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FACT FILE

THE BRIEF

To give a two-storey home in Elanora Heights a minor internal makeover and an external overhaul

THE FAMILY

Brad and Eliza Bosward and their children Maddison, 16, Tom, 12, and Will, 3

THE BUILDER

Luke Van Dyck

Winning by a yard

For this owner the secret to a great makeover is the garden, writes **Catherine Nikas-Boulos**

Some people will spend every last cent they have creating an indoor haven for their family and consider laying grass as the icing on the cake but Brad Bosward has other ideas.

With expertise in buying, sprucing up and then selling homes, Brad knew what had to be done when he bought this Elanora Heights property four years ago.

The house was structurally sound, and while the interior decor needed a polish and a pick-me-up, it was the backyard that got the royal treatment.

More than 1300 plants are now thriving in this wonderful garden, and although the cost was great – with lilly pillies, frangipani trees and gardenias among the mix – Brad says nothing quite sells a house like a well-thought-out garden, and he should know.

“I do landscape architecture on and off for a job and I am passionate about this more than anything. The gardens here are great, I wanted to have Sydney climate plants with a tropical feel,” he says.

“Essentially, I wanted an amazing outdoor entertainment area.”

Brad plans to up and move again, just don't tell that to his wife Eliza and children Maddison, Tom, and Will, who have grown to love their temporary abode. Despite original plans to keep the home following the seven-month transformation, Brad says new business beckons.

“I did all the design work myself and it was meant to be the family home for the next 20 years, but a proposition was put forward to me a couple of days ago and

we're now putting it on the market. Just don't ask my wife what she thinks,” he says.

A few bright ideas

Brad and Eliza bought the home in original condition as a double-storey red-brick house, recognising its potential for a contemporary makeover.

Their plans included an overhaul of the rear of the property with the installation of new windows and doors to let in the light and air and the new build of an undercover

entertainment deck. This is all completed by extensive new landscaping.

When builder Luke Van Dyck arrived on the site, he found a two-storey home that was in perfect working order, though minor adjustments had to be made to make it more comfortable for the Bosward family.

“Basically when they bought the property it was nice and of sound structure, we just needed to open up the layout to bring more light to the back of the house,” he says.

“Essentially, I wanted an amazing outdoor entertainment area”

PHOTOS: JOHN FOTIADIS



A The front of the home basically stayed the same **B** Work in progress **C** Massive posts hold up the pergola **D** The yard is an entertainer's dream **E** New windows and doors open up the rear **F** Brad Bosward and Luke Van Dyck **G** Brad with Eliza and Will **H** The new balustrade **I** The living area



Aluminium stacking doors and fixed windows from Airlite were used to let in the light and air to the rear of the house.

This was the most sensible move, as it was a fairly large opening they had to work with. Had Brad and Eliza chosen to use bi-fold doors, the structural dynamics of the job would have changed, requiring them to erect large beams at significant extra cost.

Luke and his team were also responsible for rendering the home and ripping out the old skirting boards and architraves and replacing them with a modern alternative.

New electricals, including powerpoints and downlights, were installed, and new carpet was laid to give it a fresh feel.

A new stainless steel balustrade was also ordered for the staircase to make it more contemporary in style, completing the internal mini-makeover.

"It was all about bringing it into the 21st century," Luke says. "It was a great building, it just looked dated."

No taking the soft option

Stage two of the makeover took Luke and his team outside. During excavation for the footings for the new entertaining deck Luke and his teams hit soft soil, which is great for plants but not so great to build on.

To counter this, the consulting engineers' advice was to pier right down to the rock base and put in reinforced concrete.

Workin' out my back door

Another hurdle was access – all the building materials had to come through the garage and out the back door, which was 82cm wide. This included all the materials including a 400kg steel beam and all

the demolition waste from the existing structure. "Everything came in and out of a single doorway, I mean every single detail, in and out," Luke says.

"We could not use a crane as there were too many obstacles in the way and we could not store it on site, out the back, all at once in the work area."

In the end, the only way to get the job done was by hand, although it was time-consuming and labour-intensive.

Luke explains the trick on this job was to be very organised and keep on top of the sub trades. "Everything had to be completed in order and on time – this was a challenge in itself," he says.

Luke agrees the new pergola does the backyard justice among the lush, tropical-inspired gardens.

"The old pergola was dilapidated and mission brown in colour – it just wasn't safe and with young kids it just had to be ripped out and rebuilt with a more modern Bali-inspired theme."

That was not without problems though – and a significant financial cost.

For this end, Luke sourced old hardwood posts that weigh about 300kg each and used merbau timber around the perimeter to give the pergola a solid look.

Luke says having the family onsite while he worked was not an issue, with Brad's knowledge and understanding of trades a benefit.

"Essentially, the client can see what you have been doing all day. I could be working on a wall that is taking a particularly long time, and the client won't turn up at the end of the day, asking, 'What have you been doing all day?'" ■

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MORE INFORMATION
LVD Industries lvdbuilders.com

GET THE LOOK



Kick back ... What Bali-inspired pergola would be complete without a timber day bed? The setting comprises a day bed and bench with cushions that can link up via velcro. **Day bed and bench** \$448, from Patio by Jamie Durie.



Stony faced ... With a unique pitched face and sandstone finish, Grangestone offers a natural stone look and is a stylish alternative for retaining walls and fences. **Grangestone** \$13.22 per unit or \$165.25 per sq m, from Boral.



Go potty ... If, like the Boswards, you have a backyard with plenty of room, make a statement with these oversized pots. These glazed pots can handle larger plants to give the garden a rich, natural vibe. Available in cone or square shapes. **Elite metro cone** from \$19.98 (22cm x 45cm) to \$56.98 (38cm x 52cm) from Bunnings.

MORE INFORMATION
Boral boral.com.au/landscaping
Bunnings bunnings.com.au
Patio by Jamie Durie patibyjamiedurie.com.au

