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Living by Design



The outdoor room

... and Jamie Durie's ideas on the perfect alfresco lifestyle

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From left: Laureate in Albert Park; Airlie Bank in South Yarra; and Garden House in Carlton.



THINK GREEN ON TOP

RESEARCHERS at the University of Melbourne are examining how the environment in our cities can be improved by growing gardens on top of buildings. Growing plants on top of new office buildings is mandated in several cities in Europe, North America and Japan, but Australia has few examples of such high-rise horticulture and little understanding of their benefits and possibilities. Horticulture lecturer Dr Nick Williams blames Australia's climate. "Green roof plants used overseas are typically from arid, mountainous or coastal environments. In Australia, plants need to be robust, have good drought tolerance, like exposure to

full sun and [be easy] to maintain. Green roofs, defined as roofs that support planted vegetation, have several demonstrable benefits, including reduced runoff of rain water, aesthetically pleasing cityscapes, longer roof life, significantly reduced building energy use and a reduction of the urban heat-island effect. "It's about people's quality of life," Dr Williams says. "As our cities become higher density, this is something that will become more prevalent." The research will be used to provide information to architects, landscape designers and public policymakers.

RENEE BARNES

Piccolo Development's Garden House, on Rathdowne Street, Carlton, is another new complex that has focused its marketing on its garden. Paul Hecker, of Hecker Phelan & Guthrie, the project's interior designer, says the developer wanted the building to be in keeping with the adjacent Carlton Gardens. "We all have a requirement for an oasis, a place to get in touch with nature," he says. "That was vital for this project." A narrow courtyard provides access to greenery from the main bedroom and ensuite, and is extended into the

apartments through clever design. The \$50 million project of 46 apartments and three terraces will begin construction next year. Another development capitalising on its garden appeal is Mirvac's new \$90 million Laureate project opposite the Gasworks Arts Park in Albert Park. Rick Eckersley, of Eckersley Garden Architecture, the landscape designer on the project, says apartment and townhouse buyers are looking for outdoor spaces that "stimulate the senses through touch, sight and smell".

The development includes three-bedroom residences starting from \$1.35 million through to five-bedroom properties starting at \$3 million. The three and four-storey townhouses include a mix of private courtyards, rooftop terraces and large outdoor decks. The overall development is also focused on garden habitat, with a central quadrangle that includes cantilever arbours wrapped in vines and a higher canopy of established trees. "It is all about creating form and mood," Mr Eckersley says. "It is

about getting dappled sunlight and encouraging birds and bees."

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 - Hecker Phelan Guthrie, 9421 1644, hpg.net.au
 - Mirvac, 9645 9400, mirvac.com.au/laureate
 - Morrell and Koren, 1800 982 622, morrellandkoren.com.au
 - Neometro, 9534 7774, neometro.com.au
 - The Garden House, 9349 0085, thegardenhouse.net.au



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