



Living

SPACE

BILLY CLARKE, of The London Landscaping Company, sees beyond those four walls...



Billy Clarke

We live in a world that's changing fast: communication, styles, tastes, ideas and intentions.

Our desires and needs for a life well spent are merging into a seamless, heady mix. This is the age of fusion and globalisation, and it's reinventing the way we live.

In major cities of the world, space is becoming an ever sought-after commodity. The need to define and integrate our personal space has become more prevalent in today's urban societies. It's considered, coveted, it's where we work, relax and socialise with friends and family.

The garden, now more than ever, has become an integrated part of our living space, morphing into an extension of the interior. For garden designers – especially in London – these are exciting times. The sleek, architectural interior living spaces are projected outside, bringing new ideas, materials and styles to the garden. These exterior spaces are not being lost to an extension because we feel the need to breathe the air; to connect with the outside.

The accessibility of quality garden design has never been greater, and is being embraced by all. Good design and ideas work across the board, independent of budget, from small courtyard-style gardens to big multifunctional family spaces.

Lighting is an essential feature in the modern garden, uniting the space and highlighting key features. And an important requirement for many urban gardens is low maintenance. Take this contemporary West Dulwich garden (pictured above and right), with its clean geometric lines and light Mediterranean feel. It has a very sunny aspect, especially at the rear, so there was a need for two seating areas. The Cumaru hardwood deck softens the garden, giving the interior and immediate exterior a relaxed, laidback quality. This is enhanced by soft architectural planting, with bamboos providing screening to the rear.

As a father of three young children, the garden is the place I like to be the most – just relaxing and playing with the kids, doing normal stuff. Spring is here at last, and it's going to be a great year, so let's get outside and enjoy it. ●

Billy Clarke, owner of East Dulwich-based **The London Landscaping Company**, has a background in design engineering and music. Call 020 8299 6466 or view their extensive portfolio at www.london-landscape.com

