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No.1 FOR NEW HOMES, LAND AND LIFESTYLE

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>> organised start

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# Summer siesta

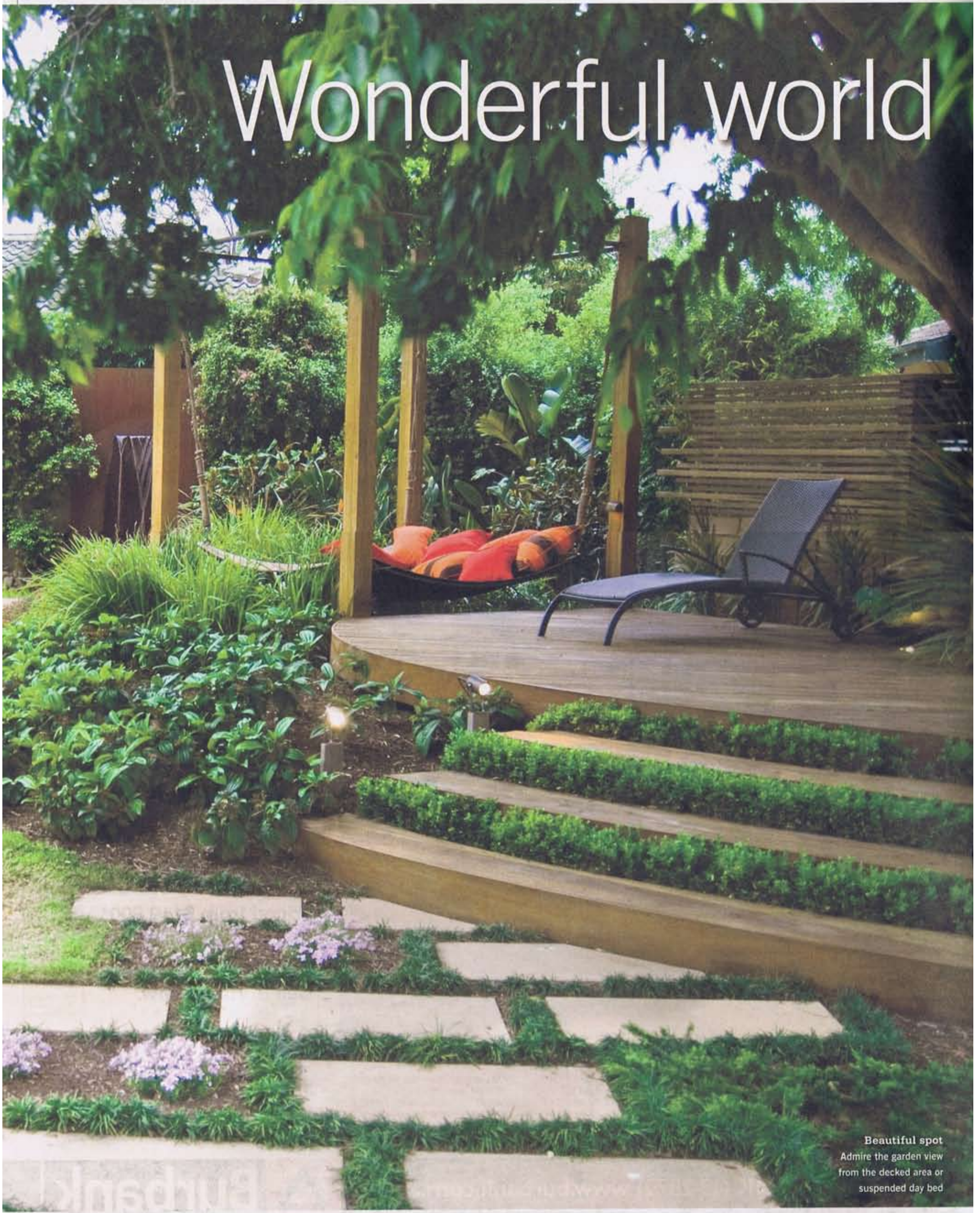
An award-winning garden where every day feels like a holiday

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Making headlines: Newsreader Jo Hall and her Inside Story



# Wonderful world



**Beautiful spot**  
Admire the garden view  
from the decked area or  
suspended day bed

## A vision of beauty and a love for the great outdoors come together to form a stunning garden

>> **Words & photography Tony Fawcett**

Landscape designer Richard Bellemo believes in bringing the world into your back yard.

