



THE PROJECT DETAILS

MEET THE RENOVATORS

Lizzie Saunders lives here with husband Neil, a banker, and their children Sam, 17 and Joe, 14

MAKEOVER BRIEF

To redesign a tired-looking garden with a new lawn and planting, as well as an outdoor kitchen and lounge area for entertaining

• OUTDOOR MAKEOVER •

'IT'S DESIGNED FOR ENTERTAINING'

Lizzie and Neil Saunders have transformed their garden with a stunning al fresco kitchen-living room

Feature **KIRSTY MCNEIL-O'CONNOR/GAP PHOTOS** Photography **GAP PHOTOS**

CAN YOU DESCRIBE YOUR ORIGINAL GARDEN?

We've lived here for 16 years, and with a large patio and lawn it was perfect when the children were younger. It's totally flat and was easy to maintain, so all we added was play equipment but nothing else. We didn't dislike it, it was just plain and uninteresting – and as the garden is south-west facing, the patio had full sunlight all day with no shade at all.

WHAT PROMPTED THE NEW DESIGN?

The children had outgrown it, and it was looking tired with storm damage to some of the fences. Plus, after years of football and paddling pools, the lawn really needed replacing. Outdoor >

↑ CONTEMPORARY PLANTING

Year-round greenery includes neatly cut yew and cube-shaped boxwood hedging. The slender-stemmed Hornbeam *Fastigiata* trees grow in a teardrop shape and look great when lit up at night



↑ RELAXING SPOT Complete with wall lights, the slate-clad wall provides screening and makes the new space feel like an outdoor room. The tall planters filled with Silver Spear Astelia add interest

kitchens were starting to become popular and we decided that building one would give the garden a more grown-up feel, and create a space that could be used both day and night.

WHERE DID YOU BEGIN?

We searched online and, after having a few designs and quotes drawn up, we settled on Cube 1994 as their work was in keeping with the style we wanted. On meeting Sean Butler from the company, we just knew he was right for the project. The inside and outside needed to flow, so we stuck to the same monochrome colour palette for the paving and furniture that we have indoors, including the same worktop that we have in our kitchen.

CAN YOU TELL US ABOUT THE OUTDOOR KITCHEN?

Neil researched this part, and at the top of his wish list was a gas grill barbecue with a rotisserie, a black ceramic egg for slow cooking over charcoal, and an outdoor fridge. Sean suggested that a fire table would be a great addition and found us a brand that fitted our design perfectly. He also designed the frame for the kitchen. We are not on mains gas so we have gas bottles behind the garage, which feed under the patio to the table and barbecue.

AND THE REST OF THE GARDEN?

As well as a new lawn, Sean encouraged us to include some large lavender bushes to sit between the neat cubes ►



↑ WHAT'S COOKING? The couple designed the outdoor kitchen themselves to include two barbecues and a fridge, set in a bespoke frame. With a granite worktop that matches the indoor kitchen, there's also shelves for log storage



CALMING PALETTE A large cantilevered umbrella provides shade above the dining area at the rear of the house, where a monochrome scheme matches the interior

of boxus hedging. It adds some colour to the monochrome scheme, attracting bees and butterflies too. We wanted the garden to be as inviting at night as it is during the day, so good lighting was essential. We found inspiration on Pinterest and Instagram, and from looking at expensive gardens on Rightmove!

DID YOU STICK TO YOUR BUDGET?

We needed to increase it for the outdoor kitchen, as elements were more costly than we expected (mainly the granite), but that was down to design choice on our behalf,

as we wanted to add shelving. We also splashed out on the fire table, which was £2,500.

ARE YOU PLEASED WITH THE RESULT?

We love it! It feels like an extension of the house, and we cook outside from April to October now; even if it's raining we can use the egg for a long, slow cook. It's become quite social, with the family gathered on the sofas while Neil cooks, and we sit outside with drinks, music and the fire table well into the night. Luckily, we have lovely neighbours who like to join us as well! ☺



DARK FOLIAGE

With purple-green leaves that can turn black when grown in full sun, Nigrescens was planted along the path edge to contrast with the boxus and yew hedging

SHOPPING LIST Materials Beige sawn sandstone paving, from £45.60 per sqm; black slate wall cladding, £62.40 per sqm, both London Stone **Kitchen** Frame and shelving, around £3,000, Cube 1994. XP1 single outdoor fridge, £1,920, Fire Magic. For a similar bull BBQ, try the Brahma built-in gas BBQ, £3,149.99; for a similar Monolith ceramic BBQ, try the Classic BBQ Guru PRO-Series 2.0 model, £1,399, both BBQ World **Furniture** Aztec gas fire table, from £2,755, Rivelin. For similar sofas, try the Eos outdoor three-seater sofa by Case, £1,745, Heal's. For a similar dining table and chairs, try the Modena 8-seater dining set, £2,399, Furniture Village **Accessories** For similar tall black planters, try the 1.2m gloss tall flared square fibreglass planters, £181.99 each, Primrose