

left Nightingale 2.0, designed by Six Degrees, drawing by Simon O'Brien.
right An early render of the stairwell of Nightingale 1.0, designed by Breathe Architecture. **opposite page** Andrew Maynard, Jeremy McLeod, Michael Roper, Clare Cousins, James Legge, Antony Martin, Nick James, Mark Austin and Ricky Booth on the roof of their inspiration - The Commons by Breathe Architecture.



Nightingale

Named for Florence Nightingale and designed by Breathe Architecture, the Nightingale Model re-imagines the housing delivery system. An evolution of Breathe Architecture's award-winning Brunswick apartments, The Commons, the premise behind Nightingale is that architects have a responsibility to society to protect and enhance the quality of cities and the structures they design within them. The idea itself was a collaboration between Breathe Architecture and six other architects who all believe that housing is currently being delivered as a highly commodified product instead of a home, with little regard for how people will live in the spaces being built or the impact they have on the environment. Nightingale presently has eight official partners aside from Breathe Architecture, including Clare Cousins Architects, Six Degrees, Austin Maynard

Architects, MRTN Architects, Architecture Architecture and Wolveridge Architects, as well as entrepreneurial design firm HIP V. HYPE and the Robin Boyd Foundation. "Our city deserves beautiful, affordable, well-built and well-sized apartments designed for real life. At present, developers are not delivering this and as long as their current formula remains profitable, they do not have an incentive to do so," says Austin Maynard Architects. The Nightingale Model removes unnecessary add-ons, for example basement car parking, air-conditioning and second bathrooms, while incorporating a shared infrastructure through centralised systems to enhance sustainability and decrease costs for the project, construction and future residents – now and in the future. The financial model for the Nightingale developments also limits profits to the project's partners at 15% and cuts out real estate agents, marketing agents, display suites and the expenses associated with them.

Designing and fostering a community is an integral component of the Nightingale Model, which currently has three developments under way, all at vastly different stages. Shared public spaces and a rooftop garden encourage individuals to engage with one another, and promote the formation of a more connected living space. Nightingale is now defining itself as a social enterprise that aims to support and promote, as well as advocate for, better housing, while facilitating environmental and social sustainability. "Beyond designing another 'sustainable' building that is 8-star rated and well performing, we aim to create a more affordable urban housing template that others can use as a tool for urban betterment," says Austin Maynard Architects. "We hope to engender an industry-wide attitude towards architectural activism."

nightingale.melbourne

text: Eleanor Scott

Prime Movers

Those who think beyond the short term or come up with something innovative or consider the common good are always inspiring. Here are three exciting projects that not only have all these qualities but were also achieved only through collaborative effort. Great minds do think alike!





Dessein founder Michele Chow offers a fresh perspective on Australian design. **bottom left to right** Simon Ancher, Tom Fereday, Nathan Day and Marcus Piper.



Dessein

Launched in 2012 by award-winning designer, Michele Chow, Dessein Furniture offers a fresh perspective on Australian design that reflects “our unique culture, lifestyle and landscape”. The core value is simple and engaging: to create authentic and quality designs that are “affordable, original and sustainable”, while also being expressive of modern, contemporary Australia. Led by Chow but centred on a collaborative ethos, Dessein aims to facilitate new opportunities for local designers and has successfully brought together some of Australia’s best – including Simon Ancher, Nathan Day, Tom Fereday and Marcus Piper – to craft their second venture, the Pieman Collection. Encompassing a full suite of chairs, tables, shelving and

accessories for residential and commercial settings, the range developed through a series of workshops, each designer contributing uniquely different skills, perspectives and experiences until “unified and coherent pieces of furniture” came together. “The functional and technical development that has driven the collective and the iterative design approach is hidden, but it was an integral part of the process,” says Chow. “It was a fascinating and enriching experience that can be seen through the beautiful pieces produced.” Dessein chose to manufacture in Australia for the Pieman Collection, partnering up with Tasmanian boutique timber company, Hydrowood. The celery top pine and Tasmanian blackwood used in the collection have been drawn from beneath the surface of Lake Pieman in north-west Tasmania, bringing new life to a forgotten resource.

“Hydrowood have given our designers the opportunity to work with rare timbers of exceptional quality that carry unique characteristics – a result of being submerged for the past three decades,” explains Chow. “Designed to showcase these timbers in a manner sympathetic to their scarcity, the Pieman Collection is a celebration of ingenuity from the ground up.” The ethical approach of Hydrowood fits very well with that of Dessein’s own. Dedicated to sustainability, Dessein seeks to embrace a strong, principled stance by finding new and untapped reusable or renewable resources. “We have locally manufactured this collection using regionally sourced sustainable materials, allowing us to pass on all the benefits of environmentally conscious and affordable design to our customers, and continuing to stay true to the Dessein story and vision,” says Chow.

desseinfurniture.com
hydrowood.com.au



top The Pieman Collection encompasses a full suite of superbly designed chairs, tables, shelving and accessories. **bottom** Hydrowood is drawn from beneath the surface of Lake Pieman in north-west Tasmania.





