

Beautiful GARDENS

IDEAS AND INSPIRATION FOR STYLISH OUTDOOR LIVING

PHOTOGRAPHY ERIK HOLT STYLING NADIA GILL & ERIK HOLT

MIDAS
TOUCH
page 120

MIDAS *touch*

A FAMILY STRUCK GOLD
WHEN THEY GAVE THEIR OLD
MINER'S COTTAGE IN VICTORIA'S
GOLDFIELDS A MEDITERRANEAN-
INSPIRED GARDEN MAKEOVER

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MODERN TAKE "The garden pays homage to the heritage of cottage gardens, with a contemporary approach," shares Nadia Gill, the landscape architect who created this garden. Swapping traditional climbing roses for an ornamental grape vine softens the steel pergola, while adding vibrant seasonal foliage. 'Elba' lounge chairs in Grey from Bo Concept. >

Beautiful GARDENS

A region of hot, dry summers and heavy winter frosts, Maldon in Victoria's Goldfields is a town heavily influenced by its gold rush history. With its largely unchanged 1850s character, the picturesque streets attract visitors from far and wide. For one Melbourne family, the town represents more than a quaint country getaway; it's a respite from their busy city lives.

"We first visited Maldon when our youngest son was about six weeks old," says Sandra, an academic, of the trip she took almost two decades ago with her husband Andrew, a barrister, and their two young sons. "We rented a tiny cottage with a delightful garden and spent a few days wandering around with the boys, and we fell in love." Smitten with the town, the couple returned just over a year later in 2007 and bought Tralee, a charming weatherboard miner's cottage built around 1864 at the height of the Victorian gold rush.

SOFT GREENS The steel grey pergola and cladding in Dulux Monument (below) are softened by abundant green foliage from an ornamental grape vine, masses of rosemary and hardy Sir Walter Buffalo grass. **HERITAGE HEROES** The formal front garden (opposite) features French lavender and parterre hedges of English box, which frame a crab apple tree. Two majestic eucalypts are visible in the distance, "giving a gorgeous sense of borrowed landscape," says Nadia. The weatherboards of the heritage miner's cottage are painted in Dulux Tranquil Retreat, with accents in Dulux Monument. >

"At the time, we lived in a small semi-detached house in Melbourne where there was very little outdoor space," says Sandra. "We wanted a place in the country where we could all spend lots of time outside." The family of four, including sons Hugo and Jasper, now 19 and 18, happily made do with the home and gardens as they were, before deciding in 2020 that their much-loved weekender deserved some attention. They engaged architect Des Cullen to modernise and extend the house, which now hints at a contemporary farmhouse style, while landscape architect Nadia Gill was put in charge of the garden makeover.

"It was very much a collaborative effort with the architect, the client and myself," says Nadia of their approach. "Sandra and Andrew really wanted to be respectful of the cottage garden aesthetic in the front, but they also wanted more of a contemporary, streamlined approach at the back to complement the direction of the architecture."



