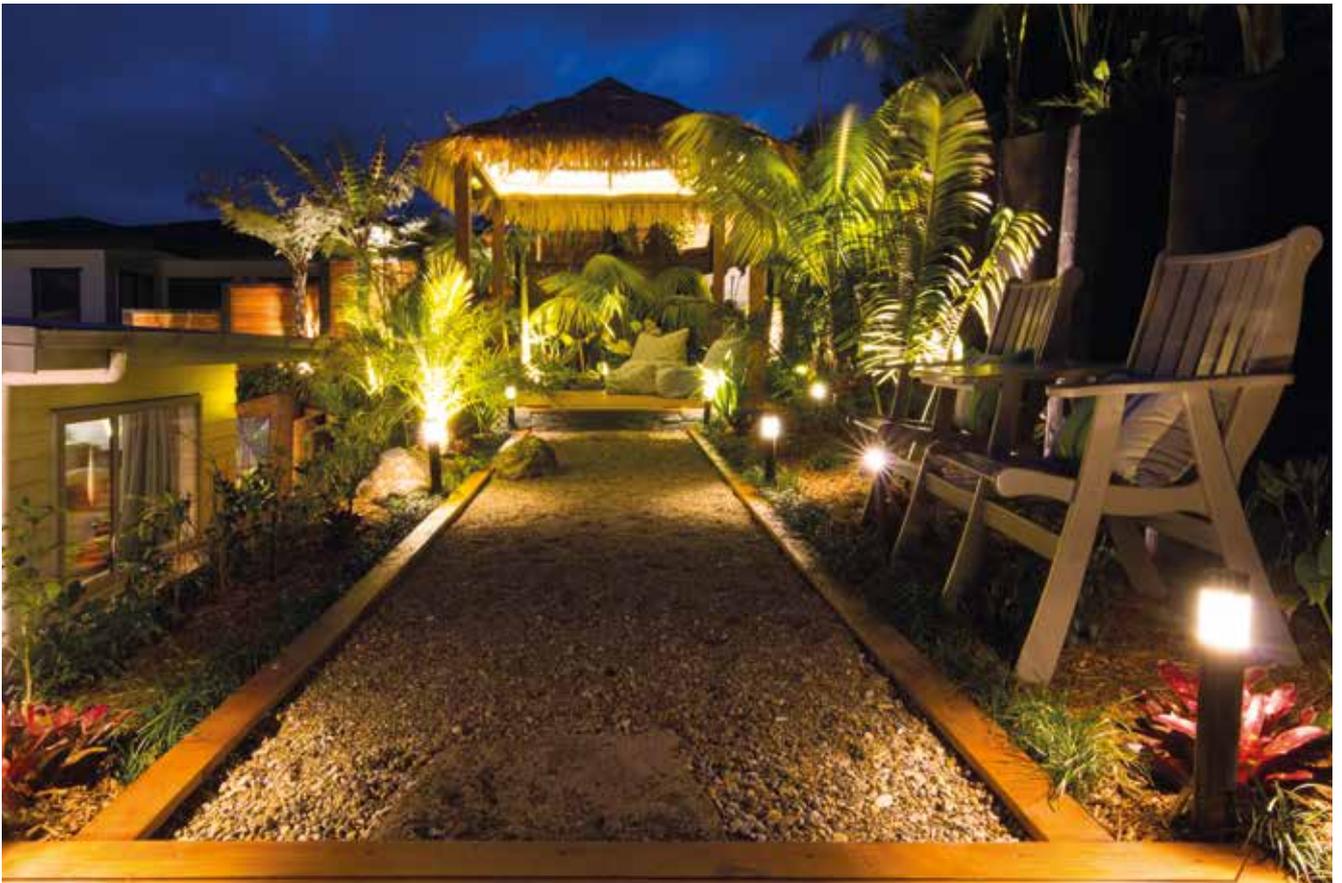
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Within one of the steps is a catchment of water which doubles as a safe haven for goldfish and is technically an up-market water feature.

From the top, one can see there is a small flow of water over a stainless steel weir and a mosaic of pebbles; but its impact is more apparent when looking up from the second level.

Inspired by a display they had done once before; Matt and Jules talked to Jacqui about the possibility of using a synthetic product on the roof of the Cabana.





This life-like synthetic thatch is like that of a palm-like foliage (panapa), that is used in the Islands. Its benefits of longevity outweigh natural products, lasting more than 15 years and it is also 98% waterproof.

