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Better Homes and Gardens®



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- Dinner to dazzle

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*With this issue





landscape ideas



making designs

Most of us design our own gardens, little by little, space by space. But who hasn't dreamt of having a professional garden designer cast their magic over your little patch of paradise? Well, the next best thing is to borrow a few ideas from the experts and put them to work at your place. DesignFest, held every two years in Melbourne, is a wonderful opportunity to get a glimpse behind the scenes, as a range of private gardens fling open their doors to the public. The 2008 event will showcase more than 20 stunning gardens, both large and small, town and country, and all professionally designed by leading landscape designers. We've taken a peek at four of them – so come for a guided tour!

Journey behind the walls of four fabulous gardens



east meets oz

Blending oriental and Australian themes, this garden cleverly mixes the formal with the informal. Fabulous focal points are set against lush and leafy exotic plantings.

1. Relaxation rules in this landscape. This raised deck, placed mid-garden, begs a visit from the house, book in hand.

2. How's this idea for a variation on a hammock? A curved, wooden, hanging bed makes an enticing relaxation zone, and is capable of holding up to six adults. It's suspended from four wooden posts using heavy-duty rope.

to see how the professional designers do it

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3. Bold flower colours complement this design perfectly, and one of the most striking inclusions is *Strelitzia reginae*, or the bird of paradise. Planted in generous clumps, its paddle-shaped leaves look fabulous year-round, while the flowers reach their peak over summer.

4. Who said pot plants are high maintenance? This beautifully composed collection of succulents gives loads of colour for minimum care. And the container? It's a converted wok!

5. Three large cascades pouring into a pond draw the eye from almost every vantage point in the garden. The water plummets over walls of rusted steel, made from a material known as corten. And, after the storage tanks have filled, the pond catches all the stormwater from the property.

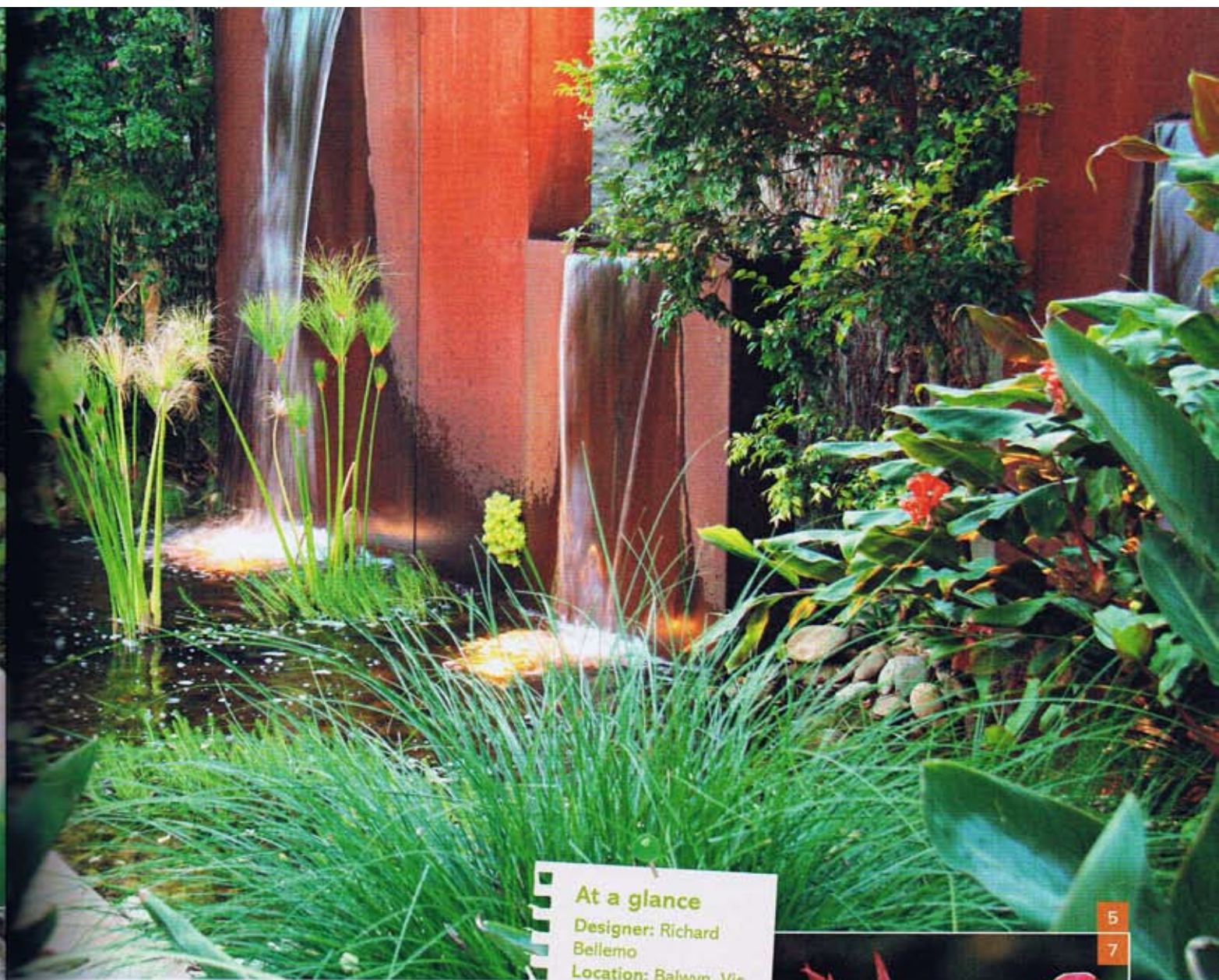
6. The alfresco dining area, which sits on decking, links the house with the garden, and gives a wonderful view to the cascading water feature along the back wall. A roof of cedar shingles makes it an all-weather zone, while the exposed timber beams, planted with grape vines, add a distinctly Italian touch.

7. Beside the pond, clumps of red cannas set the right tone. Happy in damp soil, they bloom from late spring to early autumn.

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Mix vibrant colours with steel, stone and



At a glance
Designer: Richard Bellemo
Location: Balwyn, Vic
Size: 400sqm

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timber to create a striking modern landscape