

HOT LITTLE SEVENTH HEAVEN

CREATING A LITTLE Bali resort heaven from a blank canvas was more challenging than Kirsten Sach would have originally imagined, but it was well worth it.

The ensuing garden of this Devonport, Auckland, property is a tropical Eden and an almost perfect replica of the many beautiful gardens and resorts her clients, Samala and Tony, have visited on several trips to the Indonesian island.

"It was important for them to have their own piece of paradise to relax and entertain where stresses could just melt away," explained Kirsten, landscape designer and director of Kirsten Sach Landscape Design Ltd.

To her clients, creating a strongly entertaining theme, improving the indoor-outdoor flow, which was previously absent and adding abundant vegetation was essential.

"The original space had no existing vegetation," she adds. "Being a frost free area I knew it would be possible to use some frost tender plants safely."

Using a combination of subtropicals and natives she created a green lush effect with flashes of strong colours that give a hint of the tropics while instilling a sense of peace.

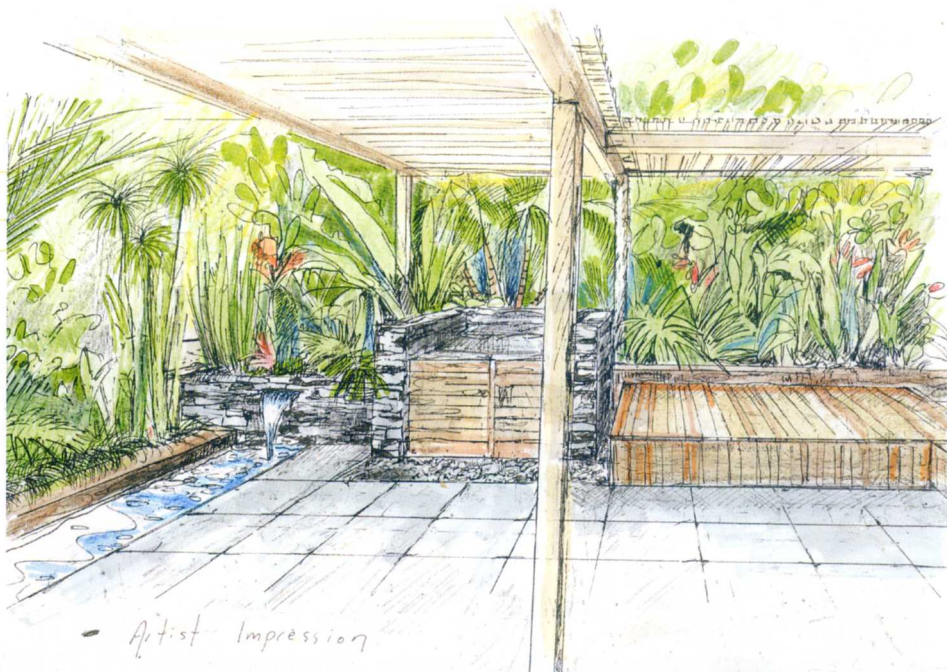
"The sound and cooling effect of water was very important with a sheer drop into a water channel that stretches from one side of the paved area to the house. Beautiful stone frangipani bowls also spill baby tears, giving a mossy aged effect."

The contrasting foliage, the textures of the different materials used such as stone, pebbles, old recycled timbers, and bamboo all add to the layering effect.

"I used a combination of subtropicals and natives," Kirsten says. "[Samala and Tony] wanted a more instant effect so plants were put in only a few months ago so that the garden looks like it's been in for a couple of years."

"It still needs to fill out a bit and then it will have the full green lush effect that they wanted."

The garden tells a story with little areas and pockets where a lot of thought has



gone into the detailing. "They liked the idea that you could wander around the garden and discover little areas of surprise."

Maximizing the flow between house and garden, and attempting to marry the old heritage villa and tropical style, a rustic bridge crosses over the water channel and through the plants and connects to the path that runs adjacent to the house.

