

A touch of Tuscany

Space was at a premium when landscape designer Ascher Smith set out to transform her own garden – but that didn't stop her from creating a gorgeous Mediterranean-style oasis, finds LISA CALAUTTI



With 12 years in the landscape industry under her belt it's no surprise that Ascher Smith's Scarborough garden is impressive. But its transformation into a Mediterranean-style oasis is even more remarkable when taking into account the confined space with which she and fiance Dylan Lindsay had to work.

"As I design gardens all over Perth I wanted our garden to have that point of difference to what I design for my clients," Ms Smith said.

"I wanted to create a relaxed, informal Mediterranean-style garden with a timeless feel about it. We wanted it to feel like you are in the middle of



Tuscany when you are here.

"To be honest, there was no design for our garden, so new materials and plants are constantly added as the garden grows and changes."

The design brief Ms Smith said she created was for a low-maintenance, waterwise garden with as many trees as possible. And with the couple's 1990s-built home set on a small 370sqm block, space was at a premium.

When Mr Lindsay bought the home five years ago, there was no garden. He installed a pizza oven and limestone-walled garden beds. Two years ago, he and Ms Smith began their garden renovation.

"The most important point was that we wanted to see the garden from every room in the house," Ms Smith said.

The scene for a Tuscan feel to the garden is set from the entrance to the home which is via a large limestone archway and wrought-iron gate.

The dining room's rosewood and glass sliding doors open to the courtyard, which allows the couple to enjoy the garden regardless of the weather.

French pattern travertine paving and burnt orange walls complete the Tuscan feel.

Other highlights include a rusted daisy green wall which features various plants through the season, and a pergola covered with an ornamental grape vine. There is also a 6m



Get the look

Ascher Smith's tips to recreate her Tuscan-style oasis

- Think of your garden as rooms within a house. Try and create different outdoor rooms that can be used and enjoyed at different times. Whether it's a view from a window or an entertaining courtyard, each "room" in the garden gives you the opportunity to try something different.
- Use natural products, whether it's stone paving or natural stone cladding. Natural products don't date easily and create a sense of a timeless garden that has been there for years.
- The plant palette should consist of blues, yellows and apricots. These colours represent a Mediterranean colour palette and complement each other rather than working against one another.

oldhamii bamboo framed behind a limestone arch.

Soft garden lighting creates dramatic shadows from the bamboo on the walls.

"We feel there is such a magical quality to a well-lit garden," Ms Smith said. "It transforms the space, highlighting features that are barely noticeable during the day."

After the renovations began, Ms Smith said they felt the Mediterranean style had to flow through into the house to really connect the space. This was achieved by cladding the entire home in natural limestone and using travertine and timber in both courtyards.

