

IN PRINT – GETTING YOUR GARDEN PUBLISHED

STORY: CATHERINE STEWART FAILDM MHMA

Catherine is a professional garden writer. She was editor of LO for many years and continues to contribute regularly.

As a writer for many garden magazines, I am one of the middlemen in the business of getting stories about designers and their gardens published. While it is true that good garden stories accompanied by luscious photographs helps magazine sales, they can also grow your design business too.

Apart from ability, hard work and good business sense, many of Australia's top landscape designers agree that clever use of magazine publishing contributes to building a design business, by creating brand recognition and prestige. Paul Bangay's career was jump started by "Vogue Living picking up on his talent quickly and showcasing it well within the magazine" says his brother, Kent. AILDM members and well-known designers, **Matt Cantwell** of Secret Gardens of Sydney, **Dean Herald** of Rolling Stone Landscapes and **Janine Mendel** of CultivArt also credit some of their success to magazine exposure. Each of them have generously given advice on how it can also work for you.

BE MARKET SAVVY

Begin with an overall marketing plan, says Matt, with magazines as just one component. Choose magazines to suit your business, and then budget the necessary marketing dollars. Dean agrees, advising: "Understand the market: there are many publications which pitch and cater to different markets; know this and ensure you are presenting a project that is suited to that publication and the readers that it targets. Don't present a simple, basic garden to a high end architectural publication and don't waste a high end project on a low end publication."

Look through a wide variety of magazines, at how many garden stories they feature, the style of work shown and the quality of the writing. Check out their circulation figures and demographics, which means who is buying what, where, and also why, such as for general interest, or a planned renovation.



1. Magazine exposure can contribute to building your design business by creating brand recognition and prestige.



garden profile

Green scene

Lush, leafy and private, this recently renovated rear garden evokes a sense of serenity.

Photos: Robyn Brown

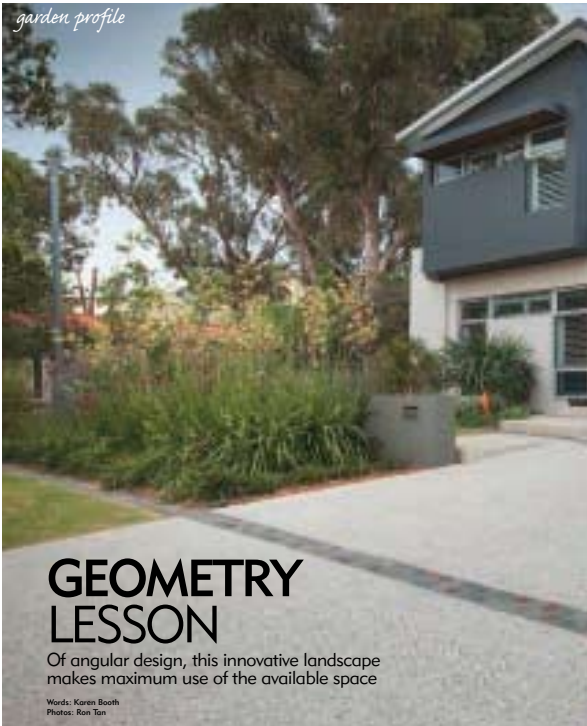


garden profile

garden profile

garden profile

"The transformation of this space has been a huge success."



garden profile

GEOMETRY LESSON

Of angular design, this innovative landscape makes maximum use of the available space

Words: Karen Booth
Photos: Ron Tan



garden profile

contributes a softer look and surface upon which to sit and contemplate.

To match the existing cream-coloured boundary fences, Kerri had fast-growing tall hedges of *Viburnum adoniscissimum* planted in front of them along the home's northern boundary and Golden Cone palms around the alfresco area. The garden is only a year old, but in another year the cream fences will barely be noticeable.

The planting was designed to be as low maintenance and sustainable as possible, which is why Kerri made water-wise plant choices and added sufficient soil conditioner, soil-wetting agents and mulch to promote strong, healthy growth. This is also why there's no lawn in the alfresco courtyard area (less

lawn means less water consumption) and there are shade trees to cool the garden.

