

BACKYARD BLITZ

Mr. Universe



Suburban Australia is full of the basic brick bungalow – solid and sturdy, but a little out of date. In a Blitz first, we tackle an entire exterior environment, transforming a modest red brick house into a modern and stylish home. Lynelle and Kevin O’Grady were together 24 years, from when they were childhood sweethearts. Kevin, a world-class body builder, represented Australia and held the Amateur Mr. Universe title. In body building circles, he is a bit of a legend.... Sadly though, the family have suffered a devastating loss. Lynelle was diagnosed with breast cancer early 2004, and despite giving it the fight of her life, Lynelle passed away in March this year.

Our garden is a tribute to Lynelle’s dreams of a modern native backyard.

Design intent

To bring a suburban red brick bungalow into the 21st century. Designed by Peter Bachak from Osmosis Gardens, website: www.osmosisgardens.com.au



Adapting this plan to your garden

Make a detailed scale drawing of your backyard (eg 1:100) showing the location of the house and major features then incorporate the desired elements from our makeover. As your garden will be a different size you will need to estimate the amounts of materials you will require.

Note: On your plan show the locations of any services (water pipes, sewerage, power, phone, etc) so you can avoid damaging them during the makeover.

Permits and approval: check with your local council regarding regulations about earthworks and drainage. If you are changing existing levels or installing drainage ensure no water run-off is directed toward neighbouring properties. Any water entering the storm water system must be free from debris and sediment.

Getting started

We cleaned out all unwanted material and turf.

Rendering the house: This new Dulux D.I.Y product Roll on Render costs \$115 for a 10lt tub which covers 8-10 m² per coat. Jamie showed how to get a textured finish to the render on a brick wall, using a special roller and this product. Jamie rolled on first coat and then using a plastic float in a circular motion working render into joints and imperfections. This process will need to be repeated three times on heavily raked brickwork.

To 'Dulux' texture finish this house would take two handymen 16 days but it would cost about \$4000.

Traditionally, to cement render a house of this size would normally take two professionals around four days and cost about \$10,000.



Garden elements

Deck: You can make an above-ground pool look in-ground by building a deck around it. Using curves in your design will guide your eye through the garden and will soften any harsh boundaries the space may have. However, if you're a first time deck builder it's best to start with an easier shape such as a square or rectangle.

Scott sets out deck area to match the same curves as the swimming pools. Scott strung a number of string lines across the pole to find the centre. From this point he was able to extend the radius to his timber deck structure. After the posts were concreted in ground (90x90mm treated pine), bearers (140x45mm treated pine) were attached to posts using galvanised cuphead bolts. 90x45mm teated pine joists were nailed to the bearers at 450mm centres. Finally hardwood decking (90mmx19mm) was attached to joists using twist shank stainless steel nails.

Blitz Tipz: When fixing more than two posts in ground, put in the two outer posts first, then attach a stringline between the two to allow the accurate fixing of further posts.

Screen around pool: Nigel marked out radius from pool centre for slatted screen around pool. 90x90mm teated pine posts were concreted at 1200mm centres in ground to a depth of 500mm. A hardwood slat 90x19mm was then nailed to the posts at 50mm spacing. Lay lowest slat first, making sure of horizontal level. Then using pre-cut spacers (50mm) proceed to attach remaining slats to post.



Wall clad with stone: Opening up verandah to back garden Nigel cut the brick verandah wall with a wet saw and these can be hired for about \$110 per day. Nigel laid Homestone stack wall in the same as tiles, starting from the bottom and using a good quality flexible adhesive and using a 6mm notched trowel to apply.

Blitz Tipz: Keep clean bucket of water and sponge on hand and clean as you go to avoid tedious cleaning later.

Decorative stone wall behind barbecue area:

Jamie attached a piece of straight timber to the wall making sure it was level. This acted as a support for the first row of decorative stone. Jamie used a notch trowel to apply a flexible coating of adhesive and made sure each piece of stone was firmly pushed into the adhesive.

Blitz Tipz: Attach a straight edge to the wall to establish a level and prevent first row from slipping down wall.

Jamie attached a 350x350mm dressed hardwood to the top of Nigel's stacked Homestone wall for a quality finish. All timber was painted with tongue oil for weather protection and to embellish the rich timber grain.

A black pool fence was chosen because the colour was unobtrusive and blends well into the background.



Garden

If you're building around an existing tree ensure you allow room for the trunk to expand and make sure that water is still able to soak into the surrounding soil to the drip line of the tree.

The beautiful frangipani in this garden is probably about 6 years old. We retained it to become a main feature of the garden. To buy one of this size would cost around \$3000.



Plants

Trees: weeping lilly pilly (*Waterhousea floribunda*), Lemon-scented myrtle (*Backhousia citriodora*)

Shrubs: grass tree (*Xanthorrhoea johnsonii*), willow myrtle (*Agonis 'After Dark'*), bush germander (*Teucrium fruticans*), grevillea (*Grevillea 'Pink Midget'*), Tea tree (*Leptospermum 'Cardwell'*)

Clumping plants: fountain grass (*Pennisetum alopecuroides*), dianella (*Dianella 'Border Silver'*), gymea lily (*Doryanthes excelsa*), kangaroo paw (*Anigozanthus* bush gem series)



Cost and availability

We used mature plants in our makeover to create an instant effect for television. As a result, our total cost for plants and materials was \$22,634. The use of smaller plants would have reduced the cost to \$17,875.

Product Details

- Most of the plants we used are readily available at, or can be ordered from, nurseries. Nurseries can also advise on similar varieties suited to your area. You may need to contact specialist nurseries for some plants. Your local nursery should be able to provide you with contacts.
- Dulux Full Cover Texture is the revolutionary product that Dulux have just launched into the market. The product is a high build texture product designed to fill and level brick mortar joints to give the appearance of a render coating. It offers consumers a complete rendering product without the need for a professional or the need to use tradesman like tools such as hawk and trowel. What's innovative about this product is what's in the can in conjunction with a specially designed roller called the Spirit Full Cover Texture roller. For more information visit their website www.dulux.com.au/textures
- Most other materials are available from large hardware stores or building or landscape suppliers.
- All tools used are commonly available for hire, including the mini loader and the nail gun.
- All timber supplies and information come from Midcoast Timber Centres. Website: www.midcoasttimber.com.au
- The masonry wall products we used are available from Homestone. Phone 1300 667 199 Website: www.homestone.com.au

Holiday Details

Peppers Anchorage

Corlette Road,

Port Stephens

Phone: (02) 4984 2555

Web: www.peppers.com.au

Bushmobile Sand Dune Tour

66 Duns Creek Road

Duns Creek

Phone: 0500 55 00 66

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Oakvale Farm & Fauna World

Nelson Bay Road

Salt Ash

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Acknowledgements

Construction by the Backyard Blitz team (all gardens are a gift from Backyard Blitz).

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