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IDEAS

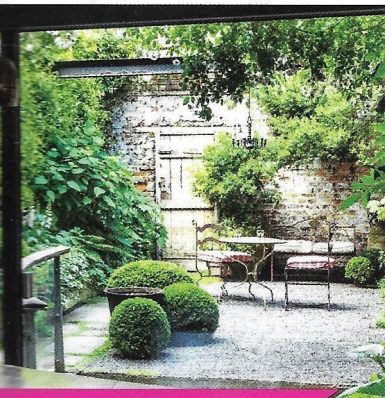
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# *“We’ve created more living space, outside!”*

**JESSICA AND CHRIS’S GARDEN** is an extension of their open-plan home and a room for all seasons

**E**ight months after moving into their home Jessica and Chris Salmanpour decided to give their garden a makeover, as they hadn’t felt inspired to use it at all.

Jessica explains: “I wanted the space to flow from inside the house out into the garden. Our house is open-plan, with no interior walls at all, and I wanted this style to continue into and through the garden to the end wall. It was also important it looked good for 90% of the year.

The couple decided that this was a job for a professional and asked five designers to come up with ideas. Four chose very symmetrical schemes. However, designer Katrina Kieffer-Wells of Earth Designs created an asymmetrical one. Jessica wasn’t sure at first, until Katrina explained her ideas. “I then realised it meant we would have different views depending on which window we looked out of, and I really liked the idea. Another clinching factor was that it used a lot of natural materials and colours,” says Jessica.

Originally, from the back door of the house there were steps leading up to the garden, so the couple called in groundworkers to remove the excess soil. This gave Katrina and her husband Matt, who project-managed the scheme, a blank canvas.

It was spring when the earth removal started and, with no access at the back of the property, everything had to be carried through the house. “The soil and all the gritty work seemed to take ages,” admits Jessica. “But once the travertine (limestone) flooring was down it was surprising how suddenly it all took shape. The pergola went up so quickly, then when the box hedging was added it looked really good.”

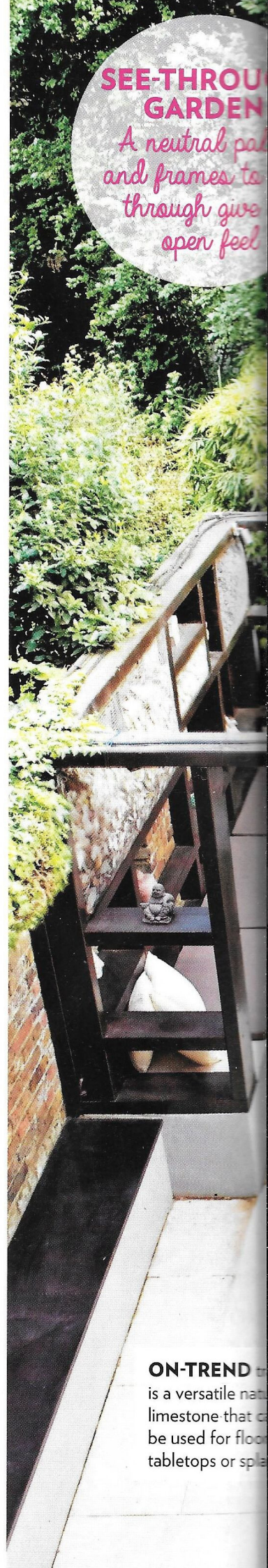
The garden has three levels: the open dining area alongside the pergola with built-in seating,



Jessica relaxes in the pergola, surrounded by things she loves, like this dreamcatcher.

