

Smart planning beats challenge

■ **Jessica Rule**

The owners of this luxury City Beach abode sought an outdoor aesthetic to rival world-class resorts, married with the best of absolute beachfront living. However, the coastal elements and a wayward palm threw up challenges along the way.

Jim and Pina McCully, who own West Coast Suspensions, live with their teenage daughter Tara, so sought various zones for hosting different groups.

"Entertaining was important, so depending on what weather was on offer, the home needed to adapt to and accommodate whatever mother nature was throwing at it," Vivendi Luxury Home Builders' Mick Lamb said.

Vivendi built the home and outdoor areas.

"The outdoor spaces had to be protected from the wild south-westerlies but also exploit the sea breezes, sunshine and views," he explained.

Therefore the expansive alfresco breakouts are spread across the 825sqm site, including an uncovered barbecue area to the east of the pool and an covered upper-floor

alfresco area — with a barbecue, sink and fridge. The pool takes pride of place. Exposed aggregate hardscaping is softened by a jarrah sundeck to the east and a smaller deck to the west of the pool.

"We rescued and refurbished the existing concrete pool that had been built in the 1980s," Mr Lamb said.

"The existing plaster, tiles and headers were removed along with a 2.4m-diameter shallow, circular entry."

The new pool features 600mm-wide steps and updated plumbing, heating and lighting, all retrofitted by Neil Hall from Westralia Pools.

A big date palm to the rear of the property was relocated, along with some rescued dracaenas, to provide space for the three-car garage.

"We had our arborist, Jeff Ashe, co-ordinate the relocation of the palm three metres to the north of its original location," Mr Lamb said.

The palm survived being uprooted at the height of summer despite being given only a 50 per cent chance. "It now creates welcome shade and privacy to the rear of the property," Mr Lamb said.



Exposed aggregate hardscaping is softened by a jarrah sundeck. Pictures: Joel Barbitta



"It's always easier to start with a clear, level block but the impact of an established tree on the finished project warrants the inconvenience of that tree during the build."

Two-metre-tall limestone fences were also retained from the original house and designer Doug Paton incorporated massive planters into the front

fence and the facade, providing for more vegetation and privacy to the outdoor entertaining area.

"Pina had been bitten by the planter bug," Mr Lamb said.

"With encouragement from Vivendi project manager Gary Walker she added a linear planter to the south side of the house, another to the west end of the pool (in which a frangipani now lives) while another planter spans the sundeck to the east of the pool."

Mrs McCully has also established a vegetable garden in the shade of the rescued palm.

"It's really difficult to get some plants to grow well by the sea, but the abundance and depth of the planter boxes

meant I could put in lots of good soil," Mrs McCully said.

Mr McCully, an avid surfer, enjoys the outdoor hot water shower and the family, including dog Cash, makes the most of the alfresco area upstairs on warmer days.

Plantings include feature dracaena draco and royal poinciana; golden cane palm and bamboo gracilis for screening; and African box, viburnum Emerald Jewel and magnolia White Caviar for hedging. Cycads, bird's-nest fern and bird of paradise plants add to the allure.

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