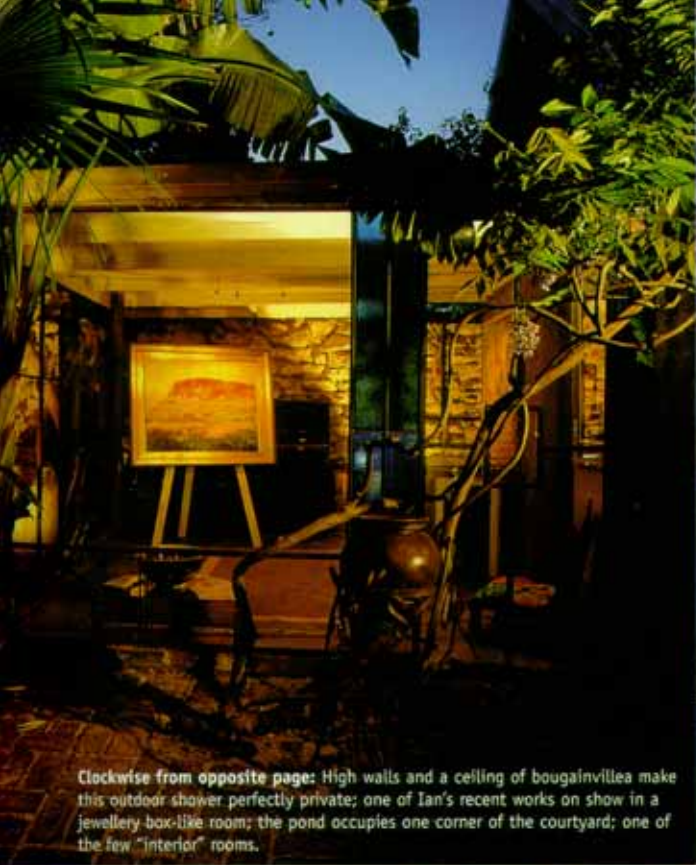


A photograph of an outdoor showerhead spraying water against a stone wall. The showerhead is green and has a fine mist of water falling from it. Above the showerhead, there are lush green leaves and branches. The background is a light-colored stone wall with a window or door frame visible on the right side. The overall scene is bright and natural, suggesting a summer outdoor setting.

Outside In

As summer's velvet blue skies entice us outside, the thought of spending long, lazy days amidst rustling leaves and running water can seduce people into transforming their living spaces accordingly. We visited three couples who have made outdoor living an integral part of their homes.



Clockwise from opposite page: High walls and a ceiling of bougainvillea make this outdoor shower perfectly private; one of Ian's recent works on show in a jewellery box-like room; the pond occupies one corner of the courtyard; one of the few "interior" rooms.

text Jennie Fitzhardinge images Emma Van Dordrecht



A work in progress

Ian and Ros de Souza's home in Fremantle is as unexpected as it is beautiful.

When building or renovating, some people have a clear goal: "This is how I want my house to look." For Fremantle artist Ian de Souza, his house evolved more from the statement "this is how I live", and as his life has changed and developed, so too has his home.

It started life as a simple rammed-earth studio in the back garden. Then Ian subdivided his block, sold the house and moved into the studio. A railway carriage was soon added and integrated with a curved roof arching between it "and the studio, creating the outdoor room which is the true heart of this home. It's the room where meals are prepared and eaten and where friends and visitors are invited to sit at the long table and enjoy the unique ambience.

Many architects, builders and landscape gardeners talk of "outdoor rooms" but this one is a fully functioning, essential room of the house. It is a style of building more familiar to the tropics than Perth, but Ian says it's used even in winter.

Such is Ian's love of the outdoor lifestyle that even the shower is outside. How many bathrooms can boast a ceiling of bougainvillea in bloom?

Privacy is ensured by high limestone and rendered walls – although the final wall was only built recently. "We rendered it with a red ochre and that changed the whole mood of the courtyard, so we've recently painted everything new colours," Ian says.

And the work is still progressing – soon Ian and Ros will start building a second storey and new folding steel and glass doors for the rammed earth studio. "A house and garden should never be finished – instead it should grow with the inhabitants," Ian says. "Nothing is ever finished in life."