3000 Acres

Melbourne-based urban agriculture initiative, 3000 Acres, works with private landowners, developers and councils to unlock unused land for community gardens and temporary raised beds. The idea was inspired by two concepts that closely align. The first was a question: How can we improve access to healthy fruit and vegetables in urban environments? The second was the discovery of 596 Acres in New York, who identify spots of unused land across Brooklyn and help turn them into community spaces. The first project of 3000 Acres was a fully transportable, modular garden design located in the car park of 9 Smith Street, Collingwood. Granted permission by the developer, Neometro, they utilised the vacant land for 18 months. Since then the raised beds have shifted three times around Fitzroy, with the same gardeners still involved. Like their New York counterpart, 3000 Acres launched a website early on that provides an interactive map of Melbourne. Open-sourced, the platform allows users to map empty land. The online portal also unites those interested in forming community gardens, and will eventually take on the responsibility of connecting people with vacant spaces and landowners as the team behind 3000 Acres moves into a less hands-on, broker-type position. "What we've found is that there are many people interested in using vacant land, but no one is really there to

facilitate the necessary relationships," says 3000 Acres project manager, Ellie Blackwood. "We're there to navigate a lot of the bureaucracy issues that make the process of unlocking unused land seem too complicated for both the growers and the landowners." 3000 Acres has slowly been growing a portfolio of landowners including Melbourne Water and VicTrack, who between them own "something like 50,000 hectares across the city," says Blackwood. "Both of them recognise the resource they have, but they're not interested in dealing with the hundreds of small gardening groups. However, they will work with us, and that's the kind of role we're trying to develop 3000 Acres into," says Blackwood. With at least a dozen projects on the go at the moment, 3000 Acres has plenty to be proud of. Located in Collingwood, their first undertaking on VicTrack land was once a fenced-off, occasional car park for the football club next door. Now the space houses a garden for food distribution service, FareShare, allowing them to grow their own constant source of basics for the meals they prepare for Melbourne families in need. With the early success of 3000 Acres, it should come as no surprise that a Sydney project, 2000 Acres, has also been established with the same intentions: To connect people with land, resources and each other, so that more people can grow more food in more places.

3000acres.org
fareshare.net.au

Ellie Blackwood and the team behind 3000 Acres strive to unlock unused land around Melbourne. **opposite page top left** Raised beds are easily shifted to utilise temporary spaces. **right** The FareShare garden in Collingwood grow their own constant source of basics for the meals they prepare for Melbourne families in need. **bottom** A tiny pocket of land beside Jewel Station becomes useful.



