

OUTDOOR DESIGN WORKSHOP

His client dreamed of visiting Fiji without leaving the property, so landscape designer Peter Fry rose to the challenge



PETER FRY

LANDSCAPE DESIGNER

Peter has been landscaping for over 25 years in the Auckland and Bay of Plenty regions, having owned his own business Peter Fry Landscapes since 1985. Peter says he enjoys connecting people with their environment and bringing to life the ideas of his clients, from their initial concept through to the finished landscape. "My aim is for creative and practical solutions that will ultimately work together in harmony."

THE BRIEF

"I want to be in Fiji without leaving my backyard," was the key request from the owner of this Mairangi Bay property on Auckland's North Shore. Like so many other suburban residential properties, privacy was a major issue for this site, and there was a need to provide shelter from the prevailing winds. "To keep things simple and uncluttered we used subtropical planting," says Peter. "Subtropical plants are generally fast growing, so the garden developed an established look quite quickly."

1 BANANARAMA

The large, lush leaves of banana palms are used to provide visual drama and architectural form in the garden. The Abyssinian banana (*Ensete ventricosum*) has conspicuous red/brown midribs and grows six to eight metres tall. The fruit is quite hard and not usually eaten, hence this plant's other common name, false banana. Banana palms need fertile soil and shelter from cold wind and frost.

2 TOUGH LOVE

Fatsia japonica (sometimes known as Japanese aralia) has bold, shiny, dark green palmate leaves that create a subtropical look, but this plant is actually very tough and cold hardy, says Peter. It looks best in shady spots, usually reaches about three metres in height and produces white flowers in autumn.

3 ISLAND STYLE

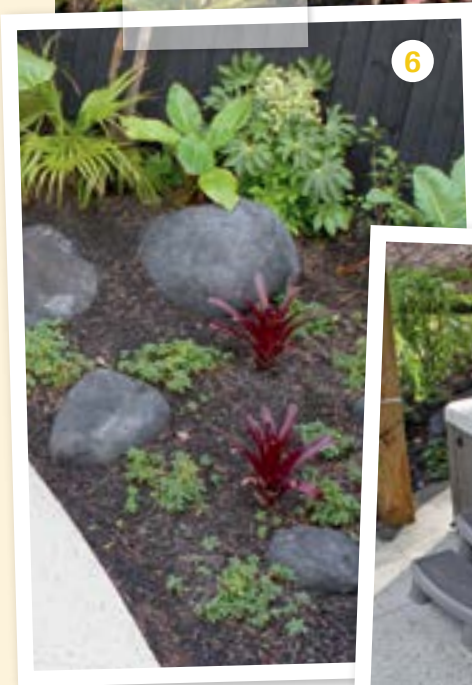
The entrance to the garden is via a flight of kwila hardwood steps surrounded by curved retaining walls of Village Stone, a construction block that resembles schist and is also used for free-standing walls, pillars and cladding houses. Peter chose these materials to give the garden a "traditional tropical presence".

4 DOING THE ROUNDS

Large circles of white in-situ poured concrete are designed to create "a clean and fresh presence and a feeling of space and flow" in the garden. The white colour of the concrete is produced by adding white cement and limestone to the mix before it's poured. Red bromeliads add splashes of colour to contrast with the predominantly green foliage.

Bromeliads add splashes of red to contrast with the green foliage





5 GOING TROPPO

The family loves the balance between practical space and tropical paradise that has been achieved with the garden, says Peter. "One of the interesting and challenging aspects of the project was the placement of 40 tonnes of boulders. In the middle of winter and with limited space to manoeuvre, this was not for the faint-hearted. The boulders were incorporated into the scheme for the dual effect of providing creative retaining for the planted beds alongside the concrete terrace, and bringing strength and contrast to the garden."

6 SMOKY SCREEN

Staining the timber fences a dark charcoal highlights the colours, shapes and textures of the subtropical planting, which includes red bromeliads, palms, fatsia and taro. More large round boulders add structural form and interest to the garden beds.

7 WATER THERAPY

With its macrocarpa timber posts and brushstick canopy, the spa pavilion has a naturalistic subtropical feel. The canopy provides shade and shelter in the often variable Auckland climate.

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