

"The colonnaded walkway enveloped with petrea has to be one of my favourite features," says homeowner Belinda Booth.

# Glorious ORDER

A structured garden in the heart of Jo'burg's northern suburbs, reflects the restraint of classical gardens

TEXT NATALIE BORUVKA PHOTOGRAPHS CHRISTOPH HOFFMANN



## Who lives here

Charles and Belinda Booth, and a large extended family that's always passing through.

## The garden

A formal, structured garden anchored by a large koi pond and a French parterre with an upper terrace defined by manicured hedges.

The design of this garden in Illovo, Jo'burg, was originally conceived by landscaper Helen Ward when the house was built in 1999. "When I took over in 2002, the garden was still immature," says homeowner Belinda Booth. "In passing, Helen mentioned to me that she had intended to arrange the garden in a series of 'rooms'. I liked the idea and decided to carry this through."

A large koi pond adjacent to the parterre, was already in place, separated from a stretch of lawn by a colonnaded walkway covered with spring-flowering petrea. An upper terrace extended 40m along one side of the property's perimeter.

To demarcate this area and the courtyard beside it, viburnum hedges were planted. "They were knee high at that stage so I allowed them to grow and replaced the myrtle hedge, which, despite having its own soft, English appeal, didn't offer the lush, more vibrant green of buxus. It's robust in sun and shade and doesn't become 'leggy'," she says.

While the focus has been on grooming the hedges that establish the formal layout, changes have also been made.

To reduce the maintenance required by such a large garden, the annuals, which once dominated the beds, have been replaced with perennials. Originally filled with poppies and primulas, the parterre

now features irises which present deep purple blooms in spring. The upper terrace is a riot of colour in summer thanks to daylilies, fuchsias and hydrangeas, and in winter, snowdrops transform the area into a sea of white. However, in early summer, purple predominates when the petrea bursts into bloom against a backdrop of jacarandas.

Areas of mass planting such as the border of *Mackaya bella* along the boundary walls and the fuchsias that now extend across the upper terrace, have evolved as a result of Belinda's careful observation of the garden. "Over the past 14 years, when I've seen plants flourish, I've taken cuttings," she says.

"The success is largely due to gardener Alfred Nemaconde of Kanyenawe ▷

### THIS PAGE, FROM LEFT TO RIGHT:

- The main bedroom leads onto a sitting area shaded by a wisteria-shrouded pergola.
- A drainage system was installed in this area and covered with concrete pavers interplanted with dwarf mondo grass.



THIS PAGE, CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE: ● Four obelisks planted with clematis lend height to the area around the koi pond and echo the purple hues of the jacarandas. ● “We have a wonderful view of the parterre from our bedroom. It’s magnificent when the irises, jacarandas and hydrangeas on the upper terrace are all in bloom,” says Belinda. ● The colonnaded walkway leads to a courtyard surrounded by beds of agapanthus.



Gardenscapes. I’ve yet to meet someone who has a better understanding of the needs and moods of a plant.”

One of the most recent changes was the koi pond and surrounding lawn. Andre Kruger of Garden Bleu raised the rill, which had become too shallow for the fish. “The lawn was a nightmare to maintain because, as the trees and hedges matured, we were left with areas of shade and it became waterlogged,” Belinda explains.

After pulling up the lawn to install a drainage system, it was replaced with concrete pavers and dwarf mondo grass. Large Italian pots with olive trees and star jasmine underplanted with creeping foxgloves soften the area.

Although Belinda doesn’t have a favourite spot, she delights in what she refers to as her ‘playground’ – a potager garden situated at the end of the large lawn. “I’m constantly reworking this area with roses and other plants as well as new vegetables and herbs. Recently a very fussy honeysuckle creeper was replaced with Carolina jasmine, which virtually covered the gazebo in no time at all,” she says with satisfaction. **GH**



THIS PAGE, CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE: ● “The garden has so many beautiful, secluded spots like my potager. When I potter about here, I feel very far away from the bustle of Sandton,” says Belinda. ● Annuals were reduced to a minimum, and Belinda plants her favourite pansies, primulas and begonias in large pots. ● A view of the upper terrace’s established trees which include American sweetgum, jacaranda and ginkgo.

**SOURCES** Garden Bleu [gardenbleu.co.za](http://gardenbleu.co.za) Kanyenawe Gardenscapes 076 927 7853