"I like to use Australian natives and mix them in with the exotics, always taking care to use plants I know will perform in the environment that I am going to put them in," says Kerri. "I'm a huge fan of the big red kangaroo paw and *Diacoria* as well as mature *Fraxionis*, which create an instant canopy for summer but let an architectural light through in winter. They are also perfect for when you want to create a focus, as is a mature *Dracontis draco*, one of which was used at the front as a feature offset against the stone wall."

Pyrus calleryana "Capital", a popular ornamental pear, was used to offset the tall,

narrow windows at the back of the house.

"These fitted into the narrow space, hide the awful fence and create a soft outlook from the windows," explains Kerri. "I'd always like to add a citrus tree and some herbs somewhere, too, which in this instance I have incorporated into the sunny front garden."

For Kerri, designing a space that will be used frequently is always a priority. That means including plenty of seating and room to move. Says Kerri: "I want to create a feeling of invitation, where people want to come out into the garden and move around the space. I want people to be a part of the garden." In this contemporary garden in the Perth suburbs, Kerri has achieved all of this and more. ■

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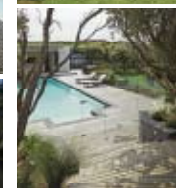
garden gallery

COASTAL SURPRISE

Displaying great respect for indigenous plant species, this garden is truly Australian.



garden gallery



garden gallery



rooftop gardens

rooftop gardens

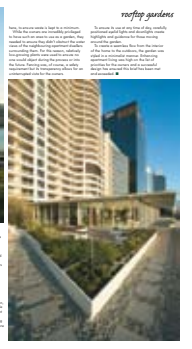
SKY HIGH

A rooftop garden amid a concrete jungle provides a refreshing respite in a busy world.



rooftop gardens

"A unique garden and outdoor living space"



rooftop gardens

Choose a magazine to suit your target clients. AILDM members Kerri Russell, Tig Crowley, Scott Brown and Green Rooms as they appeared in Universal Magazines' Backyard & Garden Design Ideas and Good Garden Design.

Editorial, which is published free, is the goal. If you are just starting out you can also buy advertorial in some magazines, where you pay to have a feature on you and your garden. Your advertisement alongside any editorial is also worthwhile, and Matt suggests negotiating a year-long package with a publisher that includes both, as a regular appearance in your chosen magazine will build your brand much better than a one-off. Dean cautions that before you try for magazine exposure, make sure your business is in the right position to take advantage of any work that comes from it.

THE LONG TERM

To make sure the garden stays available for photographing, Matt includes having access to the garden in his design contract, as most gardens need one to two years of growth before they are ready. I would also advise against using a garden that is immature, even if you are really proud of it. Stay in touch with the client and nurture that potential, as it will be worth much more to you after some growth. Keep a close eye on maintenance, and unexpected additions like inappropriate plants or 'interesting' sculptures. Dean picks the best time of year when "the feature plant material is in season and on show, along with all the related structures and features at their best".

THE PITCH

Approaching an editor can be a bit daunting, but as Janine says: "My advice is to be brave - it is difficult making the phone call but the truth is that most journalists are desperate for good gardens to put in their various publications."

GETTING PUBLISHED

- Use a marketing plan – it doesn't have to be complicated. Simple is good.
- Check a variety of magazines to choose which best suits your target clients.
- A package with a publisher over time is usually more beneficial than a one off appearance.
- Maintain client contact so you can access the garden to photograph when it matures.
- Suggest an angle for how the magazine might use your garden.
- Spectacular photos are a must – either DIY or hire a professional. The magazine may use their own photographer – this means they will have copyright of the pics.
- Use good words to go with your photos – if you are not an accomplished writer then ask someone who is.
- Universal Magazines are always keen to feature gardens by AILDLM members.

Contact Karen Booth, Editor of Backyard & Garden Design Ideas, 02 4344 1675, kbooth@bigpond.net.au



NICOLA CAMERON of Pepo in Sydney created this small dining and cooking zone that looks deceptively simple, working with level changes and smooth, clean lines to make a private but practical and uncluttered space. Rendered retaining walls in a warm grey carry built-in timber benches for relaxing back on, surrounded by clumps of clivia and bromeliads, softly cascading violets and tasty herbs and vegies growing at an easily accessible height. Quiet

colours and simple planting lets the flooring be the star of the show, with beautiful Himalayan split-stone pavers begging to be walked on barefoot. A sleek water wall flanked by arching bird of paradise adds some sound and movement and the built-in wood-fired pizza oven, with its sleek steel chimney, is sure to be the centre of many nights of delicious outdoor entertaining.

