

# NICKY SAMUEL



## One-on-one with landscape designer Nicky Samuel

### Education/employment experience:

I completed a diploma of Landscape Design and Technology from the Waikato Institute of Technology in 2004. The course covered plant knowledge, design principles, the history of garden design, graphics, product knowledge, business skills, contractual and regulatory requirements, plan drawing, construction theory and techniques. It was a practical course with hands-on components and in-depth knowledge required.

After completing the course, I started up my own business, Elan Design Limited, which focuses on landscape design as well as implementing designs in the Waikato region. I was originally trained as a primary school teacher and taught for several years before starting a family. I've also worked as a computer trainer around New Zealand for a database management system and as a business development manager for a financial services company. In 1998, I decided it was time to pursue my passion for gardening and that's when I began studying for my diploma. My hobbies include sewing, vegetable gardening, planting trees, bushwalking and keeping fit.

### Awards:

I won a Student Design Award at the Ellerslie International Flower Show in 2003. I am also an accredited member (Design) of Landscaping New Zealand — which means my work has been critiqued and reached

the appropriate standard in order for me to become a member. I have been a member of Landscaping New Zealand since 2006.

### What's planned/coming up:

I plan to continue creating beautiful gardens in the local area and beyond.

### Design philosophy:

I'm passionate about creating landscapes that provide spaces for clients to enjoy. I use the best plants, materials and design elements to suit the architecture, residence and, most importantly, the client's lifestyle. Inspiration plays a huge role in the life of any designer and, as a landscape designer, my inspiration comes from nature. Whenever I'm outdoors, I see amazing patterns, textures, shapes, colours and forms in a vast array of natural objects. I love to surround myself with beautiful imagery, which motivates and inspires me.

### Age, where you reside:

I am 54 years of age. I live and work from my home office on the slopes of Mt Pirongia in western Waikato. My family and I live close to the bush, high above the rural Waikato farmland, where the views are wonderful. One of the bonuses of living in a rural environment is that I'm more aware of the daily vistas that unfold with every season, providing a different hue. Awareness of my surroundings keeps me searching for elusive shapes and colours that I love to replicate in my design work. I draw inspiration from places visited, experiences shared and sights observed.

### Favourite thing about New Zealand:

There's more than just one thing! The superb scenery, Coromandel beaches, seafood, wonderful people, our native flora and fauna and our passion for sport.

### Favourite thing about garden design:

The plants. We are so lucky that we live in a country where there is a wide range of trees, shrubs and flowering plants for every situation. Also, being able to combine my love of plants, people and art is another thing I love about garden design. I love meeting clients and working through a project with them, from the very first visit through to the final result. The journey requires having an excellent perception of not only what the client wants but also what is possible. I love to visit nurseries to keep up to date with new plant varieties as much as I love to visit gardens. I've also attended many conferences over the years and it seems that most people involved in the landscape industry are great people to know.

### Tips/advice when it comes to garden design:

Think about the end result you want to achieve and how you want to interact with your garden. Make a list of what you would like and decide what you can realistically fit into the space you have and your budget. Have a plan and work through it systematically. Employ qualified professionals and see it as an investment in your future.