



outdoor space. "We really liked that it's in a small village - it's quiet here and there's lots of lovely walks right on our doorstep," says Sarah. "But we wanted a garden for entertaining. My great auntie Vera who sadly passed away, very

ENTERTAINING SPACE

The benefit of that empty newbuild plot was that it was a blank canvas, and the search for the right designers began. "We had a few companies out to have a look and asked those have a coffee in the morning or a drink in the evening," Sarah explains. "We wanted a space that we could put an egg chair in to read a book and relax. And we wanted plants that would attract bees and butterflies.



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OUR GARDEN PLAN

LOCATION West London THE LOOK Outdoor room SITE Size 15m x 15m Faces West Soil Clay

MY BUDGET

Hard landscaping £35,000 Fencing £5,000 Lawn **£800** Planting **£7,000** Lighting £4,000 Irrigation £2,000 Bespoke kitchen island £6,000 Water feature £2,000 Total: £61,800

HOW LONG IT TOOK

Hard landscaping 7 weeks Fencing 1 week Lawn 1 week Planting 1 week Lighting 1 week Irrigation 2 days Kitchen installation 2 days Water feature 2 days Total: 12 weeks

garden. "The client really wanted their garden to be an extension to the house with lots of outdoor living spaces," Sean says. "But the garden was so uneven, and we needed to address the incline towards the end before we could do anything else. We were initially going to have a split-level garden with steps, but then suggested raising the back of the garden up by using sleepers to support and adding additional earth."

LOCKDOWN BUILD

Sean worked with the couple to fine-tune the design to suit their every need. "The clients had their own egg chair and a barbecue that they were keen for us to incorporate into the design, and this required us to design and create a bespoke kitchen island," he explains.

Sarah and Nigel's input also meant that the initial design was tweaked. "It was quite a rigid square shape and we wanted a softer design with curved borders and a lawn," says Sarah.

And Covid-induced supply issues had an impact on the build too. "We had to compromise on a couple of things," adds Sarah. "We originally wanted a poured concrete worktop for the outdoor kitchen and then for it to be clad in bamboo but the designer was unable to source these. We were a little bit frustrated initially at not getting the kitchen we first envisaged and it is a bit bigger than we expected now, but overall we are really happy with how the whole design came together."

COOKING UP A STORM

The couple decided not to add any pergolas or structures to the space which creates a very large open feel so you can see every corner, no matter where you sit. "We have the outdoor kitchen in the bottom right-hand corner of the garden with a built-in barbecue and a kamado grill," explains Sarah.

'There's an under-counter fridge and a round dining table that seats six people with a parasol that can be put up on really sunny days. This

area is great for entertaining family and friends and also dining al fresco during the summer. We'll be able to use the kamado grill for slow-cooking joints during the winter months, meaning that the garden can be used all year round. Then there's a further seating area in the top left-hand corner of the garden with a corner sofa, outdoor rug and table, which is great for having friends and family over for drinks on a summer evening or enjoying a morning coffee."

A TRELLIS

MASTERPIECE

with trailing fuchsias.

A paved circle in the lawn houses that all-important egg chair. "It's great for relaxing in and reading a book," smiles Sarah.

And a water blade set into the garage wall with a slate surround and white pebbles at its base turns the dull expanse of brick into a beautiful focal point. "It's lovely to hear the water in the background," Sarah adds.

EASY-CARE PLANTING

The couple were keen to include lots of planting within the design, and Sean chose a soft palette of pinks, purples and white with some evergreen ferns mixed in for all year-round interest. The shrubs and climbers will soon mature to cover the walls and fill the borders with blooms throughout spring and summer.

Repeat planting of Lavandula angustifolia 'Munstead' in the beds next to the path and paved seating area looks fabulous against the pale porcelain tiles. And this block planting



Flowering sage, Salvia nemorosa 'Sensation White', echoes the white of the dining table, giving the whole space a contemporary feel. And a few darker tones balance these lighter hues, including winter-flowering hellebore 'Double Ellen Purple' with almost-black petals.

Climbers adorn the garage and house walls, including rose 'Gertrude Jekyll' and star jasmine, both of which will soon grow to turn these bare spaces into masses of scented blooms. Another wall is softened with a vertical display of small silver pots hung on a grey trellis, planted with trailing fuchsias and geraniums. "Prior to having the garden redesigned, we had absolutely no idea what we were doing with plants at all but

Despite the initial disappointment that their outdoor kitchen couldn't be concrete and bamboo, it looks great with similar styling to the slatted fencing. "We've hosted a few barbecues for family and friends here since the work was done, and we've had our neighbours over a couple of times for evening drinks," says Sarah.

"We have a few lights placed within the borders to highlight some key areas in the evening, and the water blade feature has a light, which is lovely. So now we can use the garden as an additional room, whether it be to entertain or to just sit out there to eat and drink, into the evenings. Our favourite spot, and the one we use the most, is the corner sofa area."



