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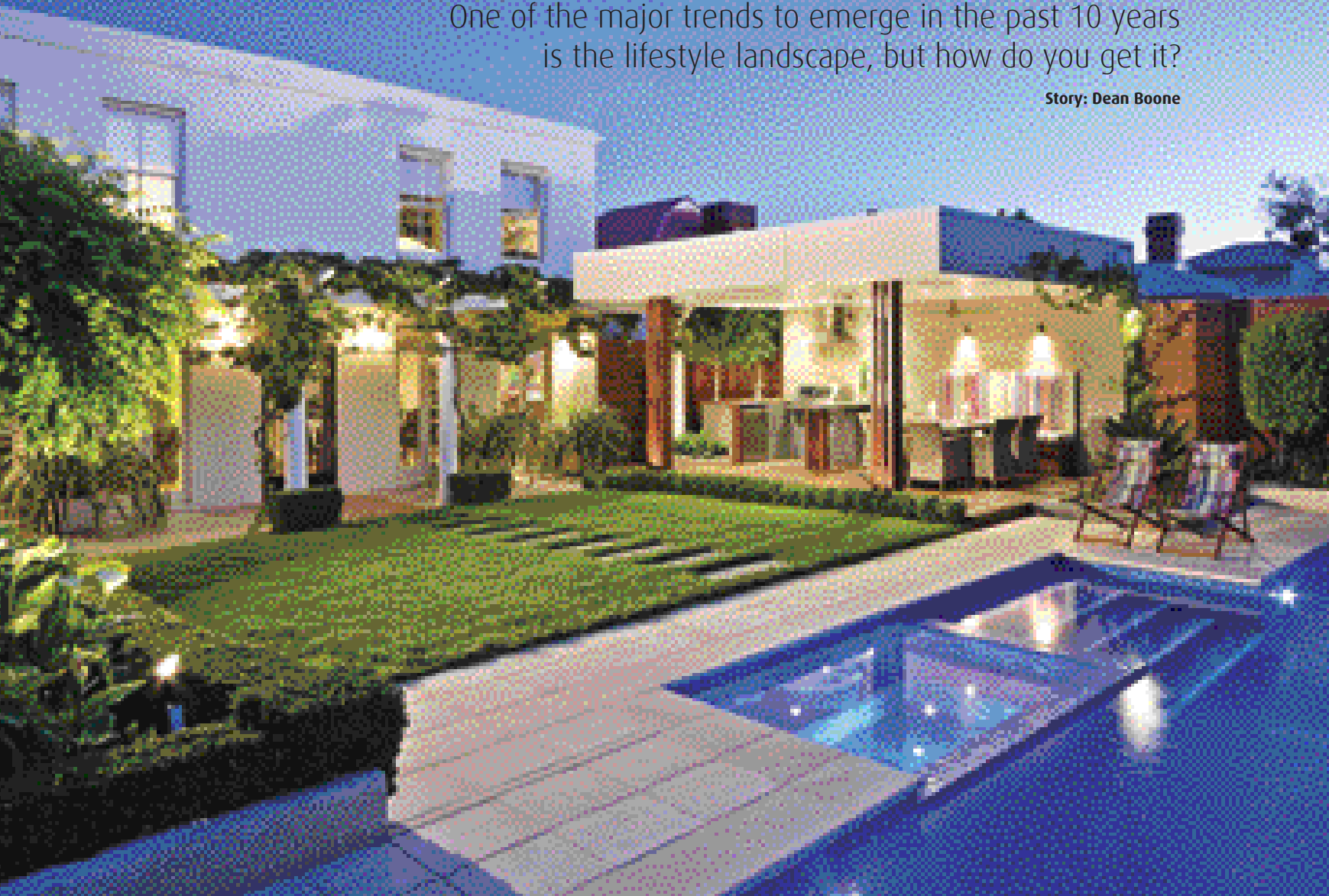


Lifestyle
landscapes
DESIGNING OUTDOOR
SPACES & GARDENS
TO BE LIVED IN

Quiet revolution

One of the major trends to emerge in the past 10 years is the lifestyle landscape, but how do you get it?

