

HOME

Units for green thumbs

Selecting home-grown produce for the dinner table is now an option for city slickers, writes Home editor **Paula Shearer**

RESTAURANT owner Frank Oliveri knows the importance of selecting fresh ingredients.

So when he was on the lookout for an inner-city apartment, the fourth-floor veggie patch at the new Como building in Teneriffe was a definite selling point.

Several weeks after moving in, Oliveri finds he often uses the herbs and vegetables to supplement his grocery shopping.

Spending several days a fortnight in Brisbane, living alone and away from his Melbourne base, the fly-in fly-out businessman picks the fresh herbs and vegetables from Como's garden.

The selection includes most herbs – from mint to basil, chives and parsley – plus vegetables such as bok choy, celery, lettuce and tomatoes. Among the fruit supply are lemon and lime trees plus a strawberry patch.

And it's all free to pick and enjoy, taken care of by the building's body corporate.

"I love the concept of a veggie patch," Oliveri says.

"It's great for making a quick dish as I don't really have the time to spend hours over a stove in preparation."

The garden also offers a back-up when he works long hours and doesn't make it to the shops.

"It's convenient and it's easy," Oliveri says.

"When I miss the chance to go to Woolies or Coles, I know I've got some basics in the garden to make something."

"It makes it enjoyable to come home and use your imagination on what to cook for the evening."

Developer Damien Cavallucci says the garden is also designed as a meeting place for residents.

"It's more than just a veggie patch," he says.

"It's also a community hub where residents can meet and enjoy each other's company."

Oliveri says his reasons for buying at Como included being surrounded by like-minded people, and he hopes the garden will offer a way of meeting other residents.

"I just think that the idea is pretty unique," he says. "It's a valuable asset to the building and it gives it a distinction."

"It's a great way to hopefully go forward and meet some other residents, exchange different ideas and also build some friendships within the apartments where you live."

"I think it's a good initiative on the part of the builder... it's not just a piece of floating concrete, they are trying to bring a bit of suburbia to apartment life."

Teneriffe Realty agent Jenny Kazoullis says the building has been easy to sell, with buyers loving the concept of a communal garden.



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Frank Oliveri
Apartment owner

CONVENIENT: Frank Oliveri at Como Apartments, Teneriffe.
Picture: Bruce Long

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