A lover of nature who once yearned to become a park ranger, Richard, 28, has in quick time made a name for himself as one of Victoria's bravest and most exciting young garden designers.

With a lust for gardens a little on the wild and exotic side, he recently walked away with two highly-sought accolades at the 2008 Victorian Landscape Awards, awarded by the Landscape Industries Association Victoria. The awards were for best residential landscape construction in the up to \$50,000 category and the \$50,000-\$150,000 category, which he won for this Balwyn garden.

His design is truly an idyllic round-the-world experience. Here there's a dash of Bali with a swinging day bed festooned with vibrant-coloured cushions, a streak of Australian outback in its rusty rock-face-like corten steel panels, and a splash of jungle tropics with three spouts of water crashing down into a pond lined with exotic water plants.

Completing the universal and slightly oriental picture are a roofed outdoor eating pavilion, floating deck entertaining area and the sort of lush plantings that conjure images of an oasis escape.

"I wanted this to be something special," says Richard surveying his winning dream garden, created for husband-and-wife clients behind their traditional clinker-brick home.

The brief was to keep already well-established plantings, including camellias, lilly-pillies, Boston ivy along a rear wall and a magnificent 100-year-old *Tilia japonica* or Japanese lime tree.

Richard puts much of the garden's success down to his love of travel and nature, explaining that he and wife Nina spent about a year and a half touring Australia, South America, Canada, Europe and New Zealand gaining inspiration and design ideas.

"I like to imitate nature in a lot of ways. I love the corten I've used here at the back of the garden, because it reminds me of the Kimberley region and Central Australia," Richard says.

"We're an environmentally sound business and I have tried to use recycled timbers wherever I could, and I'm conscious of water.

"A lot of people are scared of water features these days because they think they take too much water. But you can actually use water features as a storage, and catch your rainwater off the roof.

"If you're not going to use it to flush your toilets and run your shower, well, you can at least use it for your garden."

Here water collected off the roof is stored in 10,000-litre tanks behind the corten steel panels.

Any overflow runs into the water feature, which is kept clean and cleared of algae via two bio-filters. If the water feature also overflows, the water then automatically runs into the stormwater system.

"When it goes back into the stormwater, it's actually cleaner than if it had just run off the roof, because the water plants in the pond have filtered it," Richard says.

Because his clients enjoy an indoor/outdoor lifestyle, Richard went to extremes to ensure the outdoor eating/entertaining pavilion is as user-friendly and attractive as possible.

A roomy 35sqm, it boasts a durable floor of spotted gum, with blackbutt posts, hardwood beams and Tasmanian-oak lining boards.

Offcuts from the corten panels have been used as plates in its construction, while shingles adorn its roof.

With a built-in barbecue and sink, bluestone benchtops and cupboards and drawers, it can be quickly put into culinary service.

Raised growing containers made of offcuts from the decking are sited nearby so a supply of fresh herbs is always available.

Close by, too, is a wok-shaped wrought-iron bowl filled with succulents, completing an overall stunning picture.

> For more information on Richard Bellemo's RB Landscapes, see [www.rblandscapes.com.au](http://www.rblandscapes.com.au)



Sound of water  
Spouts of water flow  
down the corten  
steel screens

### >> day bed dalliance

Undoubtedly a highlight of this garden is the swinging timber day bed overlooking the water feature. It is cleverly created with a base made from curved jarrah garden edging. The posts that hold it are of blackbutt, and brass tubing has been used as bracing. The day bed itself is suspended with hessian ropes. When the owners saw it, they immediately went out and bought vibrant cushions to pick up the red, orange and rusty tones in the rest of the garden.



#### Gather around

Family and friends are entertained in the pavilion (above middle)

#### Time for you

Relax, surrounded by greenery, in the suspended day bed (above)

#### Undercover

The entertaining pavilion, with shingle roof, offers some shelter from the sun (left)