

This balcony's contemporary design ensures the space is well utilised.

PENTHOUSE PARADISE

This small top-floor space makes a mighty big impact



Organic shapes and rounded corners give the outdoor space a modern feel.



DESIGNER GARDENS



ABOVE AND BELOW RIGHT All of the plants used are drought tolerant, relying on natural rainfall for growth. **RIGHT** The rich green tones of the planting serve as a welcoming contrast against the grey of the planters.



The structure was custom designed by bespoke fabrications company PO Box Design to envelop the Vergola insert and cover a large entertaining space. Constructed using lightweight, powder-coated aluminium, the sculptural structure gives overhead protection from the harsh elements and its colour was specifically selected to match the existing apartment building.

"This was a major factor in the design as we wanted to complement the existing development and create a flow from the upper balcony to the lower garden," say Steve and Katrine.

Previously, the balcony had been covered in white pebbles, making the space unusable as well as causing a maintenance issue for the homeowners. To provide a better entertaining space, the team replaced the existing pebbles with modern timber decking, complementing the new seating in the lower balcony and providing a cleaner look to the space.

As the apartment was on the top floor, the OUTHOUSE Design team had limited access for construction. All items used in the design needed to be dismantled into sections to allow access into the elevator, before reassembling them on the balcony.

The balcony also had weight-loading restrictions enforced by the structural engineer. To combat these restrictions, all elements were constructed using lightweight aluminium, keeping weight to a minimum. Powder-coating



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With population growth and apartment living on the rise, you would expect relaxing green landscapes to be a thing of the past. However, this inner-city balcony proves you can still have a lush garden no matter where you live.

The homeowners' brief for Steve Warner and Katrine Mardini of OUTHOUSE Design was to convert their unused, exposed space into a place of shelter where they could dine and entertain.

"With inner-city living on the increase, there is pressure to maximise every square inch," say Steve and Katrine. "This amazing balcony is so unique, not taking advantage of it would be the crime of the century."

To bring this drab space to life, Steve, Katrine and the team designed a courtyard that was both modern, clean and crisp and provided a visual sense of unity with the rest of the apartment. Their design included organic shapes to draw the eye out and down to the lower balcony, and an overhead structure to provide protection and shade from the heat.

"The overhead structure and Vergola insert were a standout," say Steve and Katrine.

"Creating an organic and interesting shape that removed sharp corners draws you into the wider garden, while still providing the gravitas and personality it needed."

Fresh summer hues brighten the entertaining space.



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A beautiful entertaining area for relaxing with friends.



“This amazing balcony is so unique; not taking advantage of it would be the crime of the century”



ABOVE The totally reimagined space is perfect for both small alfresco gatherings and large summer parties. **LEFT** Bench seating neatly abuts the garden bed. This helps to create a sense of connection between spaces.

Plants chosen included *Raphirolepis indica* ‘Oriental Pearl’ (Indian hawthorn), *Dichondra argentea* ‘Silver Falls’, *Westringia* ‘Greybox’, *Strelitzia reginae* (bird of paradise), *Cupaniopsis anacardioides* (tuckeroo) and *Sansevieria trifasciata* (mother-in-law’s tongue).

“The way the garden bed wraps around and connects with the seating zone allows the homeowners to engage with multiple destination points and supports intimate and extensive gatherings,” say Steve and Katrine. For added colour, the seats were upholstered with vibrant fabric by Inform Upholstery.

By providing a sustainable and architectural balcony garden, Steve, Katrine and the OUTHOUSE Design team were able to meet the homeowners’ brief to create a place they can relax, entertain and be sheltered from the harsh elements. Using organic shapes and an overhead structure, the team has not only brought the space to life, they have created a natural oasis that will only improve with time.

these elements enabled them to have long-term protection against the weather conditions.

As nothing was able to be bolted or fixed onto the existing tiled surface, the overhead structure was used as the key connecting point to the main building. The individual planters had commercial-grade casters to allow for ease of movement and provide minimum impact on the existing balcony tiles.

“All key garden beds were raised from the ground using commercial rubber feet to allow for drainage and flow of excess water into the existing drainage points,” say Steve and Katrine.

To keep the garden sustainable and eco-friendly, all plants used were drought-tolerant, relying only on natural rainfall. Each of the pots had an internal water draw-up system to capture and distribute water through the roots. Any proposed trees were structurally supported by creating a pot within the planters, allowing for future root expansion.

“A clean planting palette was created to deliver strong, bold architectural contrast,” say Steve and Katrine. “The round planting complements the cut-out shapes within the overhead structure and the privacy side screen.”