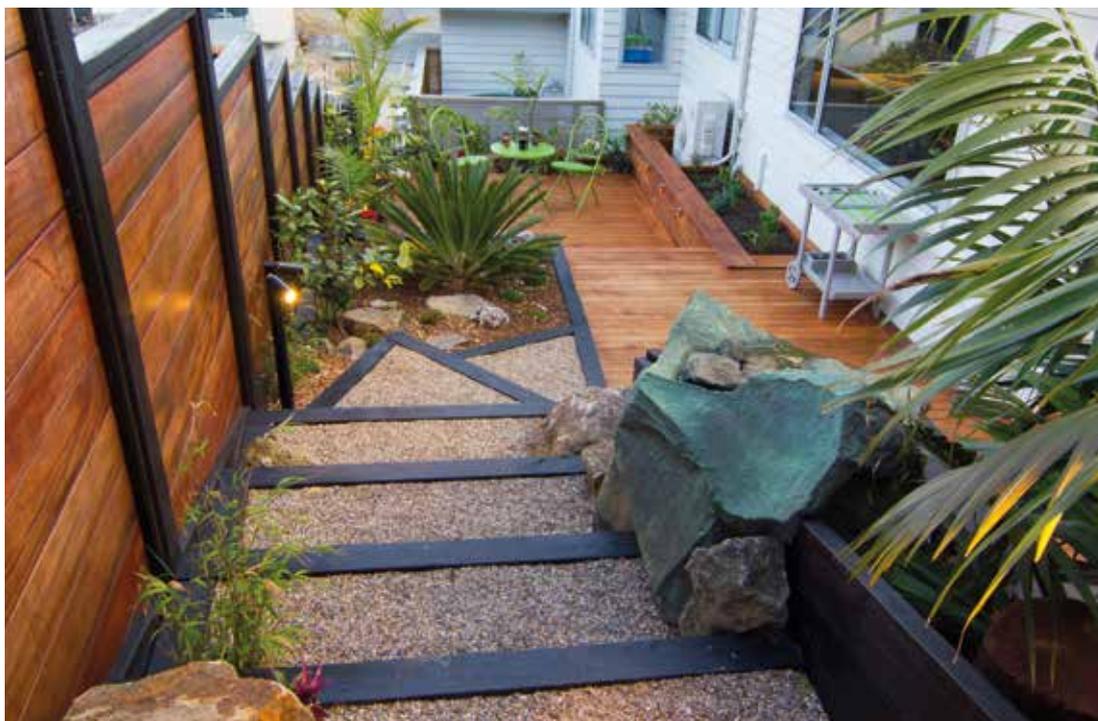
It's the perfect covering for our New Zealand summers as it's made from polyolefin (not PVC) and it breathes. The temperature under a thatch roof is typically 10 to 15% cooler than usual.

As an accompaniment to this area, Jacqui had always wanted a petanque court for family fun and interaction. The pebble scree path was the perfect place for this. Outcrops of rock naturalized themselves within the scree, making this normally long stretch seem slightly random and interesting.

Large flat bottomed rocks in front of the decks act as a foot mat before stepping onto the main platforms.

With pebble lock in place, the walking is made easier but the integrity of the course is still intact. From a distance, the vista to this thatched house is seamless and inviting with soft blue bean bags completing the invitation.

Layers of leafy and subtropical plants will line the garden landscape once the plants are fully grown



Of course, no landscape of this caliber is complete without the quintessential backdrop of palms and layered leafy plants. Some more special than others will stand their ground when flowering.

One, a rare subtropical Heliconia from Jule's personal collection, gets 3 metres tall with red and yellow flowers that hang down. Thankfully this made it through the winter and is tucked into the microclimate of goodies.

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Moving down from the top level, one cannot help notice the natural wood fence panels. Black pine posts with mahogany inserts provide a chunky, yet natural feel to the home and macrocaper sleeper also painted black provide the footing for the journey below.

It is fair to say there are so many wonderful things to view within this garden; the engineering of a schist covered planter and water feature, which cleverly conceals the height of the back retaining wall, to the outstanding outdoor kitchen and its accompaniments. Overhead Kudos aluminium louvre's provide shelter in all weathers and have added benefit of letting the light in when needed.





'The Kitchen', designed by Al Williams, Matt McIsaac, and owner Jacqui, is at the hub of this landscape. Intricately beautiful, this five metre long outdoor kitchen houses a gas BBQ and fire, a stainless steel sink and faucet and schist panels that secretly disguise the sliding recesses draws 'for all things cooking'.

Not to be overshadowed by the beautiful flecks of Lapis Lazuli within the granite benchtop, is the cast aluminium Stags head. Reigning supreme all his glory above the kitchen.

From the initial design scope to the end result; it was a culmination of the right people brought together to solve the challenges that smaller section restraints throw at them – a showcase of renovation at its best. With stylish spaces and easy living all at your backdoor – who could ask for more? 📷

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