Story: Dean Boone



IF SOMEONE TOLD YOU TO GO OUT AND CREATE for yourself a totally new way of living, what would you do? The notion seems challenging, but for landscape designers and contractors this is exactly what we are asked to do each and every day.

Today, we aren't just called upon to create gardens — we are expected to create lifestyles. When designing an outdoor space it used to be all about creating a very pretty garden, lots of flowers, shady trees and a good patch of lawn. Now we need to be lifestyle consultants, too. Sometimes, depending on how our clients want to work, live and play, we are expected to help bring about substantial lifestyle change.

Because of this focus on lifestyle, the landscape profession has undergone a quiet revolution during the past 10 years. No longer are we creating spaces where people can potter on the weekend. Rather, we are charged with creating lifestyle-enhancing spaces, in the process turning houses into homes.

Nowadays, many people are working longer hours than ever before so the need to multi-task is vital. After all, there is so much to do — shop, cook and clean, wash the car and feed the dog, go to the gym, catch up with friends, ferry the kids around, be a responsible citizen of the earth. When we do have time to spend in our gardens we don't want it to be spent doing garden maintenance. We want it to be spent doing the things we like to do, so we've begun to demand low-maintenance, adaptable spaces that cater to our varied lifestyle needs.

First and foremost, gardens are now about a place in which to entertain and run a very close second to the kitchen in terms of what is the social hub — and heart — of the home. They're also about relaxation, which is why these spaces need to be flexible.

The first step on the path to creating a new lifestyle is recognising that change is needed. The next is working out what must be done to create

a landscape that will allow you and your family to live the life you want. A good landscape designer will begin the transformation process by enquiring about your lifestyle needs, not just now but in five and 10 years from now.

As families grow, their needs change and the sign of a well-designed 'lifestyle landscape' is one that can adapt to those changing needs. A landscape designer can help you plan ahead and develop a design that is flexible enough to fulfill your present and future lifestyle requirements. Of course, things like garden styles and favourite flowers are important too, but a 'lifestyle landscape' needs to be functional, even multi-functional, so a landscape designer or contractor is indispensable.

Today's client has high expectations brought about, in part, by TV shows that make garden transformations seem almost effortless and virtually instantaneous. Of course, a fully landscaped garden doesn't just magically rise up from the ground.



Design by Justine Carlile Landscape Design.

A lot of thought, effort and careful planning are required and the construction process takes longer than most people think, especially when you're at the mercy of Mother Nature. Nonetheless, clients expect a smoothly run, stress-free project and in the hands of a qualified and experienced designer and contractor, that is what you should get.

What makes the ideal lifestyle landscape for one person may not be the same for another, but there are three current trends that are popular with landscapes of myriad styles and sizes: the outdoor room, the outdoor kitchen, and achieving a seamless indoor-outdoor connection between interior and exterior living and entertaining spaces. Whether these outdoor living spaces are created in a courtyard or a rooftop is a matter for each individual, but the lifestyle focus remains the same.

Despite drought conditions, water in the garden — whether in the form of a water feature or a swimming pool — has held its popularity. Water



Design by Domain Pools & Landscaping.

features in the landscape continue to be desirable because the sight and sound of running water is soothing and swimming pools — well, they're a quintessential part of the Australian backyard. With creative thinking, pools can be integrated into just about any space. Perhaps a lap pool extending down the side of the house or along a back boundary wall, or maybe a plunge pool in the corner of a courtyard.

From a resale point of view, a professionally designed and built lifestyle landscape is a major

asset. People want landscapes that are functional, easy to maintain and provide a great space for relaxing and entertaining — and they'll pay a premium to get that. But the goal is to improve your own lifestyle, not boost the resale value of your home (although that is a welcome bonus). Get the landscape and you'll get the lifestyle — it's really that simple.

Dean Boone is an award-winning landscape designer and director of distinctive.



Design by Scott Brown Landscape Design.