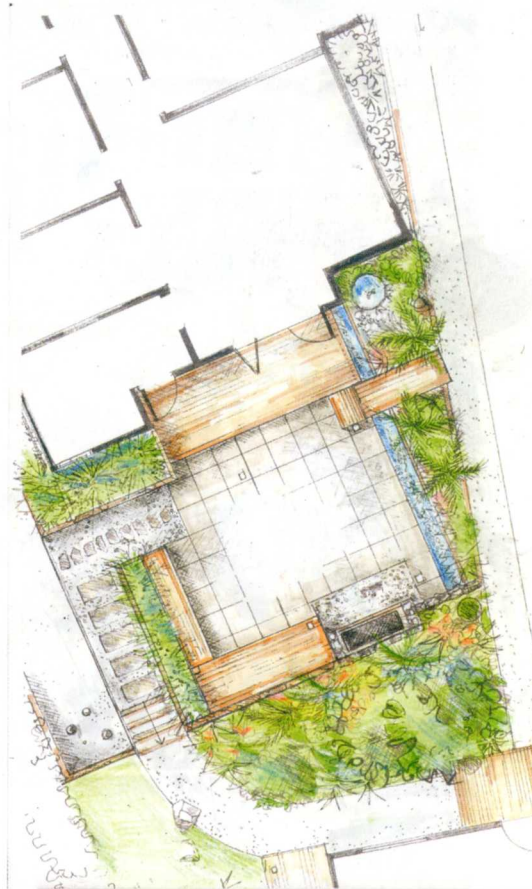
"Overhead, the slatted pergola that juts out from the dining room gives a sense of flow out into the garden and creates a more intimate effect."

A built-in rustic barbecue blends into the garden and into a quiet area located off to one side. This space has a one metre diameter bowl with a Buddha nestled in pebbles and moss.

Soft textures of fairy bamboo are contained in raised planters by the timber seat – which Tony built along with other timber features in the garden – and daybeds define the areas.

A petanque court off the other side also provides an entertaining space.

"They're both creative and the design of the garden was a pleasure to work on with them."



Kirsten Sach

Kirsten Sach, director and designer of Kirsten Sach Landscape Design Ltd, is passionate about plants and the outdoors. Her prime interest is in sustainable gardens and two of her gardens, 'Raingarden' and 'Kia ora ai te wai' Make the water well' have won a gold and silver award at the Ellerslie International Flower Show in 2007 and 2008 respectively. www.kirstensachlandscapes.com



SEAFRONT HILLSIDE GARDEN

INSPIRATION IS VITAL in any creative work, and particularly so when it comes to landscape designing.

Alex Schanzer's style and work have been deeply influenced by the Brazilian master, Roberto Burle-Marx, an artist and urban space designer with a flair for modernist landscape architecture.

"I share his love of South American plants and the idea of using plants as a colour palette with which to paint the landscape," Alex, from Alex Schanzer Landscaping, says.

The designer's enthusiasm at the opportunity to redesign this seafront hillside garden in Auckland filled him with gusto and soon enough gave the property a fresh, innovative look.

At the top of his client's wish list was a desire to connect the top area around the house to the water and to create a more family friendly and entertaining setting.

Alison, the client, also wanted to move the existing concrete pathway that bisected the slope. Neighbours had been using it as public access way from the beach to their sections.

