

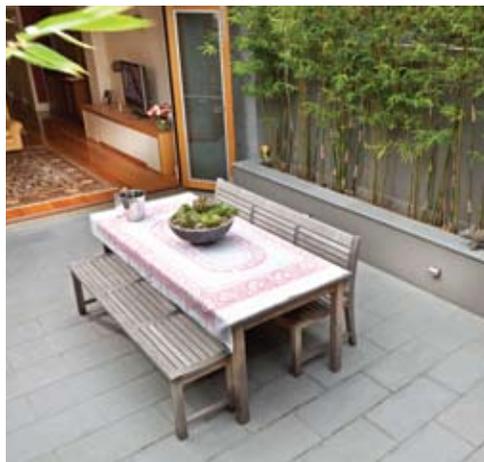
ABOVE Clumping bamboo creates privacy and a living wall along both sides of the courtyard.
BOTTOM Sandblasted granite paving and wall capping add a look of timeless sophistication.

Private oasis

From dated and overgrown backyard to a clean contemporary courtyard

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Taking the outside in and the inside out was the easy part when it came to this new outdoor room. With recently installed bi-fold doors at the rear of the narrow terrace house opening from wall to wall, the



garden was crying out to be transformed into an inviting new green outdoor room.

There was just one glitch. The neighbours had recently renovated and built a five-plus-metre-high studio at the rear of their property so the first thing to do was to create raised planters around the boundary. There were two good reasons for this: one was to create additional seating in what is a very tight area, two was to steal an extra half a metre of height around the boundary for the new screening plants. Eighteen months on and the screening plants have achieved their goal. The neighbour's studio is blocked from sight and there is the bonus of a living wall of green.

The two side boundary planter boxes feature *Bambusa textilis* 'Gracilis', a clumping form of bamboo with a long straight growth habit and foliage that takes on a bluish-green tinge. This colouring ties in with the sandblasted grey granite stone used for the paving and for the bullnose capping on the planter boxes. The second tall, narrow-growing screening plant is

an ornamental pear (*Pyrus calleryana* 'Capital'), with its lush dark-green foliage that changes to reddish-purple through autumn, a truly spectacular specimen tree.

At the rear of the courtyard we constructed a hardwood timber screen with a sliding door for access to the car and the rainwater tank. Stainless-steel low-voltage garden lighting was mounted on the face of the planter boxes as well as uplighting to the ornamental pears to draw your eye out to the rear of the courtyard in the evening. Not only does the lighting provide a warm ambience when entertaining, it is also great to enjoy the night viewing of your garden when you are sitting back relaxing inside the house.

So don't despair if your neighbours decide to renovate or extend. With a little bit of planning, you too can create your own intimate outdoor green living room. ■

Terry Meehan is a landscape designer and founder of Melbourne-based Seasons Landscape.



BEFORE