



**KAREN STAUNTON-ROSS**  
Designer and Director,  
Outside Living



# COASTAL ESCAPE

Embraced by tropical planting and offering a pool and cabana, this is the ideal resort-style sanctuary

If you're lucky to call a beachside suburb home, you'll want to enjoy the full coastal lifestyle experience — such was the case for the owners of this property. "They wanted me to create a tropical retreat that would capture the essence of what it's like to live near the coast — and they wanted it to have a resort-style escape vibe," says Karen Staunton-Ross, garden designer and founder of Outside Living.

A new house was being built on a battle axe block and, in the process, vehicular access would be changing from the front via a long driveway to the rear lane. "This change gave us the opportunity to really tie the house and pool together," says Karen. "It also allowed us to convert the driveway into a leafy transitional space that would usher you from the pressures of modern living to a place of seclusion and retreat. At the end of

the journey there are places for friends and family to gather and enjoy being together — a pool area, cabana and an open space.

"I love the way the garden reveals itself to visitors. Each space is quite distinct, but well connected," continues Karen. "To begin with, you transition along the former drive to the lawn area before you see the cabana and then the pool. The pool forges a seamless connection with the house,

something that was made so much easier by constructing both at the same time.

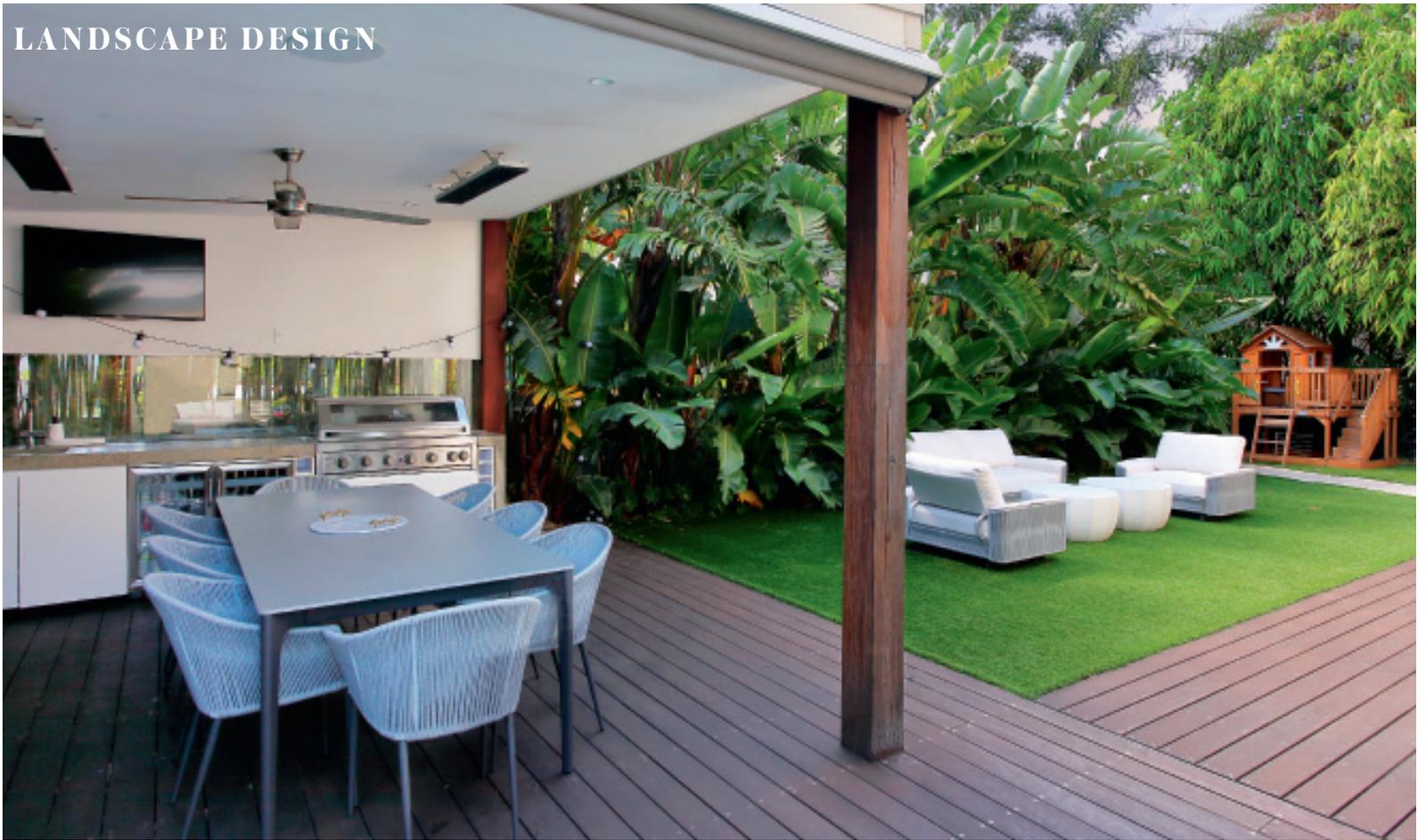
Inspired by the tropics, the planting is the star of the show. "I chose striking plants with bold foliage and textures that make a statement. Together, they provide colour, form and structure. I also tried to include a range of heights, including tall and mid-sized plants along with groundcovers and lots of leaf shapes and sizes."

As you stroll around the garden, which was constructed by EJM Paving and Landscape, you will spy *Philodendron*, *Alcantarea*, *Alpinia*, *Liriope*, *Cordyline*, *Drepanostachyum falcatum*, *Strelitzia nicolai*, *Pogonatherum paniceum* and both *Raphis* and *Kentia* palms.

"The screening plants around the cabana create a sense of enclosure and provide privacy while still enabling you to feel like you



## LANDSCAPE DESIGN



are sitting out in the garden. The bamboo works perfectly between the structure and the fence, creating a space that is open and screened at the same time," says Karen. The plant selection was brought to life with some inspired inclusions by Bamboo South Coast, who supplied most of the plants and helped to enhance the garden design.

The timber boardwalk-style path adds an air of informality, an effect enhanced by eschewing even edges in favour of a staggered approach. The same timber was employed for the deck, thematically

connecting both garden elements and introducing some visual warmth. Paving was used for the high-traffic areas, which include the pool surrounds.

Despite the peculiar site dimensions, Karen was able to design a welcoming coastal-style garden that is lush and relaxing. "The new house has generous windows and doors opening to the garden so we had to create something that was not only spectacular to be in but looked wonderful when viewed from inside," she says. The family now has its dream resort-style escape.

**NSW**

## PROJECT DETAILS

Landscape design  
**OUTSIDE LIVING**

**Address** 20/12 Phillip Mall,  
West Pymble NSW 2073

**Phone** (02) 9440 5451

**Email** [design@outsideliving.com.au](mailto:design@outsideliving.com.au)

**Website** [outsideliving.com.au](http://outsideliving.com.au)

Photography by Peter Brennan