Serene and green

A lush, formal-style garden designed to offer a new delight at every turn

There are two keys to creating a successful garden: a clearly defined, well-balanced structure and the generous use of a select number of materials, shapes and colours. The proof of this philosophy can be found in the well-set-out grounds of this Sydney property where outdoor areas have been carved into a series of garden rooms, each relying on a restricted colour palette and the minimum number of materials to create maximum impact.

Says designer Matthew Leacy from Landart Landscapes: "This garden was conceptualised with a view to creating formal yet relaxing spaces incorporating water elements to enhance the design and the ambience. The owners wanted landscaped areas that would be private and sophisticated to set off the style of the house. They also wanted a sense of structure and a planting scheme that would provide seasonal change."

After much consideration, Leacy devised a structural planting plan that beautifully frames the soft seasonal planting, creating year-round interest and appeal. For screening, he used *Cupressocyparis leylandii* 'Leighton Green' (a fast-growing conifer); for hedging and to frame the softer plantings of *Pyrus calleryana* (ornamental pear), *Pyrus nivalis* (snow pear), lavenders and various jasmines,

there are hedges of Japanese box (*Buxus microphylla* var. *japonica*).

Around the pool, the garden is divided into several different spaces, one of which includes a poolside pavilion. This functions as an entertaining/lounge area and opens up to connect to a paved alfresco dining area as well as a barbecue area to one side. This part of the garden is suitable for relaxed lunches and elegant dinner parties and, while there is an easy charm about the area, the formal design elements are still very evident, such as the matching Chinese elms that overhang and frame the dining area.

From the pavilion or dining area you can look across the pool — another example of classic formal design — to a stretch of lawn. This garden room is a cool, shady place with a timber bench where you can relax while enjoying the lush greenness of the garden.

The main bedroom opens to a lovely courtyard-style area, which is a welcoming and very private space. The focal point is a classical urn fountain set in the midst of a formal square pond, positioned on a direct axis from the bedroom doors.

A wide path of Classicstone paving leads from the house to the water feature and, to add a rustic ambience to the formal symmetry of the area, there is a rustic granite stone feature wall behind the fountain and recycled hardwood trellis frames to either side. A beautiful wrought-iron gate invites you from the front garden down an outdoor "hallway" of natural sandstone steppers.

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In the front garden, a similarly formal design has been implemented, signalling a warm welcome to visitors and giving the home maximum street appeal. As with the other outdoor areas around the house, the entry garden is a serene and green space that has an elegance about it that will never date.

"Although some sections of the garden have only recently been completed, the garden already has the beauty you usually see in established garden. And it is a beauty that will only continue to develop and deepen with the passage of time," says Matthew Leacy.