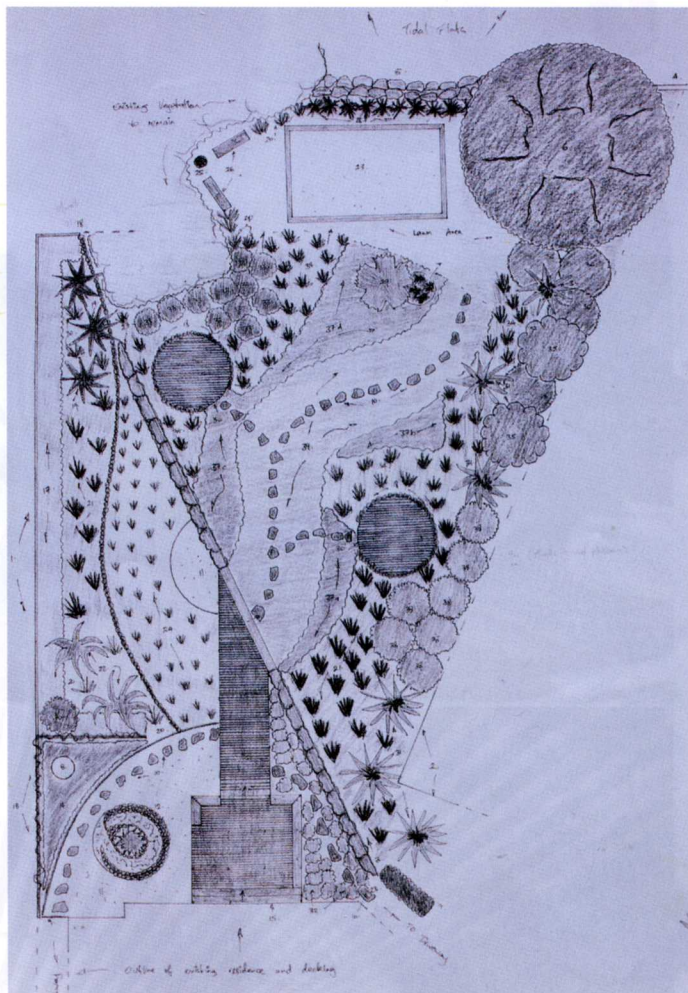
The steep hill, the fragility of the slope and the costs involved meant major excavation had to be kept to a minimum with mass planting and stepping stone access.

With these factors in mind, Alex chose to link the house to the water via a timber 'jetty' deck, which not only creates an access-way to a series of natural basalt slab stepping stones down the slope to the lower area, but also directs the viewer visually out to the beautiful seascape.

The entertaining area originally was to be decked but this was changed to crushed shell from Yard Art Designs in Paerata, another link with the beach area below.

The lower section, previously a grassed strip, now makes a nice space to relax, with its built-in free-standing bench seats that match those in the upper entertaining area.

The site's prevailing south west coastal winds that at times lash the property helped decide which plants to use.



"We had to use the ones that would cope with the salt winds, have a strong root system that would aid in stopping erosion of the hillside, while still creating the colours and textural forms I wanted for this particular design," Alex says. "The plant palette is

mainly derived from New Zealand natives but the sculptural accents are provided via the South African natives, with Aloe Thraskii and Strelitzia Nicolai (an evergreen)."

Design features include two circular viewing decks cantilevering on the hillside. Each is surrounded by a vertical punga wall, commonly known as the hard tree fern, which provides protection from the winds even once cut to maximise the view.

"The low sculptural punga wall is finished with an undulating cut, the form lending itself to the undulating coastline and creating a feeling of movement in the landscape."

A tough groundcover variety of burgundy stoloniferous bromeliad from Brazil is also mounted on the punga walls for year-round colour.

"The finished result has achieved the transformation both Alison and I had hoped it would," Alex says. "I look forward to revisiting the site once the plants have had some growing time in order to become established and develop into the slice of paradise I know it will become."

Alex Schanzer

Alex Schanzer has come into the landscaping industry from a horticultural background and training, with a passion for plants and creating spaces for people to experience. He has won several awards over time including a silver medal at the 2004 Ellerslie Flower Show and a gold medal at the Waiheke Art Exhibit garden.

www.alexschanzerlandscaping.com



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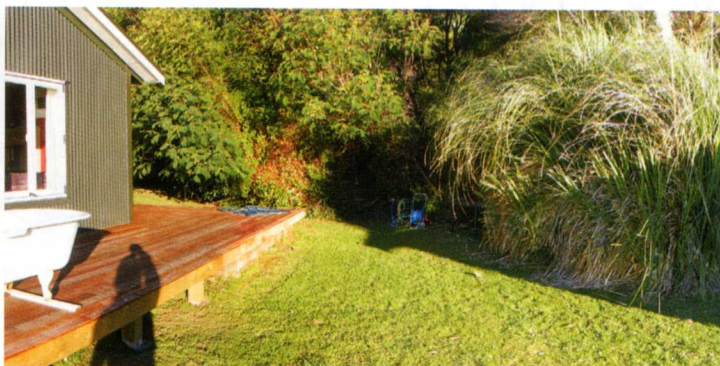


AFTER



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BEFORE



AFTER

