



Made to order

If you want a tailor-made landscape design, you need a professional landscape designer

A spectacular landscape design cannot be purchased as you would a new car. Sure, you could commission a designer to repeat a familiar pattern, adjusting it just enough to suit your particular site, but will that design have a sense of place or the individuality that a bespoke design would have provided?

The design brief

The design brief may be conceived entirely by the client prior to meeting the designer, or an initial consultation can take place with the designer preparing a brief based on the needs and wants expressed by the client during that meeting. The brief pulls together all the key pieces of the puzzle and provides the conceptual building blocks for the design.

As the design concept is developed, all essential elements are integrated into the design with the landscape designer ensuring there is a harmonious relationship between spaces. This concept development stage will also include a rationalisation of ground levels and may identify areas for paving, garden beds, turf and structures.

Concept presentation

Generally, a presentation of the initial design concept would also include a mood board. Mood

boards are a compilation of images (of plants, structures, lighting etc) and samples of materials that might be included in your landscape. A mood board helps a designer to convey the look and feel of the design at an early stage.

It's extremely important that you review the concept presentation in detail and take your time doing so. Provide comments on what you see and how it fits with what you would like and how you see yourself in the landscape. While adjustments can and will be made further along the design process, fundamental changes should be considered at this stage to keep the fluidity of the process.

The finer details

Once you are committed to a concept your designer will move on to the next stage, which involves the detailing of the elements. Planting compositions, material specifications, finishing notes and building details are compiled in a set of construction drawings and documents so that construction can begin.

By now it will be clear that a landscape designer takes a methodical, staged

ABOVE A design tailor-made for the site and the homeowners. Photo courtesy of Landart Landscapes.

approach to creating an individual design tailored to your specific needs. As a designer, I would advise you to embrace the process and involve yourself in the design as much as possible. Great design is created not from a pattern, but a process. ■

Prepared by the ecodesign team on behalf of the Australian Institute of Landscape Designers & Managers (AILDM): www.aildm.com.au

The right designer

Make sure that any designer you speak to is suitably qualified, insured, and a member of the appropriate professional association. A good starting point is the Australian Institute of Landscape Designers and Managers (AILDM), where members have to adhere to strict codes of conduct and their work must meet high standards. Look for a designer who is approachable, a good listener, open to your ideas, and someone with whom you feel completely at ease. You're going to be working closely with them so there needs to be good chemistry – and communication – between you.