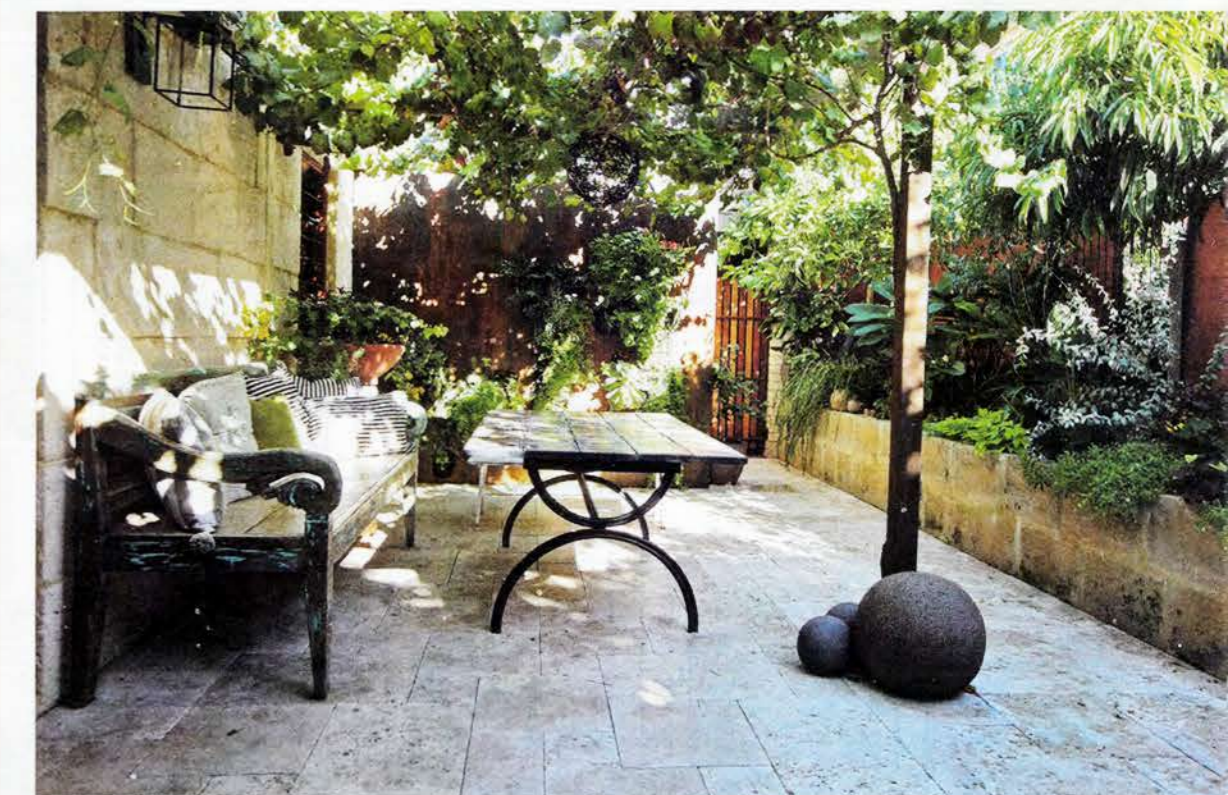
"There are plans to renovate further, adding a second storey to our house, so the garden will continue to influence our renovations into the future," she said.

The front courtyard — which is Mr Lindsay's domain — is home to an impressive vegetable garden with tomatoes, basil, asparagus, turmeric and beetroot plants, to name just a few.

Fruit trees including lemon, lime and guava line the courtyard fence, along with a boab tree from Broome.



Ascher Smith wanted her garden to have a point of difference. Pictures: Robert Duncan



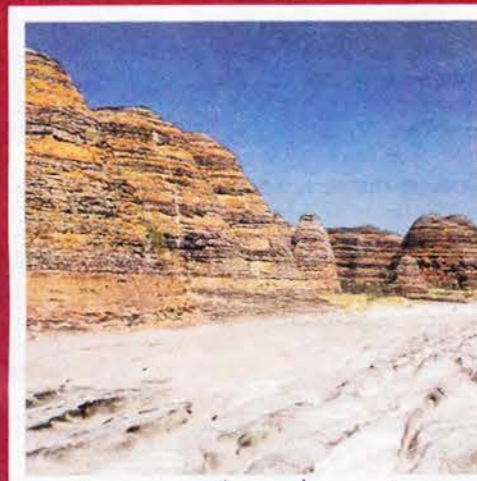
Natural limestone cladding and the right furniture complete the Tuscan look.

Planting guide

Fruit trees / Lemon, guava, lime, cherry guavas, vanilla, banana, finger lime, pawpaw, kaffir lime, mango, apple, cumquat, nectarine, bay

Vegetables and herbs / Eggplant, tomatoes, basil, oregano, parsley, beetroot, Vietnamese mint, spring onion, asparagus, coriander, mint, thyme, lemongrass, tarragon, turmeric

Deciduous trees / Chinese tallow, poinciana, Madagascar boab, ornamental pears, bauhinia, maple trees, ornamental plums, frangipanis, birches, golden rain tree, forest pansy



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