## **SEE-THROUGH GARDEN**

*A neutral palette and frames to see through give an open feel*

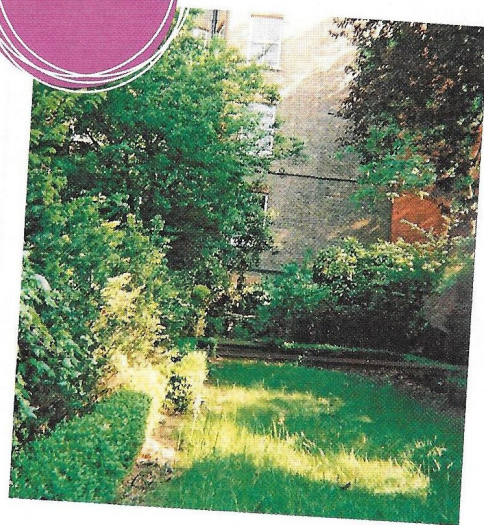


## **ON-TREND**

travertine is a versatile natural limestone that can be used for floors, tabletops or splashbacks



BEFORE



Jessica and Chris inherited a featureless grassy plot that was dark and overgrown

## OUR GARDEN PLAN

### LOCATION

"Our Victorian house in West London is open-plan and I wanted the garden to be a continuation of it. We love having friends round, so needed somewhere we could entertain up to 20 people."

### THE LOOK

A natural-style, entertaining garden

### SITE & SOIL

Size 20m x 6m (66ft x 20ft)

Faces South

Soil Loamy/clay

### OUR BUDGET

Earth removal and groundworks **£6,860**

Pergola **£3,900**

Travertine flooring **£15,000**

Seating, table, raised bed **£5,400**

Artificial grass and lighting **£4,020**

Planters, soil, buddha, cushions **£1,860**

Planting **£2,640**

**TOTAL £39,680**

### HOW LONG IT TOOK

Earth removal & groundworks **300 hours**

Pergola, flooring **370 hours**

Seating, lighting, grass **145 hours**

Planting **30 hours**

Other **50 hours**

**TOTAL 895 HOURS**  
(about 3 months)

AFTER

**1 REFLECTIVE GLASS** reduces heat loss/gain in the eco-friendly office, which is also built from sustainable red cedar.

**2 THE PERGOLA** has integrated heating, truly making it an outdoor room.

**4 WATERPROOF** seat pads make dining comfortably outside possible in all weathers.





▲ **BOX HEDGING** in an integrated raised bed behind the dining area adds all-year colour.

the upper play area for the couple's two small children, then, at the farthest end of the garden, a pre-existing home office that's constructed from eco-friendly materials such as red cedar.

"Katrina had the idea to divide the garden up with a pergola forming the seating area. I was worried it wouldn't be open-plan enough, but as the pergola is very open I still get lovely views to the end of the garden," Jessica explains.

There are panels within it filled with natural materials such as slate chippings and rounded cobbles, which add a touch of privacy. As Jessica and Chris are keen divers, Katrina's also included a panel filled with scallop shells to evoke memories of happy times spent by the sea. "I think it's important to be surrounded by nice things, as they make you feel like it's a place you want to be in," says Jessica. She loves all the natural materials, including the large tapered slate pots. "The stone is naturally iridescent and the colour changes depending on the view – in sunlight they shimmer like gold," she says.

The garden also has a natural, neutral colour scheme, which is carried through into the soft furnishings. It means Jessica can add any colour

***"It's a tranquil place and gives me a positive feeling – I love my garden"***



**SCALLOP SHELLS** catch the light and recall the couple's diving trips.

**CREATE A SENSE OF CALM**

*The natural colour scheme and loved objects create a peaceful space*

theme simply by adding brightly coloured posies.

At Christmas she turns the garden into a winter wonderland by decorating the table and shelves with frosted mini Christmas trees, hanging icicle lights from the pergola and placing silver baubles in the box hedging.

As well as entertaining up to 20 friends at a time, the Salmanpour's garden gets used on a day to day basis in all seasons. "In winter it's on with the Uggs and big coat – I love to sit out there with a hot drink," says Jessica.

