

BACKYARD BLITZ

Moroccan Magic



Eddie and Naomi Mallia have had some difficult times recently. Their declining health and a massive renovation on their home has taken its toll. They'd run out of energy to finish the garden but daughter Nicole Abate had other ideas. She contacted the Backyard Blitz team to give them a hand. We sent them to a resort in the Blue Mountains, NSW while we blitzed the backyard.



The house has a distinct Moroccan flavour, which landscape designer Andrew Davies has continued in the garden. A richly coloured pergola with round beams and copper motifs extends out from the house. A circular paved area with a decorative mosaic pattern continues the Moroccan theme. A trompe l'oeil scene, framed with lattice, disguises the garage wall. Striking plants of giant bird of paradise and colourful canna lilies match the bold use of colours and textures in the garden. The new garden is an exciting and inviting oasis in a busy part of the world.

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: council permission is required to remove some trees, and may be required for some structural work. Check with your local council regarding regulations about the pruning and removal of trees before you commence any work. It may be necessary to employ a professional tree contractor to perform the work for you. Check under Tree Contractors in your 'Yellow Pages', or contact the National Arborist Association of Australia for a recommended contractor in your area.

Materials

Paving: the concrete slab beneath the pergola was removed using a demolition saw and an electric jackhammer. Charcoal 'Texipave' pavers (300x200x40mm) were laid over compacted roadbase and paving sand. Fine grouting sand was swept through all paving areas to bond the pavers together. An existing circular brick paved area was updated by removing the central pavers and replacing them with cream concrete pavers (Besser capping tiles). An eight pointed star shape was cut into the pavers and a mosaic of pebbles grouted

into place.

Blitz Tipz: if finished levels allow, retain existing areas of concrete as they provide an excellent sub-base when laying pavers. This also avoids the heavy work of removing concrete.

Pergola: the Moroccan pergola used a combination of materials to achieve a traditional feel. All timbers in the pergola were structural grade (F7) treated pine and all nails, bolts, nuts and washers were galvanised. Posts (90x90x3000mm), bearers (150x150x3600mm), rafters (3600x150mm round logs), ledger (140x45x3600mm), noggins (90x45mm). Posts were set in rapid set concrete in the ground. A stud and noggin frame was connected to the posts and beam to give it a solid presence. External grade compressed fibre cement sheeting (2400x1200mm and 1800x1200mm) was used to surround the posts and beam. A UV reducing roof of polycarbonate sheeting (3600x820mm) was connected to the rafters with roofing screws. The pergola was painted to match existing paint colours in the house and garage.



Blitz Tipz: when painting two different colours next to one another use masking tape for a clean edge. Position the masking tape to allow a small area of the first colour to show. When this is covered with the second colour it gives a clean line.

Garden beds and edging: we improved the existing site soil by incorporating an organic garden mix, digging it in to a spade's depth. Pine bark nuggets were used as a mulch. The garden edge was defined by a treated pine timber edge (120x19mm) held in place with hardwood pegs (450x50x50mm) and galvanised nails (50mm).

Trompe l'oeil screen and copper arch: structural grade treated pine posts were installed in the ground using rapid set concrete. Lattice was cut to shape around our trompe l'oeil scene, which was painted by Mary Cartmer. Compressed fibre sheeting was cut to shape and connected to the posts and lattice. Sheets of copper were cut to shape using electric tinsnips and connected to the compressed fibre sheeting by moulding the edges over the sheeting with a wooden float and light rubber mallet. The posts and lattice surrounds were painted.



Blitz Tipz: Trompe l'oeil is a painting technique that uses perspective to create an impression of depth on flat surfaces.

Water feature: our fountain was a simple, self-contained reconstituted sandstone wall feature held in place with dynabolts screwed into the brick wall. You will need an electric drill with a hammer feature and a masonry bit to drill into the wall.

Blitz Tipz: create a small guide hole in the wall by hammering a large nail partially into the wall. The mark created will help you to guide the head of the drill.



Plants

Several plants were retained from the existing garden including a large cotoneaster, which was providing privacy, and a magnificent clump of narrow-leaved bird of paradise (*Strelitzia juncea*). We added a variety of heat-loving plants, selecting those with good foliage contrast. Edible plants such as herbs and an olive were

also planted. The olives were planted into large, decorative pots.

Plants: bay tree (*Laurus nobilis*), canna lily (*Canna 'Tropicanna'*), Chinese tallow tree (*Sapium sebiferum*), climbing rose (*Rosa 'Altissimo'*), giant bird of paradise (*Strelitzia nicolai*), olive (*Olea europaea* var. *communis*), swamp lily (*Crinum pedunculatum*), assorted herbs.



olive



Chinese tallow



swamp lily



canna lily



climbing rose



Cost and availability

We used mature plants in our makeover to create an instant effect for television. As a result our total cost of plants and materials was \$9854. This cost could be reduced to \$7026 by using smaller plants.

- Texipave concrete pavers (300x200x40mm) from Texipave cost \$43m²; phone: (02) 4774 0555. The Besser concrete capping stones used as pavers for the Moroccan motif cost \$22m² from hardware stores.
- Copper sheeting (0.55mm thick) is from Austral Wright Metals; phone: (02) 9827 0700. Look under Sheet Metal in your 'Yellow Pages' for local suppliers.
- Moroccan motif pots (rolled tops, 500x450mm) from The Big Cactus; phone: (02) 9970 6484.
- Water feature from The Statue Shop cost \$105; phone: (02) 9721 2770.
- Trompe l'oeil painted by Mary Cartmer of Squizart and cost \$400; phone: 0400 817 402 or contact squizart@ihug.com.au. To find a trompe l'oeil specialist in other areas check under Interior Decorators in your 'Yellow Pages'
- Most of the plants we used are readily available at nurseries or ask your nursery to order them for you. You may need to contact specialist nurseries for some plants. Your local nursery should be able to provide contacts.
- Most other materials are available from large hardware stores, building or landscape suppliers.
- All tools used such as the electric jackhammer and electric tinsnips, are commonly available for hire.

Getaway details:

Accommodation: Crystal Lodge, 19 Abbotsford Rd, Katoomba, NSW, phone: (02) 4782 5122 and Peppers Fairmont Resort, Sublime Point Rd, Leura, NSW, phone: (02) 4782 5222.

Acknowledgements:

- Design by Andrew Davies of Icon Exteriors; phone (02) 9876 4632.
- Construction by the Backyard Blitz team.

For more **Step by Step Constructions** click here



© Burke's Backyard 2003

Burke's Backyard and Backyard Blitz do not accept payment to promote products. All recommendations are genuine.

Details on the fact sheets are accurate at the time of publishing, however prices and contact information are not updated and may change.