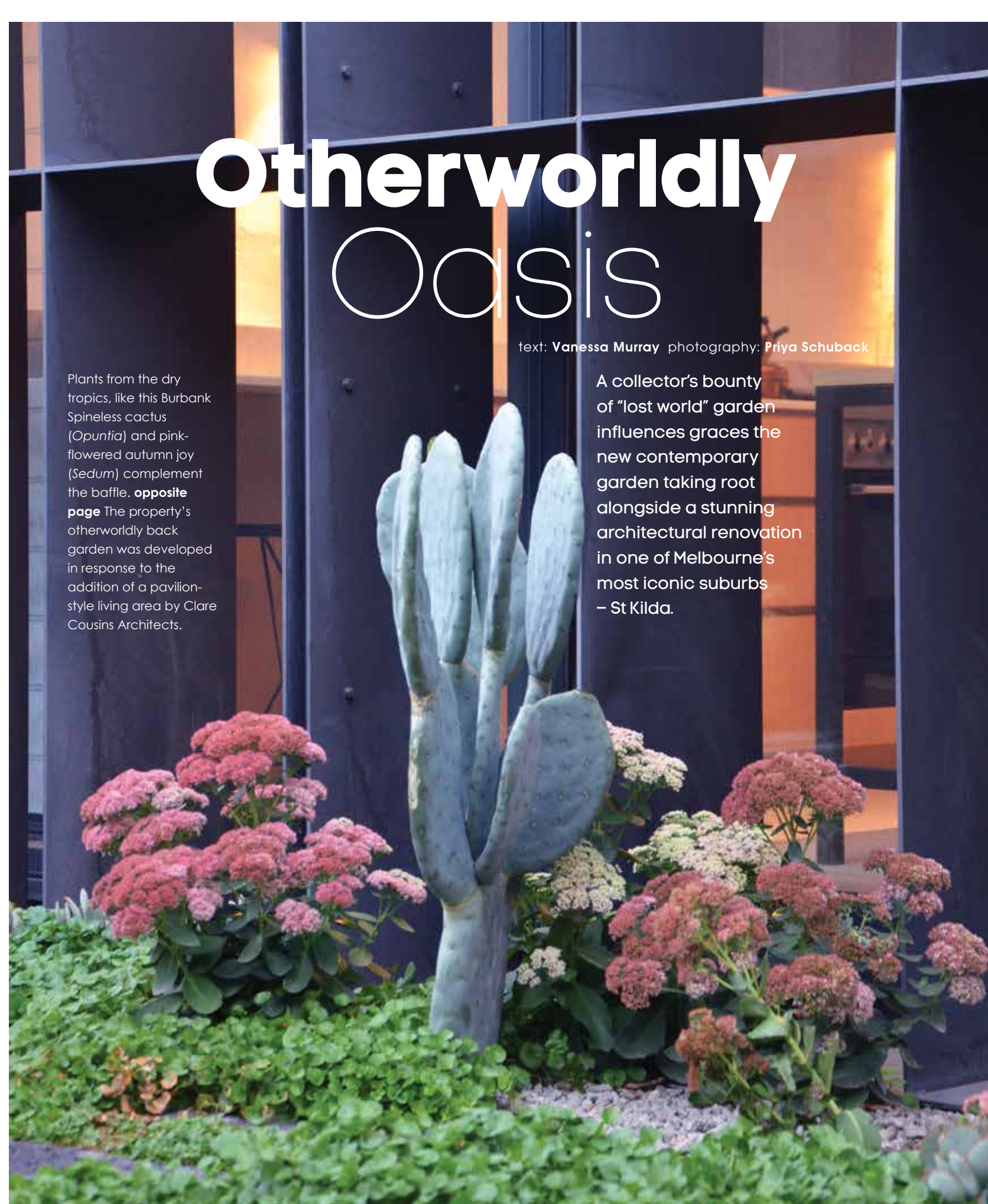


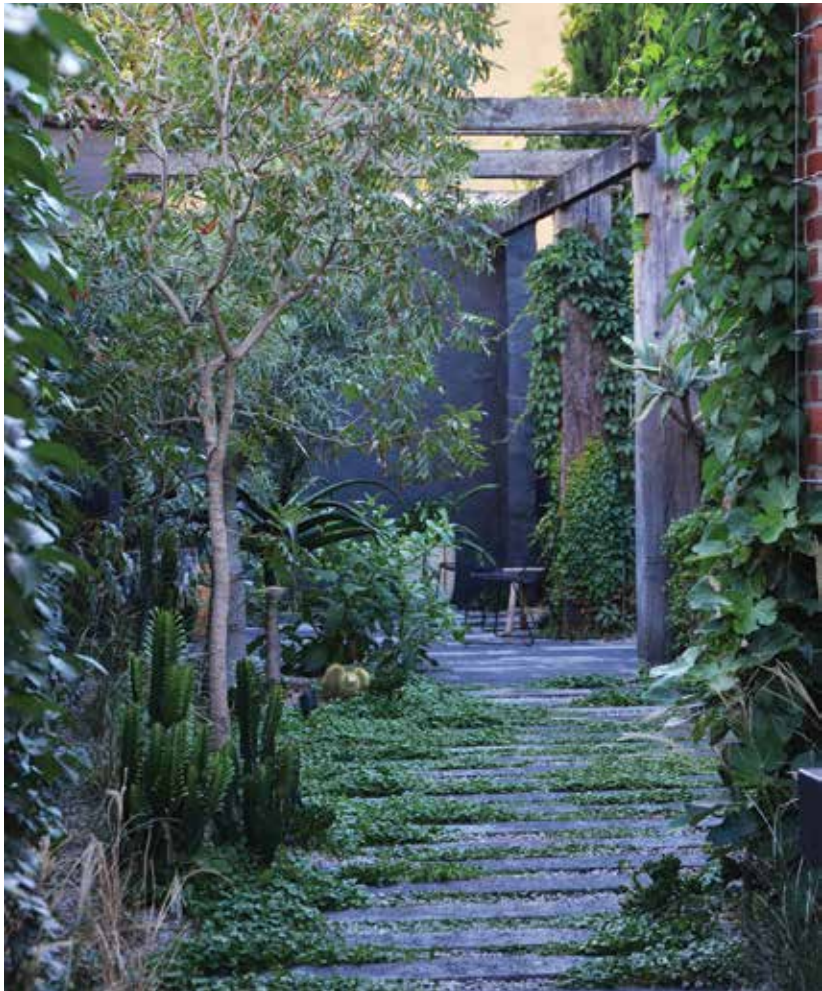
Otherworldly Oasis

text: Vanessa Murray photography: Priya Schuback

Plants from the dry tropics, like this Burbank Spineless cactus (*Opuntia*) and pink-flowered autumn joy (*Sedum*) complement the baffle. **opposite page** The property's otherworldly back garden was developed in response to the addition of a pavilion-style living area by Clare Cousins Architects.

