

HOMES & GARDENS[®]

JANUARY 2016
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*Design experts,
from Sophie Conran
to Abigail Ahern,
share their secrets*



RECALL: 1/1/16

A DELICIOUS
FEAST FOR
FRIENDS

A warm welcome

INSIDE A LONDON TOWNHOUSE, A HAMPSHIRE RECTORY,
AN ALPINE CHALET AND A CARIBBEAN HIDEAWAY

MODERN CHARM

Strong geometric shapes, a restrained planting palette and clever design tricks give this north London garden a chic, contemporary edge



DESIGNER PROFILE Having spent 11 years as a film set designer, Sara Jane Rothwell retrained in horticulture and garden design, and set up her award-winning London design practice in 2002. Spanish horticulturist and landscape architect JoanMa Roig Ortiz joined in 2012. They designed this scheme together.

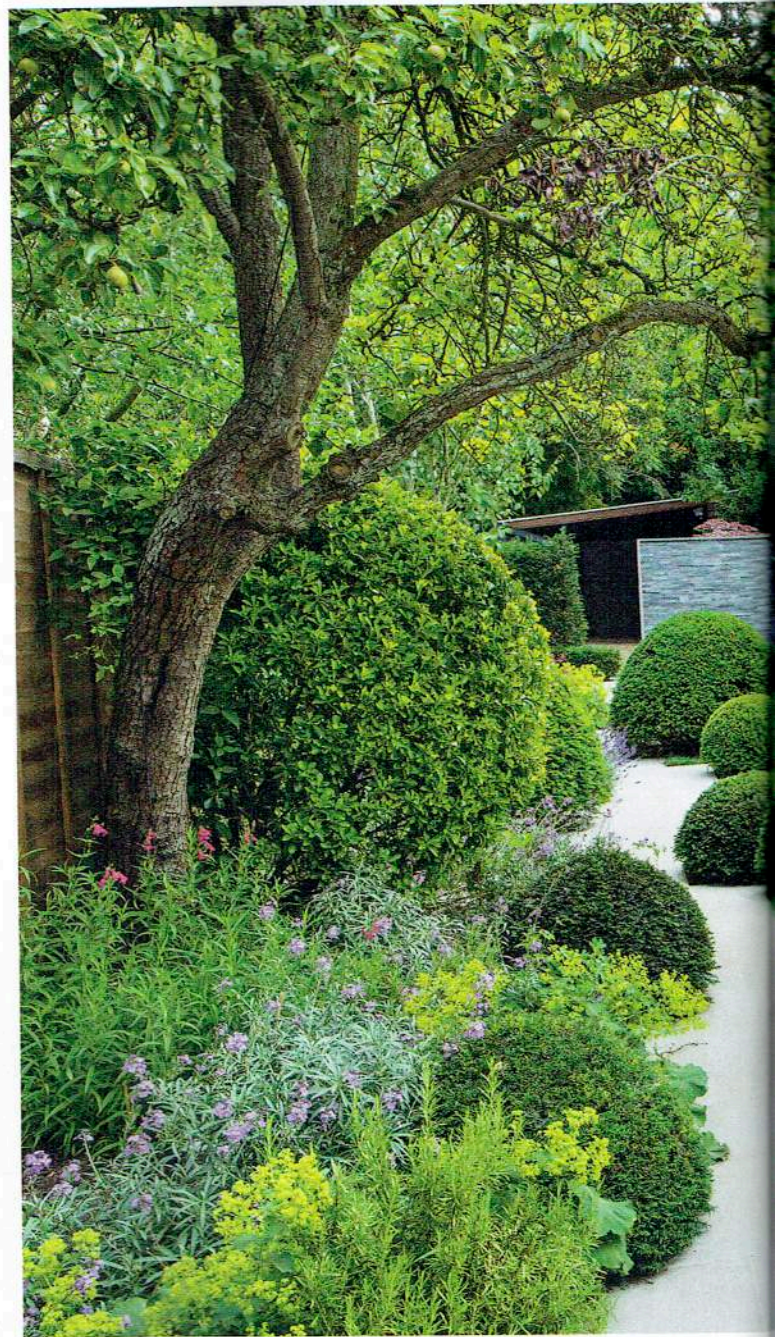
WHAT DID THE SPACE LOOK LIKE BEFORE? It was a nice garden, with mature trees and a lawn, but the client wanted something a little more exciting. It was essential for the design to include an unimpeded route between the parking spot at the bottom of the garden and the house. The car dominated the view from every angle and finding a way to disguise it proved to be our greatest challenge. The client was also keen to keep the garden's sense of maturity, an effect created by the established trees and some of the shrubs.