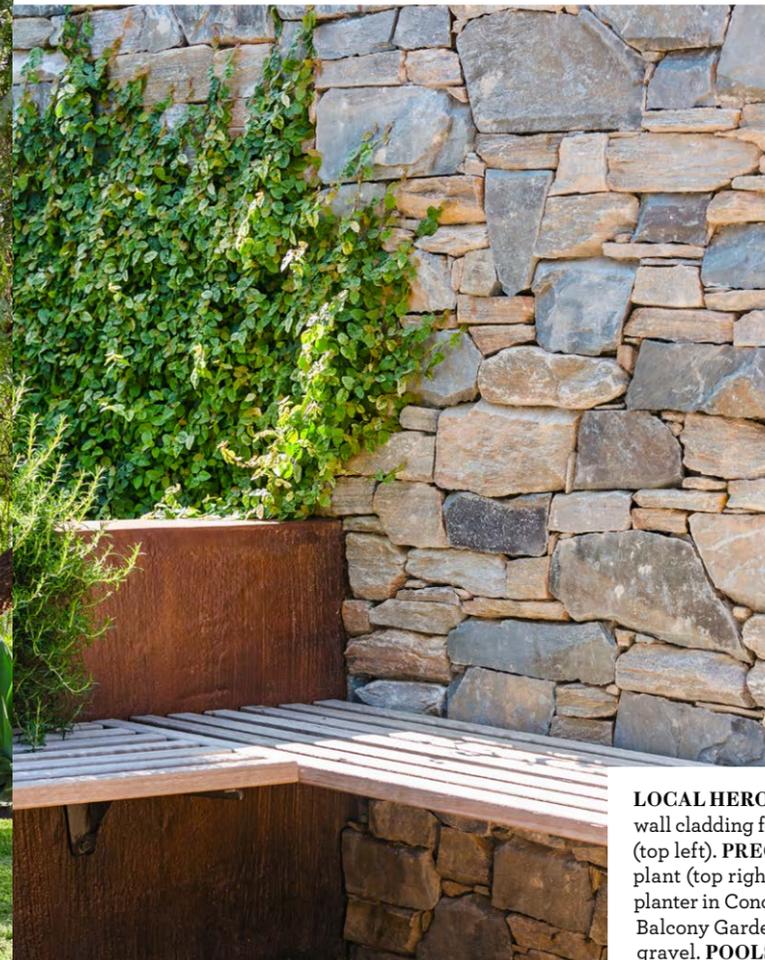


STILL LIFE A garden bench (above), shaded by cascading branches of a peppercorn tree and surrounded by agave and euphorbia, which border the lawn. “We created beautiful vignettes to be viewed from indoors,” shares Nadia. **NEXT LEVEL** The hardwood timber verandah at the entry (bottom left), complete with a Victorian bluestone step from Bamstone.

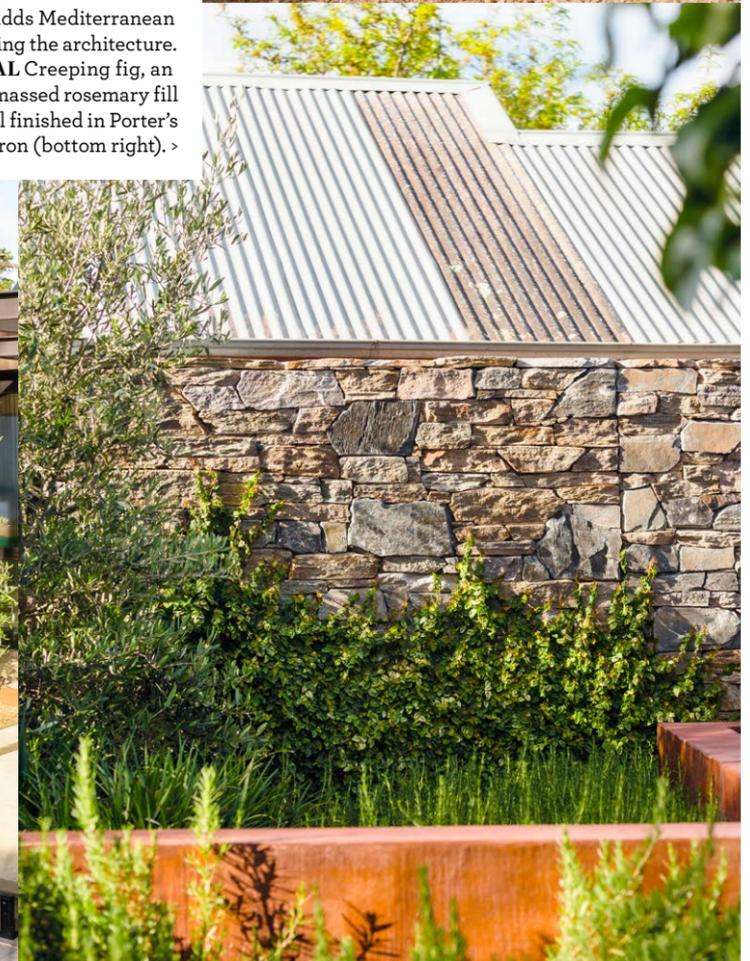
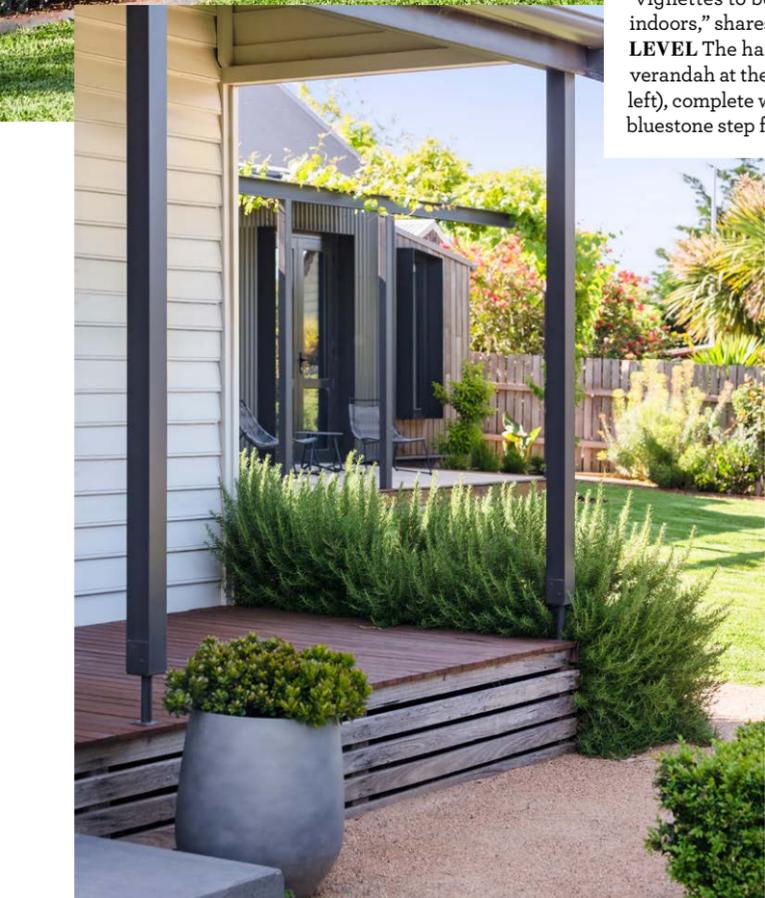
As with many of Maldon’s cottage gardens, Tralee was endowed with camellias, an oleander, plenty of fruit trees and a box hedge. Nadia’s response to the brief was a sympathetic rejuvenation, preserving parts of the garden that referenced the past while taking into consideration the challenging local climate, heavy clay soils and haphazard rock veins that typify the area. They are characteristics, she explains, “which were perfect for the goldfields, but tricky to establish a garden”.

