

Gardens

Practically Perfect

A garden that is practical but also aesthetically delightful can often be a challenge. However, for one household on The Villa development this ideal combination has fused together perfectly.

Text: Helga Jensen-Forde, Freelance Writer; Photos: Christopher List, Staff Photographer

This garden at The Villa development has been carefully designed as a multi-use space and although relatively new, still impresses



The emerging Villa development may be rather new compared with some of Dubai's other more established projects, but for one family it seems incredible to think that they only moved in just over six months ago.

The delightful Nasser family, who left their Jumeirah home after many years, moved into their spacious residence in The Villa, on the outskirts of Dubai near the Al Ain highway, in June last year. However, their garden is already fully landscaped and it almost looks as though they could have moved in years ago. While, naturally, the plants aren't mature, everything in this garden appears perfectly blended.

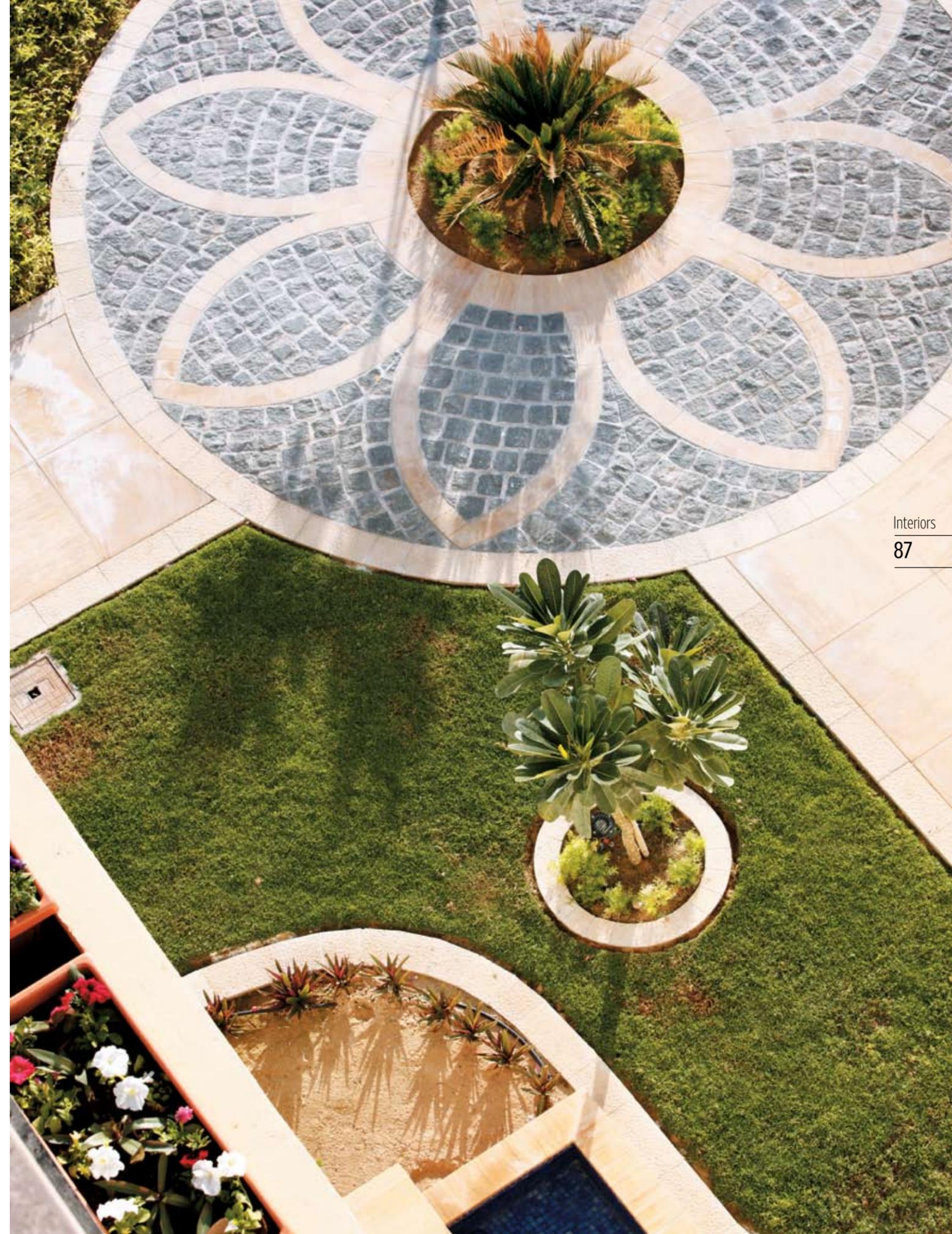
Designed by Dubai-based Better Gardens, a welcoming infinity saltwater pool sits on one side of the garden, while elsewhere there are plenty of green areas providing ubiquitous places for the Nasser family's dog and pet rabbit to run around.

What strikes you as you look around is while this garden may be immaculately kept it is also extremely practical. While there are plenty of places for children and animals to play, there

is a storage shed for bikes, and elsewhere an outdoor shower, which is ideal for the children. Samantha Nasser explains all about her quest for the perfect functional garden. "I had certain ideas that I definitely did want from the beginning. I wanted a nice split-level garden for entertaining. I also wanted a lap pool as I wanted a pool that was practical too. I also knew that I wanted it at the side rather than in the middle of the garden. The outdoor shower we definitely wanted, especially with the children. They have immediate access to it without having to traipse through the house."

There are so many different characteristics and delineated areas to the garden and Samantha admits that this is probably her favourite thing about it. "For me I love the multi-use aspect. The fact that the garden is split-level means we have space for entertaining and we also have the lawn for playing on and the pool to one side."

For entertaining there are plenty of features, including what Samantha confesses is her husband's toy; music that comes from the ground via two sunken speakers. Elsewhere, tucked into a corner is a barbecue that gets plenty of use. ♦



Right: A solitary royal palm stands sentinel over a secluded seating area



The garden has been designed with clearly defined areas for play, rest and leisure

While there is certainly everything you need for that perfect garden party, set amid this entertaining backdrop are plants that include jasmine, bougainvillea, dragon palm, royal palm, desert rose and a stunning lemon tree that stands graciously alone.

Interestingly, the desert rose and some of the bougainvillea were transferred from the Nasser's old property, while Better Gardens planted the newer additions including the cheekily named Mother-in-Law's Tongue, a Eucalyptus Gum Tree and a beautiful olive tree

that is situated in the front garden.

Overall the planting and additional landscaping took around 18 weeks to complete, according to Samantha. However, she adds, "unless you live in it you then you don't see things such as the extra lights in the garden that needed to be added. You have to live in it to see what needs adding and tweaking."

Following more than a little tweaking here and there the garden now provides myriad colours and textures and the paved and decking areas add another interesting dimension to this

lovely space. Samantha suggests, "We wanted cladding on the side of the steps, which gives a nice mix of textures and I think that limestone complements the verandas that we extended." Having totally changed their outdoor area since buying the property, the Nasser family is immensely pleased with the final product. "The more we use it the happier we are with it," concludes Samantha. "It is definitely worth the investment. Firstly, you get immediate use out of it, especially for us because we have young children. It is also a good long-term investment as you are adding to the structural

value of your home if you ever wish to sell it one day in the future."

As Samantha earlier admitted to me she discovered Better Gardens while looking through the advertisements in this very magazine. I wondered if we could take any credit for this garden? Probably not, after all it was the work of Better Gardens, but I have to confess that I did feel a sense of satisfaction when I left the Nassers' house knowing we played a very small part in this very successful landscaping story. ■