



A Modernised Melbourne Edwardian + Lush 'No Lawn' Garden!

ARCHITECTURE

There was always plenty to love about this Edwardian in Fitzroy North, but the previous interiors were basic, and the garden almost entirely devoid of foliage.

With the architectural expertise of [Buck & Simple](#) and garden prowess of [Inge Jabra Landscapes](#), the home now is open and airy, showcasing a design as distinguished as its gorgeous Edwardian facade.

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This Fitzroy North property had all the makings of a great home, but a poky layout and simplistic interiors were obstructing its full potential.

‘There was a disingenuous correlation between the original weatherboard cottage and additions that had happened sometime after,’ explains Kurt Crisp, director of [Buck & Simple](#). ‘There was at least one rear extension that was quite clumsy in its layout, and construction that we needed to pare back and start again, rethinking the layout, the light and the flow.’

[Buck & Simple](#)’s vision was to open up the living domain to better suit the clients, who were expecting their first child. ‘We spoke of a house with two faces: a bright, bustling and fun place for great conversations, food and drink; as well as areas that could allow you to recharge, providing intimate spaces for reflection and caring for a family,’ says Kurt.

Instead of clearly defined rooms, the living domain is now an open-plan domain looking out to the garden through a huge sliding glass door. Zones within are subtly defined by a central fireplace, and changes in materiality chosen to support the user experience.







Kurt worked with [Inge Jabra Landscapes](#) to ensure a cohesive palette between the garden and interior, as reflected in the matte black garden lights and painted wall mirroring the industrial-style joinery indoors. Smoky coloured stone tiles on the outdoor terrace also appear as an extension of the living area's terrazzo floor.

The brief provided to Inge Jabra Landscapes was almost entirely open, except for the need to obscure a neighbouring property (hence the thriving rear hedge), and instil plenty of lush greenery.

'The client said to me, "The only thing is I want to see green through all the windows, then you can do whatever you want!" That was the best brief any designer could ever get,' recalls Inge.

Another request was to make the entire courtyard suitable for entertaining, without feeling dominated by either a lawn or the terrace when not in use.

'They said to me, "We want the back garden to look like it has a lawn, but it doesn't have a lawn," says Inge.







To achieve this, Inge installed steppers surrounded by white flowering creeping thyme (*Thymus praecox*) in the garden, forming a subtle extension of the main terrace that guests can walk on.

‘It looks like a lawn, but it’s not, it’s actually edible thyme,’ says Inge. ‘You can spill a lot of people into the garden if you want to, but if they’re standing underneath the arbour and it’s just a small group of people, it feels like part of the garden.’

Potted Japanese maples (*Acer palmatum* ‘Bloodgood’) and pink Sedum ‘Autumn Joy’ provide added pops of colour.

Even on a relatively short timeline, both Inge and Kurt speak so highly of this project and the experience bringing the home and garden together.

‘It was meant to be the hardest job we’ve ever done because the architect was in Sydney, the client was in Sydney for lockdown, the [builder](#) was someone we hadn’t worked with before but he was a gun, and it all just magically worked,’ says Inge. ‘There were no hiccups, and it all got done before they had the baby!’