

SATURDAY

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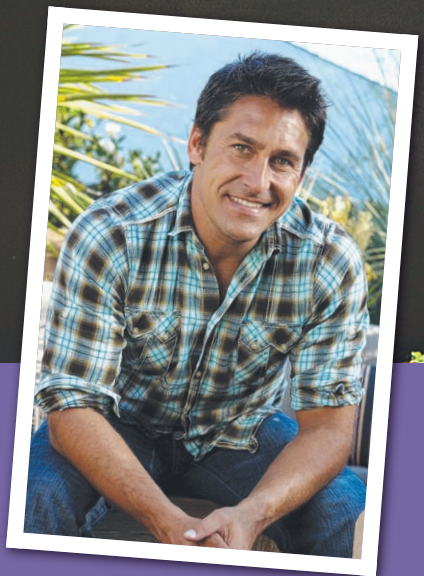
## Just coasting along nicely

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Ground cover plants frame the pathway that leads to the terrazzo tiles at the front door. Existing trees create a sense of privacy while still keeping the front garden open to the street.

# A slice of heaven by the coast

This seaside garden takes a trans-Tasman approach to a relaxed and restful outdoor space, writes **Robyn Willis**

## PROJECT

### Owners

A couple with two active boys who moved from Melbourne

### Landscaper

Nature's Vision Landscapes, [naturesvision.com.au](http://naturesvision.com.au)

### The problem

Converting a bare site on the Central Coast into a lush low-maintenance garden

### The site

A sloping block with a four-metre fall from the street

### Design solution

A mix of Australian and New Zealand natives with an open coastal-style garden at the front and a rainforest-style garden at the rear

You don't often think of Australians experiencing culture shock in their own country, but in a way, that's what happened to this family when they moved from Melbourne to the Central Coast.

With a contemporary looking house on an otherwise bare block, their first thoughts for the front garden were to put up a solid wall.

"They wanted the front area to be a little courtyard but I wanted to keep it open," says Adam Eurell, director of local company, Nature's Vision Landscapes.

"I reminded them that they live on the Central Coast now and it's pretty relaxed here."

In keeping with the rest of the street, Adam designed a coastal garden for the front entrance, using the existing trees for privacy.

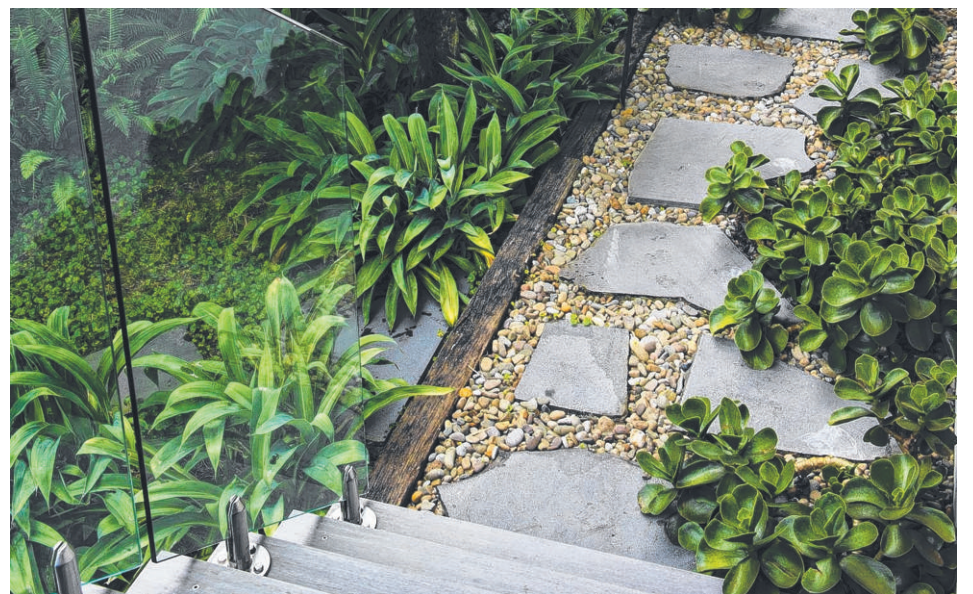
"They were worried about privacy and security but I convinced them that having some of the (larger) trees there like the coastal banksia would help break up the view, so we used the planting to create privacy instead of a structural wall," he says.

The owners were keen to avoid a manicured look in favour of a style more in keeping with its coastal setting.

"It wasn't so much about being low maintenance but they wanted plants that looked like they do in their natural habitat," Adam says.

He designed the front and back gardens on the sloping site, which has a gradual drop of four metres from the street to the back of the block. While plant species vary in different parts of the garden, he says having an overall vision for the space was key.

"You have to have someone to do the entire design, front and back," he says. "We have used various understorey plants that can tolerate the shade but they still relate to the rest of the garden."



Soft and hard landscaping materials give the garden a relaxed seaside feel.

"You don't want the backyard looking completely different to the front yard."

### Cross cultural exchanges

While one of the owners is Australian, the other is from New Zealand.

Adam says they were keen to reflect that in the choice of plants in the garden.

"The Australian and New Zealand landscapes are very different and the New Zealand plants are often used to colder climates," he says. "Some of the things they wanted I steered them away from because of the humidity here but we went with plants like New Zealand flaxes, ferns and rock lilies mixed in with Australian natives."

While the front garden is exposed to salt

spray and sea winds, Adam created a more protected micro climate in the back, which has allowed for the ferns to thrive.

The back garden was designed around an existing pool and a few lemon scented tea trees along the boundary which he cut back hard at the start of the project so that by the time the owners moved in, they provided beautiful natural screening.

With two entertaining decks on the back of the house, the back garden also needed to look good when viewed from above.

"It had to be family friendly and able to handle a little rough and tumble, although there are parts of the garden where you wouldn't kick a soccer ball," he says.

**Pictures** Brigid Arnott





There's a four-metre drop from street level to the backyard which is managed by a series of level changes using railway sleepers and gravel.



The backyard is more protected from salt laden winds allowing Adam to include ferns and rock lilies.



Australia and New Zealand are very different environments but Adam used a variety of plants native to each country in this stunning garden. The New Zealand species performed better in the back garden, which was more protected from the strong winds and salt air.

**Australian plants**

- Baeckea virgata
- Eleocharis reticulatus Prima Donna
- Doryanthes palmeri
- Leptospermum petersonii
- Banksia integrifolia
- Westringia fruticosa
- Poa Labillardieri
- Suggan Buggan
- Lepidozamia peroffskyana
- Podocarpus elatus

**New Zealand**

- Corokia Silver Ghost
- Muahlenbeckia axillaris
- Phormium Yellow Wave



The garden has been designed to be enjoyed from inside the house as well as outside.