

# return to eden

After a barren dirt garden in their Nigerian home, this family wanted to immerse themselves in colour and greenery.

## *did you know...*

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The semi-circular 'amphitheatre' was dug out of the bank and soil moved around to create a flat area dotted with islands of palms and natives. The curved two-toned orange feature walls are painted in Resene Grenadier (top) and Resene Sorbus (bottom).



**W**hat's one of the first things you do when returning from a four-year expatriate posting in Nigeria? Well, if you're Aucklander Jane McRae, you set about creating a magical garden retreat incorporating palms and native plants, bright colours and lots of bird-enticing elements.

"I'd been living overseas in a third-world country and I just wanted to come home and have a garden," she explains. "At our house in Port Harcourt, Nigeria, the outdoor area was focused around a playground for the kids to enjoy. It was all dirt with nothing green, so when we came back I really wanted to plant things again."

Jane and her partner extensively renovated their Hillsborough home overlooking the Manukau Harbour to create an environment the family could continue to enjoy as their primary school-age children grew into teenagers.

Along with remodelling the house, they also tackled the barren wedge-shaped piece of land on the southeast seaward side of the house, enlisting the help of landscape designer Tania Barke from Through the Garden Gate.

Tania and Jane worked closely together. Jane's scrapbook of ideas included pictures of water features, specific plants, outdoor fireplaces,

paving stones and flowing steps – all of which helped Tania understand her client's vision.

"The scrapbook was a fantastic starting point," says Tania. "But we then had to fit Jane's ideas to the site and the conditions, and marry the garden to the house. It's a very narrow space that steps down from the house. We filled and lifted the site, and the wedge shape of the garden dictated to a large degree what we could do with it. Being a small space, too many elements would have been confusing."

Because the garden is also in shadow all winter and is exposed to strong on-shore winds, the plants had to be wind and salt tolerant.

Low maintenance and privacy were Jane's key requirements. And, of course, there was also the inclusion of the colour orange. Two tones – Resene Sorbus and Resene Grenadier – were used to paint the curved plastered walls and provide the perfect counterbalance to the lush foliage.

"Some of the neighbours were a bit sceptical at first," admits Jane, "but orange and green are beautiful together." Tania agrees: "The orange is stunning and vibrant, and it just calls you out into the garden. Even in winter this garden is enticing from the house." The plant palette Tania chose also includes red, white and a smattering >



**Left** A functional work of art, the custom-made chiminea fireplace provides warmth and ambience, and acts as a visual focal point. It's also great for toasting marshmallows.

**Below** Snowcone, the rainbow lorikeet belonging to Jane's daughter, is a regular visitor to the garden and his colourful plumage tones perfectly with the orange, green and purple colour palette.

- Resene Kabul
- Resene Sorbus







**Above left** In a far corner nearest the sea is the Thai spirit house that Jane brought back with her from her travels.

**Above right** A ceramic birdbath is tucked into a garden bed.

**Opposite** Table and chairs sit next to a rectangular fishpond with a minimalist water feature – a chute made from glass coated in Resene Kabul to match the painted wall behind.

**Left** A sitting area on the covered deck has a backdrop of slatted timber stained in Resene Waterborne Woodsman tinted to Resene Treehouse.

of purple. And the family pet Snowcone, a rainbow lorikeet, also adds to the vibrancy.

Jane had clear native plant favourites, including nikau, king palms and cabbage trees, which are planted in three 'islands' with sago palms and green mondo grass. Tania offset all this green with the richly coloured Caruba Black and Purpurea cabbage trees, Platt's Black flax and dark bromeliads to complement the Resene Waterborne Woodsman stain tinted to Resene Treehouse on the cedar details of the house.

A karaka tree adds height at the seaward end of the orange feature walls. The other end is lined with a row of fruit-laden mandarin, lime and feijoa trees above a fragrant bank of star jasmine. Philodendron xanadu grows beneath the orange-stemmed dypsis palms that flank the eye-catching custom-made chiminea fireplace.

Irises and liriopé musacari add a dash of purple, while native heritage flaxes and grey-green oioi reeds complement the dwarf pohutukawa and the titoki that provide privacy along the boundary fence. Wind-







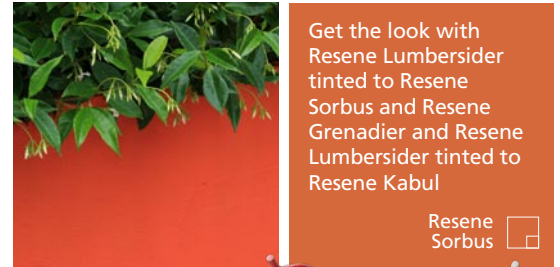
tolerant Poor Knights lilies add an abundance of crimson bottle-brush flowers, to which the birds flock.

