

# a touch of the tropics





A family visit to Queensland provided the inspiration for Jo and Craig Howe's garden and pool, on their lifestyle block an hour's drive south of Auckland.

Their brief to the landscape designer was unequivocal.

"We wanted a low-maintenance garden, a pool with a waterfall, a spa and barbeque area, lots of palm trees and a bure," says Jo Howe.

The couple have two children under four and love to spend time with family and friends. They needed a garden and pool that would provide an entertainment and recreation area to suit their lifestyle.

The resulting design was a response not only to Jo and Craig's brief, but also to the rural setting. The materials reflect this: rustic timber and rocks. The spa area is screened on three sides by rocks and plants and the barbeque was built into a big schist fireplace.

The house, the garden, and the 10m x 5m rectangular pool take up one acre of the Howe's 12-acre property. The pool and surrounding landscaping were completed over a five-month period. One dozen Highland cattle have the run of the remaining 11 acres of the property.

The section is very exposed, so the plants needed to be hardy. The Howes were concerned about the wind, so mounds of earth were created on the western side, from the soil that was excavated for the pool. Once the garden matures, these raised planting beds will provide an effective wind buffer. Their home is also built on a knoll overlooking the surrounding countryside. The mounds around the pool reflect this, encasing the design and creating a visual association with the house.

Jo and Craig wanted a resort-style look. Accordingly, the garden contains mass plantings of hardy sub-tropicals and big, grouped mixtures of different-textured leaves and colour variations.

The designer specified Queen palms (*Syagrus romananzoffiana*), Washington palms (*Washingtonia robusta*), Pygmy date palm (*Phoenix roebellinii*), Sago



alternative ideas for this exterior on pages 124-127

# a few tips on pool care

1. Regular servicing of your swimming pool motor and pump will ensure good water circulation and help prevent nasties from growing in the water.
2. Review filter cartridges or filter grids on a frequent basis and make sure filter baskets are kept clean. It's also important the pool filter runs for the right amount of time each day for your climate and pool size – it's hard to keep pool chemicals balanced in nutrient-rich water.
3. Regular vacuuming will also help keep unwanted material out of the pool.
4. Swimming pools like consistency in the battle against pool algae. Keep a constant eye on the pH of the water and the level of sanitising product required.
5. It takes only seconds for a child to drown. Even though your pool fence will be regularly inspected by your local council, make sure it is well maintained between inspections, and that all gates close and lock securely.
6. Make sure you're not stacking firewood or compost, or anything else that could be climbed by young feet, close to a pool fence. Keep overhanging tree branches well trimmed back too.
7. Make sure even older children are fully supervised when using pool toys or buoyancy aids. It is easy for them to become so confident they exceed their swimming capabilities or play too roughly, inviting accident.
8. Ensure pool surrounds – stone, concrete or decking – are kept mould-free with a product like Resene Moss & Mould Killer to stop them becoming slippery when wet. Just make sure any chemicals you use don't get into the pool water, as they will affect its balance.

palm (*Cycas revoluta*), Ponytail palm (*Beaucarnea recurvata*) and yuccas. Carpets of clipped star jasmine have been used as a groundcover to soften the effect of the spiky leaves. The plant is naturally a climber and requires pruning to retain the flat effect the designer was after. There are few natives in the garden, although it does feature *Griselinia lucida*, with its bold, tropical leaves, and *Griselinia littoralis*, used as a hedge to conceal the pool fence, and as a second barrier about the immediate spa surroundings.

Sited at one corner of the pool, the bure or gazebo conveys the impression that it is floating on the water.

The garden and pool connect well with the three-year-old house, which is constructed from Hinuera stone. The lounge looks out over the pool and garden, while a half-circle concrete deck leads to a winding path running about 10 metres down to the pool, which can be accessed from two sides. The lawn in the pool area features oversized stepping stones to provide a crossing to the paving. The designer was keen to minimise the expanse of hard area and keep the surroundings soft, with plenty of greenery.

Sited at one corner of the pool, the bure or gazebo conveys the impression that it is floating on the water. Inspired by the Howe's visits to Fiji, its thatched roof provides shade in the summer and shelter in the winter. Materials for the kitset bure and thatched roof panels were sourced from Brustics by a local supplier. The pool is fenced with brushwood on two sides of the garden, with a coated steel fence, front and back. The rear fence is already screened by trees.