A collector's bounty of "lost world" garden influences graces the new contemporary garden taking root alongside a stunning architectural renovation in one of Melbourne's most iconic suburbs – St Kilda.





When the owners commissioned an architectural addition to their brick and shingle Edwardian cottage, they decided it was time to renovate the garden too. They'd lived at the property for more than a decade, so they knew what needed to happen in order to make the garden more liveable. As well as room for their dogs, they wanted to be able to grow food for their kitchen and to enjoy a low-maintenance, aesthetically pleasing style of outdoor living – one enabled by passive solar principles.

The new garden, by the team at Eckersley Garden Architecture (E-GA), achieves all of these things in abundance – a curiosity collector, topsy-turvy kind of abundance that makes a fabulous talking point of this small yet remarkable space.

Unlike most vegetable gardens, the one at this house sits at the front of the property, facing the street. This is for practical reasons. The property's alignment is east-west, and the front garden gets the most sunlight, to which the existing fruit trees attest. A citrus hedge, trifoliate orange (*Citrus trifoliata*), has been introduced, along with Corten steel pots packed with herbs, vegetables and picking-flowers.

"To ensure the garden would be dog-proof, yet still full and lush, we decided to go a bit spiky and prehistoric with plantings," says Myles Broad, Director and Principal Designer at E-GA, going on to cite the Princess of Wales Conservatory in Kew Gardens' collection of tropical plants as a major inspiration.

"It's the dry tropical specimens that suit Melbourne's climate, giant Santa Fe-style cactuses, African bottle trees and yuccas. Our star trees are both in pots: a floss silk tree (*Ceiba speciosa*) with a big, broad canopy, thorns and a swollen trunk that makes it look like a dinosaur's tail, and a barrel cactus (*Ferocactus cylindraceus*) that is more than half a metre wide. They add sculptural elements to the space."

The other-worldly back garden responds to the addition – a pavilion-style living area by Clare Cousins Architects. It has a north-oriented structural steel baffle that frames the view into the garden. In summer it provides much-needed shade. In winter the sun pours in, warming the polished concrete slab. The baffle casts dramatic daytime shadows all year round.

"Before the renovation, the house's living spaces were restrictive. Access to natural light or garden vistas was limited, and the rear garden received little sun, which made it difficult to establish plantings," says Clare Cousins, who has termed the project the Baffle House. "The pavilion's orientation was very deliberate. We wanted to create a small, sun-drenched rear garden, and to maximise exposure of it to the pavilion, and vice versa. The landscape needed to thread the contemporariness of the pavilion and the period features of the Edwardian cottage together." →

*Delicate Kidney weed (Dichondra repens) almost bubbles out of the bluestone pavers; the stainless steel baffle juxtaposed beyond. **opposite page top left** The pavers invite connection between front and back garden spaces. **right** Herbs, vegetables and picking-flowers pop out of Corten steel pots in the sun-drenched front garden. **bottom left** The plant selection is inspired by a prehistoric otherworld. **right** As the newly planted creepers grow up the fine mesh wires they'll provide living green walls, sun protection and privacy.*



To connect the front and back gardens, E-GA laid bluestone pavers and gravel underfoot, peppering it with a variety of eye-catching groundcover, including kidney weed (*Dichondra repens*), baby's tears (*Soleirolia soleirolii*), Corsican mint (*Mentha requienii*) and white thyme (*Thymus serpyllum 'Alba'*). Then they ran 3-metre-high fine mesh wires along the property's northern side and grew deciduous creepers, like Chinese pistachio (*Pistacia chinensis*) and Virginia creeper (*Parthenocissus quinquefolia*), on them.

"The creepers are about providing sun protection and privacy screening. They give shade in summer, and drop their leaves in winter, opening up to let the sun through," explains Broad.

The mesh continues around the back wall. Here, it hosts an evergreen Chinese star jasmine (*Trachelospermum jasminoides*) creeper, chosen for its hedge-like coverage but space-saving horizontal growth.

Further along, the one-time garage, which had been sitting in the north-eastern corner of the back garden like an unwelcome ghost, was reclaimed, raised and transformed into a pergola, where the owners have placed a table and chairs. Here, they can dine and drink and just be transported from the busy inner-urban living environment outside their front gate into another, quieter world. 🌿

e-ga.com.au
clarecousins.com.au

left The house's stainless steel baffle opens to an intriguing view of the garden beyond. **bottom** This formidable barrel cactus (*Ferocactus cylindraceus*) measures more than half a metre wide.



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