



A step up

Consistent materials and concepts link two courtyards with independent functions

The trend to build larger homes on smaller sites means landscape architects must ensure every inch of available space is used to maximum efficiency and effect.

Such was the case for the owners of this contemporary townhouse. They wanted to create multi-use outdoor areas, while maintaining a sense of connectivity between two isolated gardens, says Damian Wendelborn of Urbanite Landscape Design.

"The original landscaping levels were



too high and lacked any sort of connectivity. The design concept was to create a dialogue between the two defined spaces, while providing a play area for children and an adult rest and recreation space."

The design takes its cue from the architecture of the home. Freestanding plastered block walls reflect the style and orientation of the house while providing wind-breaks, privacy and design consistency.

"The scale of the walls contribute to a sense of extravagance, making the

Facing page: The functions of these two garden areas are quite individual, yet linking them literally and visually gives them an independent identity while maintaining design consistency.

Top: A volcanic-rock water feature provides textural relief against plastered block walls.

Above and left: Freestanding plastered walls continue the architectural style of the home, but also provide a wind break and maintain privacy.



compact courtyard appear larger than it actually is."

A cantilevered, pre-cast concrete slab table sits in a shielded alcove, providing a gathering point on the upper level. The overhang is lit by concealed lighting. This void creates an interesting sculptural effect while providing ambient light.

Large, polished concrete pavers carry the philosophy of scale towards stairs, which lead to a less formal lower garden.

Volcanic boulders mirror the igneous rock water feature found on the upper

level, and create a contoured garden bed.

"The owners have an active interest in sub-tropical plants, which have been used extensively throughout this garden. To add a bit of local flavour, I have complemented these with native flora, such as the Puka shrubs forming a loose hedge along the boundary," says Wendelborn.

The lower, tablet garden provides a play field for junior members of this home. The design integrity is maintained via consistent use of similar plants and materials, such as the paving established upon entry.



Landscape designer: Damian Wendelborn, Urbanite Landscape Design, GDSNZ (Auckland)

Lighting: Hunza

Planting: Urbanite and owner's own collection

Stonework: Stone Direct

Concrete step treads: Paving Slab Co

Cantilevered concrete table and seat: Custom designed

Photography by Kallan MacLeod

Facing page, top: Floating stairs lead from an upper courtyard to a lower tablet garden. Volcanic rocks give the garden texture and continue the design established by the upper level water feature.

Facing page, lower: Bromeliads add tropical texture.

Above: Local flavour has been added using native shrubs. These balance the owners' collection of sub-tropical plants.

Left: Smaller versions of polished concrete, also laid on the upper courtyard border the lower garden.