Contact: www.pepo.com.au

The ideal outdoor room is a place which attracts you to it, then makes you want to linger there.



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Suggest an angle for how the magazine might use your garden. AILDLM member Nicola Cameron of Pepo used 'clever design for a small space with level changes' for this appearance in Burke's Backyard.

Matt often suggests an angle for how a magazine might use his garden, other than the standard story-line. Perhaps it illustrates a design challenge, like working on a steep site, or a special feature such as indigenous plants. You could put together two or three of your gardens on a theme, like small garden design, night lighting, or innovative ways with decking. If you get knocked back, try again with a different magazine, or accept some constructive criticism.

PHOTOGRAPHY

All the designers agree that the key to magazine success is good photography. Janine suggests you invest in a good SLR camera and take the first round of photographs yourself, both to

understand what works through a camera lens, and have a work portfolio if a magazine comes calling. As a journalist, I am often dismayed at how few AILDLM designers have taken any pictures at all, let alone high quality ones of their work.

If the magazine takes the photos, it keeps the copyright (maybe jointly with the photographer). You may get permission to use them for your own purpose like on your website, but they are not yours to reuse. Alternatively, you can pay a professional photographer so you will own copyright, but check their portfolio first as garden photography is a special skill. High contrast, windy days and garden layouts might require several different lenses and filters, tripods and reflectors to get a good shot. That said, whiz-bang equipment is no substitute for a good eye for framing up a shot and telling the story of the garden, especially using appropriate depth of field (how much of the picture is in focus).

STYLE AND STYLING

Karen Booth, editor at *Backyard and Garden Design Ideas*, is always keen to feature AILDLM member's gardens, either arranging the photography or accepting high resolution jpegs or tiff files (minimum 300dpi). She needs about 10 to 12 photos, showing both overall garden and some details.

To prepare a garden for photographing, pay close attention to detail. Freshly cut hedges show jagged leaves and torn stems, so trim a week before, and top up mulch. On the day, remove any obvious dead leaves and spent flowers, and sweep up fallen leaves. Hide away hoses, tools, toys and messy pots. Use your best diplomacy to persuade a client to allow you to remove unsympathetic clutter. If the day is really wet or too windy, reschedule, as the photographs will not impress.

Many magazines favour a lifestyle approach, so look at styling the garden with props like colourful cushions, outdoor rugs and throws, table settings and towels by the pool. As Karen says: "most magazines prefer shots that emphasise the lifestyle elements of a garden - that is, gardens are meant to be lived in and enjoyed, not just looked at."

Matt employs a professional stylist for his garden photographs, or you can DIY, but Janine warns to be wary of overwhelming a well-designed garden with kitschy fashion items. Look at your target magazine to see if it uses shots with people, or always without. Designer and writer Helen Young calls it the "child running through a garden with a puppy dog and it's all slightly blurred" look. Include some shots with a loveable pet, cute kids or a happy owner, but also have pictures without.

Get along to the photo shoot, help groom the garden as the photos are taken, and talk about what you would like included. If an in-house photographer does the job, Janine advises you ask to check the shots before publication so you are confident they have done your project justice.

WITH OR WITHOUT WORDS

You can write the story yourself, but unless you have writing experience as a professional in the field, I would suggest someone write up your garden story for you to really get the most mileage out of your project. You can supply dot points of information to a writer, or ask the magazine to do the whole thing for you.

SENDING AND RECEIVING

You can email low resolution photos but, as high res pictures are often 10-20Mb, you will need to either send them by disk or upload them to an online file hosting site. Make sure the magazine is clear about who owns the photographs and how they can be used. You might limit it to single magazine use, or allow multiple uses including websites. Always insist on credit to both designer and photographer. If you have publication lined up with one magazine, you will need to wait at least six to twelve months before offering it as a garden story to another, and always be up-front about its previous publication. You could also suggest it for a story using a different angle, or in combination with other gardens, either yours or by a fellow designer. **LD**