



BEFORE

*A blank canvas ready for an injection of style and personality*

**GARDEN**  
*makeover*

*“I love to enjoy a glass of vino with friends in my new garden”*

Ferne McCann's bare newbuild Essex plot is now bursting with comfy sofas, stylish olive trees and **LOVE ISLAND VILLA VIBES**

Bronze Planters, POA,  
[tercpots.com](http://tercpots.com)



## GARDEN MAKEOVER

### SMART IDEAS TO STEAL

#### ✓ POSITION STATEMENT POTS

in your borders and resist the urge to fill them with plants!

#### ✓ MAKE A BUG HOTEL

by fixing a wooden frame to a wall and filling with logs and canes.

#### ✓ RENDER A WALL for a more modern finish.

#### THAT'S CLEVER!

*Star jasmine has been trained up diagonal steel wires*

*Thinking of fitting bifold doors? Turn to p31*

When Ferne McCann and her daughter Sunday moved into their Essex newbuild in 2019, the model, television personality and presenter couldn't wait to turn the garden into a space for outdoor living. "When I bought the house, I knew I wanted to design

the garden myself," Ferne explains. "The house was only completed on the day I got the keys, which meant the garden was left unfinished. I was happy about that though as it meant it was a blank canvas for me to design it the way I wanted it to look – there was only a patio and the rest was just mud!"

Ferne wasted no time, using Pinterest to gather inspiration for her garden design. "I wanted the space to feel calming and have different sections for sitting with friends, with a Love Island villa vibe," she explains.

She passed this vision to local garden designers Cube 1994 ([cube1994.com](http://cube1994.com)).



BEFORE



*Devoid of colour and interest, there was nothing to turn heads here*



*Ferne's new garden ticks all her boxes!*

## MY GARDEN PLAN

**LOCATION** Essex

**THE LOOK** Contemporary entertaining space

**SITE** Size 225m<sup>2</sup> **Faces** South  
**Soil** Clay

### MY BUDGET

Rear chillout adult area (glass balustrade, porcelain grey paving, firebowl) **£15,000-£20,000**  
Side area (wooden arches, polished black pebbles & boulders) **£2,500-£5,000**  
Front area (Sunday's play area, lawn, porcelain paving, fencing, daybed, waterblade) **£20,000-£25,000**  
Planting **£10,000-£15,000**  
**TOTAL: £47,000-£60,000**

### HOW LONG IT TOOK

Clearance & preparation **2 weeks**  
Hard landscaping **1 week**  
Painting **3 days**  
Planting **2 days**  
**TOTAL: 4 weeks**

**INSPIRING PEACE,**  
a simple water feature pours onto large pebbles below, recreating the sounds of a babbling brook next to the daybed.



"I'd heard a lot of people talk about Cube so I got them to come and view the garden," says Ferne. "I passed them my wish list, which included having different sections for sitting with friends, the daybed (which was important!), the festoon lighting at the back by the hot tub, and a firepit. Cube came back with their design board and it was perfect."

### ENTERTAINING SPACE

As the garden wraps around the house, the design was able to fit three seating areas to give a choice of spots to sit and relax in. The main patio houses a generous L-shaped sofa and matching benches, with a table that's perfect for dining. "I love having friends over for dinner and eating al fresco, and I have strip lighting under the steps, candles and a large gas heater for the colder evenings," says Ferne. "I recently had an Ascot party in the garden that was amazing. We had caterers, musicians and a mixologist."

Sunday's playhouse, in a matching dark-grey, is also sited here, next to the large glass windows so it can be seen from the house as well as most of the garden.

A second area, in matching porcelain paving, has a more informal vibe with a firepit and festoons strung overhead for a cosy feel. The hot tub is here too, positioned where its occupants can enjoy the view over the neighbouring field. "We use it weekly," says Ferne. "It's so nice to lay in the hot tub looking out across the field." And a daybed, built bespoke using smooth deck boards, provides the ultimate spot for relaxing.

Tying all these areas together is a monochrome colour palette and oversized, bronze Torc pots. With a colour and texture reminiscent of copper beech tree bark, these statement pots bring glamour and grandeur, creating the feel of a high-end Ibiza club. It tones with the Corten steel firepit and adds warmth to the minimal palette.

### UNINTERRUPTED VIEWS

A key point on Ferne's wish list was to make the most of the fabulous view from the plot. "The main thing I loved about the house was the field and the views," Ferne says. "My bedroom is the smaller one, but I wanted the room with the Juliet balcony to get the view each morning."

To ensure the view was uninterrupted, the designers installed a glass balustrade on the field boundary, with mature olive trees at either end to give privacy as well as a Mediterranean vibe. "I see lots of deer grazing in the fields and we even had a peacock in the front garden once!" says Ferne.

To cater for smaller wildlife, there's a bug hotel and a plethora of insect- and bird-friendly planting filling the flowerbeds. "Lots of birds visit the garden and there are loads of insects in the bug hotel," she adds. The design even incorporates steps below the wall-mounted bug hotel so it's easy for Sunday to investigate.

The contemporary, club-feel style hasn't been compromised by the child and wildlife-friendly approach, and the informal planting helps to tie the modern monochrome palette in with the lush green of the surrounding fields.



## GARDEN MAKEOVER

- 1 Luxe Lite Wrinkle Cylinder Planter – Bronze, 40 x 38cm, **£124.99** [hortology.co.uk](http://hortology.co.uk)
- 2 Corten Steel Fire Pit 60cm, **£75.99** [onbuy.com](http://onbuy.com)
- 3 Saskatoon 12 Jet Patio Spa, **£3,495** [therange.co.uk](http://therange.co.uk)
- 4 Blomus Stay Day Bed, **£699** [utilitydesign.co.uk](http://utilitydesign.co.uk)
- 5 Olive tree, **£159.95/125-150cm tall** [palmcentre.co.uk](http://palmcentre.co.uk)

*Get the look!*



**SMOOTH CURVES**  
add interest and soften the contemporary, sleek lines of the patio.

*Love this sofa but not the price? Turn to p30*

*Marutti Moon Island Sofa, £8,800, [gardenhousefurniture.com](http://gardenhousefurniture.com)*



**PERGOLA ARCHES**  
transform the side return into an inviting walkway.



**OLIVE TREES**  
flank the glass balustrade, adding to the Med feel.

### OUTDOOR LIFESTYLE

As a parent with such a busy career, Ferne employs a gardener to look after the lawned area and plants. "I would love to have the time to get into gardening but at this stage in my life I struggle to find the time. When I'm out in the garden I'm playing with Sunday or enjoying a glass of vino and dinner with friends," she says.

The garden is also a real sanctuary for Ferne. "I sometimes do my morning meditation and yoga in the garden and I love looking across the field of an evening," she says.

The project went without a hitch, and there's little Ferne would change. "I might get a path added from the patio to the garage as the shaded area gets really muddy during winter and, with a white patio and kitchen floor, I am forever cleaning the mud away!" Ferne admits. "I love the space, it's just as I had hoped. There are so many sections to enjoy and I'm having more garden gatherings now lockdown has lifted and the weather has improved. We can chill in the hot tub looking out at the deer in the field, sit around the firepit, and lay on the daybed."