Stepping up from the garden, a paved patio connects to the covered deck and downstairs living area. Table and chairs sit next to a rectangular fishpond with a minimalist water feature – a chute made from glass coated in Resene Kabul to match the painted wall behind. Further on is the children’s playhouse.

Says Jane. “The kids can run around the trees, make trails between the flaxes and there are small zones and hiding spots everywhere. They have the pool on the other side of the house in summer and their playhouse, and they can toast marshmallows in the chiminea. The oval amphitheatre is also the perfect place for their shows.”

As well as doing virtually all of the planting herself, Jane has added her own personal touches: wind chimes, ceramic leaf-shaped wall art, a Thai spirit house to welcome good karma into the garden and a lime-green bird bath and tall wooden feeding platform to entice native birds into this magical space. **H**

words Deirdre Coleman  
pictures Sally Tagg



Get the look with Resene Lumbersider tinted to Resene Sorbus and Resene Grenadier and Resene Lumbersider tinted to Resene Kabul

Resene Sorbus 



Ceramic art: Bob Steiner, [www.steinerceramics.co.nz](http://www.steinerceramics.co.nz)

Resene Kabul 



Landscape designer: Tania Barke, Through the Garden Gate, [www.ttgg.co.nz](http://www.ttgg.co.nz)

Resene Mother Earth 



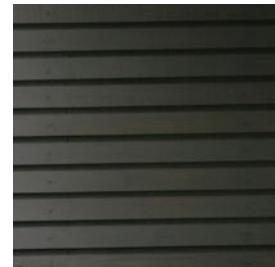
Custom-made chiminea: Bella Fuego, [www.bellafuego.co.nz](http://www.bellafuego.co.nz)


Resene Code Red 



Get the exterior stained look with Resene Waterborne Woodsman tinted to Resene Treehouse

Resene Limerick 



Resene Waterborne Woodsman tinted to Resene Treehouse 


turn the page for alternative looks to Jane's garden



alternative solution - native flair



^ A striking native scheme with Resene Cocoa Bean plaster walls, Resene Dynamite drums lit from within and Resene Friar Grey concrete furniture.

 Resene  
Barely There



# a sweeping koru form connects this design



**Jennie van der Valk** of Artworks Landscapes suggests this alternative scheme:

This design is influenced by the arches and curves already used in the landscape. At its heart is a sweeping koru form made from pavers interplanted with Chatham Island fescue. This koru connects the garden's two main focal points – the water feature of plaster (in Resene Cocoa Bean) and gabion walls, and the cabbage tree sculpture. Both of these are lit up at night along with the 44-gallon drums (painted in Resene Dynamite) which have cutouts on the side to allow light to shine out from within. Low maintenance native plants are used to provide extra colour and form.

phone 03 387 0673 mob 021 985 559 web [www.artworkslandscapes.co.nz](http://www.artworkslandscapes.co.nz)

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Cocoa Bean



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Cabbage tree sculpture by Jeff Thomson  
[www.jeffthomson.co.nz](http://www.jeffthomson.co.nz)