Frontier Pools installed the pool, which includes two striking features: a rock wall in one corner and a waterfall.

“We created the pool in such a way that it would support the rocks,” says Frontier Pool’s Neil Runciman.

The pool has a durable quartz finish. It was plastered first, then acid-etched to provide texture and colour.

“The plaster finish in Diamond Brite’s Onyx gives it a black, natural look, which ties in with the planting” says Runciman. “Onyx is a very popular colour and black is great for heat retention.”

Craig and a builder friend, Mike Farrell, built the retaining wall and the brushwood fences, erected the bure and did all the planting. Rod Freeman built the rock wall, the waterfall and the fireplace. Craig gave the designer’s planting plan to two different specialist nurseries, who sourced and delivered the plants according to the specifications. Rocks were brought in from the Bombay quarry and placed around the garden by Craig.

Timber sourced by a demolition friend from an old railway bridge was sandblasted to remove the red paint, and used to form the retaining wall across the back of the pool. The wall is raised 300mm above the water, creating an edge for the planting. The old railway timber is also featured across the front of the fireplace.

“Doing the labour ourselves and using our own contacts helped to keep the cost down a little bit,” says Craig. “And we’re very pleased with the outcome – we’ve got exactly what we wanted.” **H**



Pool: Frontier Pools  
 Builder: Mike Farrell  
 Rockwork: Rod Freeman  
 Resene Warrior



Pool equipment: Waterloo NZ  
 Pool heating: Hot Water Heat Pumps  
 Pool sanitisation: Ozonz NZ  
 Resene Escape



Yucca

Resene Alfresco



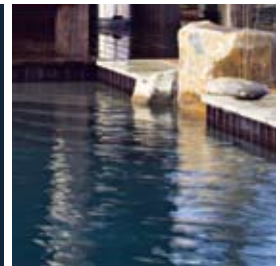
Bromeliad

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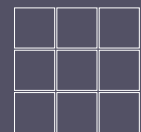


For a non-skid finish on pool surrounds, use Resene Non-Skid Deck and Path. See the Resene Decks, Paths, Driveways and Recreational Areas colour chart.

Resene Indian Ink



Resene Warlord



on the following pages,  
 find two alternative style  
 suggestions for this garden



^ Use a few simple choices to draw this space together.

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Resene Talisman 

Resene Concrete

Resene Hot August

Resene Escapade



Tony Collins from GreenGables Landscape suggests this alternative design:

A simple palette of plants and materials gives this space unity and cohesion. Plain ground-and-sealed concrete is a cost-effective option for a high-quality finish around the pool. A block-and-plaster wall with a planter encloses the space, with Balmain panels allowing a visual link to surrounding outdoor areas. Shade comes in the form of a galvanised steel cabana with a roof of Zinaculume and open rafters, while an outdoor fireplace set into the wall provides warmth in the evenings.


The planting offers minimal maintenance and year-round visual appeal. The reds of *Iresine lindenii*, *Cordyline fruticosa* and *Libertia ixioides* complement the grey cabana, concrete and fireplace. A Lady palm and philodendron give subtle texture, while the lush dark green of viburnum provides an effective screen. A small section of lawn balances the hard surfaces.

*Tony Collins*

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^ Regular forms add structure and symmetry.

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Resene Epiphany

Resene Tomahawk

Resene Cargo

Resene Beachcomber

>  
Corokia 'Geenty's Green'



>>  
Cypress



Stewart Stevenson from CGC Landscapes proposes this alternative design:

Vertical elements and rectangular forms create a sense of structure and symmetry in this pool area. Two square archways made from honed-block columns with a stained timber cross-member define the fireplace area, while a third over the water feature ties the whole scheme together. Rectangular Italian stone tiles are laid across the space to draw the eye to the pool and to mirror the block pattern in the perimeter wall.

The plant selection of hardy evergreens won't drop leaves into the water. Around the walls, a hedge of Corokia 'Geenty's Green', with its light foliage, complements the natural-coloured blockwork. Cypresses are planted at intervals to reinforce the vertical lines. Liriope muscari covers the ground beneath the cypresses and hedging. The edges of the water feature are softened with Buxus sempervirens.

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