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New Homes

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Outdoors Pools & Spas

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Cooking up a backyard treat

Resort ambience created in big garden renovation for 10-year-old family home. **Maya Anderson** reports.

With a lap pool, sundeck, water feature, below-ground spa, pool table, massive covered alfresco area and a full outdoor kitchen, this recently completed garden in Bibra Lake resembles a backyard resort.

Two years ago, owners Inga and John Sells decided they wanted a new look for the garden of their 10-year-old home that would be a great place for them and their daughters, aged 20 and 13, to relax and entertain.

What began as a few improvements soon turned into a big project complete with a pool and spa, a big alfresco area and an outdoor kitchen. Mr Sells said he did not want to look back on the project and wish that he had done something differently or better.

"Whatever we got done we wanted it done to the best we could get, with really good attention to detail, and everything of a high quality," he said.

An 11m-long concrete pool with a big, adjoining



Ric Piil with owner John Sells in the new alfresco kitchen in the Bibra Lake home.

Pictures: Guy Magowan

below-ground spa was installed and bordered with frameless glass by Glass Works. Behind the pool is a raised sundeck, complemented by low-maintenance, waterwise plants, and an elegant stone cladding water feature which partially conceals an outdoor shower.

The garden was paved with Urbanstone. All the pool and garden equipment has been located in a pretty "pump room" with limestone walls and leadlight-look windows.

A big alfresco area that would offer plenty of room for entertaining on any level was an important part of the new garden. With a beautiful cedar-lined ceiling crisscrossed with beams, this area is as much a feature of the garden as something functional.

A pool table with feature lighting has been positioned in one part of the covered alfresco area while the other part holds an outdoor lounge setting. The outdoor furniture came from The Savvy Garden online store.

The Sells were keen to put in facilities for outdoor cooking and decided to hire Ric Piil, of Alfresco Kitchens, after Mr Sells came across photos of his work.

Mr Piil said the Sells knew what they wanted when it came to an alfresco kitchen and drew them up a brief with a big barbecue, a range hood, a cooktop, a stainless-steel dishwasher, two glass-door fridges and a large pantry.

"In terms of appliances, the owners wanted to replicate an indoor kitchen outdoors, and it

also had to be a stand-alone feature," Mr Piil said.

The kitchen is as attractive as it is functional, with CaesarStone benchtops teamed with sleek cabinetry and a blue glass splashback chosen to create a harmonious link between the kitchen and the blue of the pool and spa. Limestone walls on three sides keep the area wind-free so it can be used comfortably all year round, while an island bench is an ideal place to put out plates of food for buffet-style dining.

Mrs Sells said they were very happy with the work of Alfresco Kitchens.

"They were unbelievable — very good to work with," Mrs Sells said. "We have recommended Alfresco Kitchens to our friends."

Mr Sells agreed. "Ric was great to work with — we had no dramas," he said.

After being recently completed, the hotel-like garden was the site for the 13th birthday celebration held for one of the Sells' daughters.

"We had 32 kids running around here that day," Mr Sells said, adding that the guests had great fun jumping off the sundeck into the pool, which is 1.8m at the shallower part and 2.2m at the deep end.

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