Given the family don’t live at the house full-time, the gardens had to be hardy enough to survive Maldon’s climactic extremes with little intervention. “We were very influenced by gardens that we had seen in Sicily. They survive the hot, dry weather, often without much looking after,” says Sandra. Nadia agreed that a Mediterranean style would thrive in Maldon, and landed on a design inspired by southern Europe’s etesian climate, featuring local stone and layered textural plantings.

“The overarching brief for Nadia was to create multiple environments for relaxing and for entertaining,” says Sandra. “She has done this with great success.” The result of a collaborative and forward-thinking approach, Nadia says the key to the garden’s ongoing health is the dedication of its owners. “Because Sandra was very much involved in the design process, she’s taken ownership of it and has really become its custodian,” she says. “That’s the secret for a successful garden.”



LOCAL HERO ‘Goldfields Strata’ wall cladding from Yarrabee Stone (top left). **PRECIOUS GEM** A jade plant (top right), happy in its ‘Jitt’ planter in Concrete Grey from The Balcony Garden, on granitic sand gravel. **POOLSIDE** An olive tree (bottom left) adds Mediterranean flavour, softening the architecture. **HEAVY METAL** Creeping fig, an olive tree and massed rosemary fill a retaining wall finished in Porter’s Paints Liquid Iron (bottom right). >



ITALIAN ESCAPE “In summer it feels like you’re in Tuscany,” shares Sandra. Blue chalk sticks in the foreground bring contrast and a cumquat tree adds vibrant colour. Ironbark battens partition the pool area, which features ‘Endicott’ split stone pavers from Eco Outdoor and ‘Delhi’ mosaic blend pool tiles from Bisazza in harmonious green hues. A double row of ornamental pear trees forms a walkway from the lawn to the rear verandah.

Source book

Landscape architecture: Nadia Gill Landscape Architect, nadiagill.com.au.

Landscape build: Ian Evans Creative Landscapes, ianevascreativelandscapes.com.

Architecture: Cullen Architects, des@cullenarchitects.com.au.

Builder: Searle Bros, searlebrothers.com.au. 🏠

“THE *back garden* IS VERY MUCH ABOUT *throwing open the doors* IN SUMMER”

NADIA, LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT