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Resene Barely There

Resene Friar Grey

Resene Seachange

Resene Dynamite

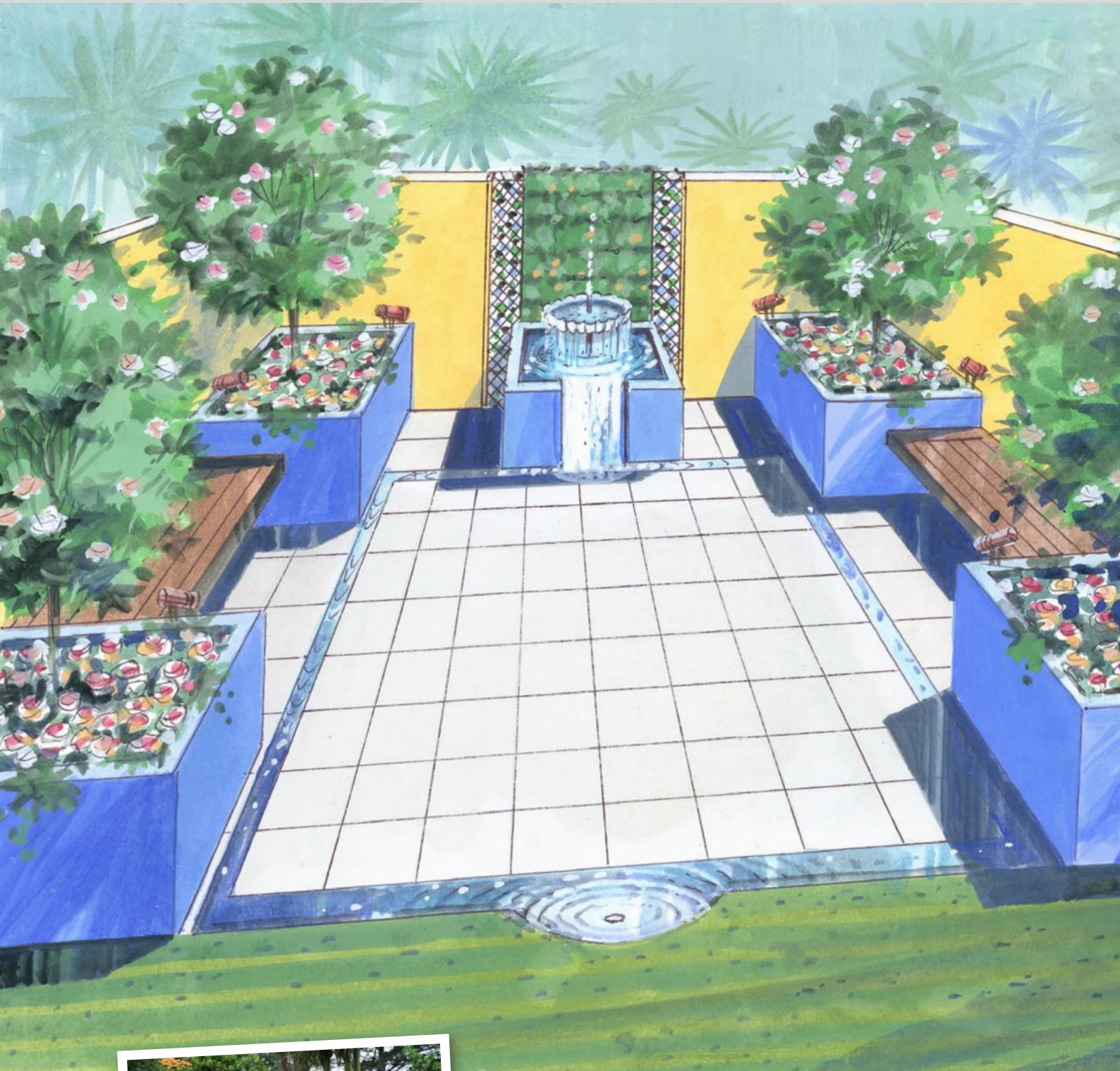


Stainless steel water blade  
The Water Garden  
03 343 1621



illustration  
Bruce Bryant



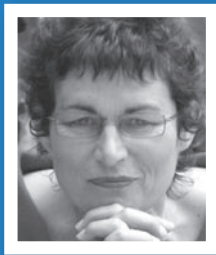


^ Rich colours in Resene Float (planters) and Resene Cream Can (walls) are a vibrant component for this middle eastern-inspired garden.

Resene  
White Thunder



# an ode to the Islamic paradise garden



Landscape designer **Nicky Samuel** suggests this alternative scheme:





Reminiscent of the walled Islamic paradise garden style, this design features a water rill to create a cooling effect on hot summer nights. Raised planters in each corner are finished in Resene Float, with dwarf magnolia trees underplanted with a riot of plants with cream, blue and white flowers, as well as fragrant plants like roses, stock and herbs. Enclosing the space are Panelrok walls painted in Resene Cream Can, with mock tile details in Resene Float, Resene Black Sheep and Resene Moxie. A relatively new technological advance in landscaping, a green wall, is used behind the whimsical fountain and provides more space on the ground plane. Built-in seating uses Panelrok's Knotwood and gives a place to rest.

phone 07 872 8028 mob 0274 866 218 web [www.elandesign.net.nz](http://www.elandesign.net.nz)



illustration  
Bruce Bryant

Resene Float

	<p>&lt;</p> <p>Spike Spot Metal Halide</p> <p>Hunza Pure Outdoor Lighting  <a href="http://www.hunza.co.nz">www.hunza.co.nz</a> or  <a href="http://www.garemalighting.com.au">www.garemalighting.com.au</a>          09 528 9471</p> <p>&gt;</p> <p>Blue Moon rose</p>	
<p>&gt;</p> <p>Panelrok and Knotwood</p> <p><a href="http://www.panelrok.co.nz">www.panelrok.co.nz</a> or  <a href="http://www.adelaidefencecentre.com.au">www.adelaidefencecentre.com.au</a>          0800 266 730</p>		<p>Resene Cream Can </p> <p> Resene Moxie</p> <p> Resene Float</p> <p> Resene Black Sheep</p>
	<p>&lt;</p> <p>Green walls</p> <p>Maccaferri  <a href="http://www.maccaferri.co.nz">www.maccaferri.co.nz</a> or  <a href="http://www.maccaferri.com.au">www.maccaferri.com.au</a>          03 349 5600</p> <p>&gt;</p> <p>Terrazo Veneto Bianco pavers</p> <p>Horizon International  <a href="http://www.horizoninternational.co.nz">www.horizoninternational.co.nz</a>          0800 682 745</p>	