ABOVE Mass-planted native violets were employed as a pretty groundcover in the raised planter.
LEFT The timber feature wall softens the hard edges of the space and adds a feeling of warmth.

WORDS: Kate McKee **PHOTOS:** Katrine Alatli

While the home was the envy of most, the garden certainly wasn't. "Being only 3.5m wide by 6m long and enclosed with 3m-high walls, the old garden felt like a small concrete box," says Steve Warner of OUTHOUSE Design. In summer, it was hot and claustrophobic and in winter, it was dank and uninviting.

The new garden design was to be simple in layout and take advantage of the existing structures. "At the end of the day, if you can work with the landscape rather than fight it, it delivers a cost-effective and cohesive design," says Steve.

The main goal for the space was to create a feeling of balance and calm by keeping the materials simple and drawing focus to certain elements. One challenge was confronting the

Out of the box

By cleverly working the vertical planes, this garden no longer feels boxed in

ABOVE The main garden bed features dwarf magnolias, which produce a heady scent when in bloom.
LEFT Built-in elements, including the benches and the integrated barbecue, maximise the space.

height of the boundary walls. A feature wall at the back of the garden was the obvious solution, but Steve was careful to create a feature that wouldn't be too imposing.

To combat the lack of planting opportunities, the best use of the wall facing the house was made by training star jasmine along wires arranged vertically. The jasmine now grows from a narrow planter that was built along the base of the wall.

Light-coloured sandstone paving was laid horizontally to create a sense of extra width, and space-saving fixed bench seating was installed. "The long part of the seat was kept storage-free, as this allows us to light up the seating area and create a sense that the garden is wider than it is," adds Steve.