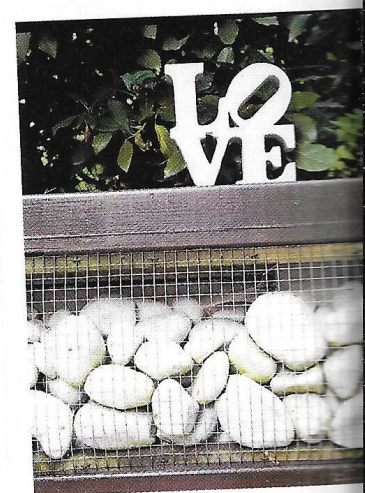
The couple also use their garden as a gym, as well as a venue for year-round cooking.

Chris says: "I love barbecuing so, whenever possible, I just start the grill and get cooking." Jessica adds: "We love eating outside, even in the winter as we have a garden heater. If it's particularly cold we'll still barbecue outside then bring the food back inside to eat. The only time we don't really use the garden is when it's raining but we're looking into having a glass roof put onto the pergola, so we can use it even in the rain."

The planting is minimal and evergreen, chosen to look good all year round. Bamboo gives the play area a feeling of a leafy oasis, formal box balls sit atop the giant up-lit slate planters, and matching box hedging runs behind the dining area in an integrated raised bed. Box

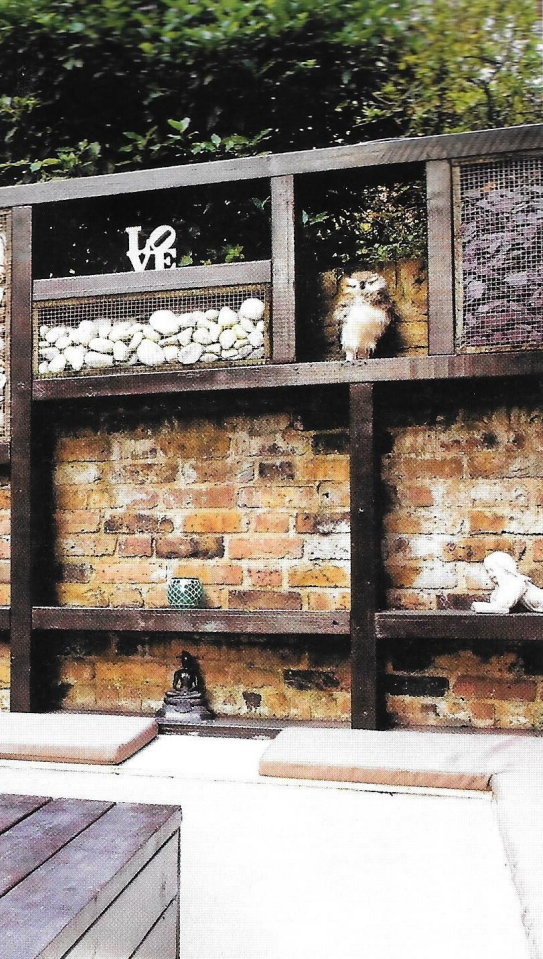
hedging also outlines the play area with artificial grass. It's low so offers a view of the house. Jessica adds: "I can see to the end of the garden. A mirror placed on a wall makes the path seem to carry on."

She continues: "We use the garden year-round. It really is like having an extra room to the house. I find it very relaxing, especially with the pergola. I love to put on some music and sit there looking up at the beautiful trees. It's a tranquil place and gives me a positive feeling. I love my garden so much!"



Filling some of the pergola's panels with white pebbles gives an element of





▲ **THE CHILDREN'S AREA**, with its play house and artificial grass, blends into the garden but is visible from all angles so the couple can keep an eye on the kids.



**DARK GLASS** windows of the home office reflect the lush bamboo and make the structure 'disappear'.

## DIY pergolas for an outdoor room



### Contemporary pergola

This comes with four ladder panels to place where you want to grow plants.  
up. £599.99 [www.worm.co.uk](http://www.worm.co.uk)



### Rowlinson Sienna wooden wall-mounted canopy

Create an extra eating area outdoors.  
£482 [www.diy.com](http://www.diy.com)



### Grange urban timber garden pergola

Perfect for entertaining, this has a screen wall and slatted roof for shade, privacy and to support plants. £499.99  
[www.internetgardener.co.uk](http://www.internetgardener.co.uk)