HOW DID YOU FULFIL THE BRIEF? We used two key design tricks to divert the eye away from the car, while also providing easy access to it. First, we made a path that is on a straight axis, but appears to be staggered due to the different widths along its length and also because it is punctuated by yew domes. As a further distraction, we constructed a feature wall in slate, with an integrated spout that pours water into a large bowl at one side. Set at a right angle to the end of path, the wall hides the car from view, while the sound and movement of the water add another layer of interest. To enhance the overall design, we used geometric shapes for the path, wall and yew, which lend a clean, crisp look, and softened the hard landscaping with a lawn and planting around the mature trees.

CAN YOU TELL US ABOUT THE PLANTING? The large trees cast dappled shade over the borders, so this determined our choice of plants. Ferns and grasses are our stalwarts for shady areas but, as the client does not like these, we opted for more traditional cottage-style planting, including *Alchemilla mollis*, hardy geraniums and *Actaea matsumurae* and euphorbia. In the sunnier areas, we used lavender, perennial wallflowers, penstemons and rosemary – soft herbaceous plants that offset the strong shapes of the yew domes. In winter, the domes and hedges offer permanent colour and structure, while the gleaming white stems of a Himalayan birch make a dramatic statement. The wallflowers, lavender and rosemary also retain their leaves throughout the year.

WHAT INFLUENCED YOUR CHOICE OF LANDSCAPING MATERIALS?

The space originally had a dark, riven slate terrace but we needed to create a sharp, bright look. We chose a sawn grey sandstone, which is slightly less porous than beige sandstones and is easier to keep clean, an important factor here as the birds and the leaves and fruit from the apple tree can make quite a mess. The slate wall and the water feature needed to work tonally with the sandstone, so we opted for a grey slate and a grey finish for the water bowl.



HOW DID YOU DESIGN THE WATER FEATURE AND IS IT EASY TO MAINTAIN?

A pump forces water from a sump tank in the bowl up through the wall, into a reservoir behind the spout and out into the bowl in a continuous circuit. The landscaper also devised a simple maintenance system: a tap inside the bowl allows the water to be drained in winter; in spring, it is easily topped up with a hose.

DO YOU HAVE ANY TIPS FOR CREATING A MODERN STYLE?

Base the scheme on a simple, asymmetrical plan, using geometric shapes for the main features, such as the lawn, borders and terrace. In this garden, the paving stones have been laid out at regular intervals in a uniform pattern, which gives the path and terrace a neater look. Also, choose a simple planting palette, and repeat the plants, as we have done with the yew domes and other cottage-style varieties.



KEY PLANTS

- 1| *Alchemilla mollis*.
- 2| *Rosmarinus officinalis* (rosemary).
- 3| *Taxus baccata* (yew domes).
- 4| *Erysimum* 'Bowles's Mauve' (perennial wallflower).
- 5| *Penstemon* 'Andenken an Friedrich Hahn'.
- 6| Apple tree.
- 7| Pear tree.
- 8| *Camellia*.
- 9| *Acer palmatum* 'Atropurpureum'.
- 10| *Skimmia japonica*.
- 11| *Hydrangea macrophylla* 'Endless Summer Pink'.
- 12| *Hebe*.
- 13| *Prunus* 'Kanzan'.
- 14| *Betula utilis* var. *jacquemontii* (Himalayan birch).
- 15| Ivy hedge.
- 16| *Anemone x hybrida* 'Honorine Jobert'.
- 17| *Penstemon* 'White Bedder'.
- 18| *Robinia pseudoacacia* 'Frisia'.
- 19| *Taxus baccata* (yew hedging).

PLANT SUPPLIERS

- The Beth Chatto Gardens.**
01206 822007.
bethchatto.co.uk.
- Jacksons Nurseries.**
01782 502741.
jacksonsnurseries.co.uk.
- Ready Hedge.**
01386 750585.
readyhedge.td.com.
- Deepdale Trees.**
01767 262636.
deepdale-trees.co.uk.
- The Palm Centre.**
020 8255 6191.
palmcentre.co.uk.

LANDSCAPING SUPPLIERS

The **terrace** and **path** are sawn grey sandstone, and the **feature wall** is clad in green slate, both London Stone, 0844 225 1915, londonstone.co.uk. **Landscaping**, Wootten Landscaping, 07887 847770, outsideedgelandscapes@gmail.com. **Water feature bowl**, Urbis, 01759 373839, urbisdesign.co.uk.

GARDEN DESIGN
London Garden Designer,
07976 155282.
londongardendesigner.com.

“
Finding a way
to hide the car
parked at the end
of the garden proved
to be our greatest
challenge.”

