



# TAILOR-MADE

Landscape designer Franchesca Watson explains how architects and landscapers can work together to create a rich synergy between home and garden for the ultimate living space

**NEVER BEFORE** have we been more aware of the interrelationship between buildings and gardens. As buildings become greener and more thoughtful, both mechanically and aesthetically, the quality of the gardens lapping against them has become far more important to us.

Gone are the days when we'd be happy with a functional house with a play and pool area close by, nice kitchen cupboards and a colourful pretty garden with a big lawn to make the husband happy. Even first-time homeowners now demand high levels of aesthetic sensitivity in tune with their aspirations about how they want to lead their lives in terms of ethics, ethnicity and spiritualism. In fact, these days most of my clients are likely to bring some kind of cosmic consciousness into our discussions regarding their gardens.

Sometimes this is expressed as a need for naturalness and wholesomeness, including all the wildlife that comes with it. Sometimes it's

about symbolism, a theme that cuts into the conceptualist sphere and can become intensely personal. And sometimes it's just a simple need for the expression of a quality such as serenity.

The architect usually gets tasked with a similar brief as the garden designer in terms of atmosphere. Therefore, it's important that architect and garden designer understand how each are going to achieve this and tailor-make the interface between garden and house in order to ensure that the theme carries through. Otherwise there can be a sort of bland zone between the house and the further reaches of the garden.

Sometimes the understanding between house and garden sits easy. But it can also be a complex area

where materials, light and views are of paramount importance and are often only finally understood nearing the end of construction. This every-man's zone obsesses me more the longer I work.

The communication and respect between an architect and garden designer is often what makes or breaks a landscaping project. The answer is obviously to involve all members of the team as early as possible, and to acknowledge that the relationships between members need to be constructive and almost intuitive. Most good designers feed off each other. So, pick your people carefully, try to express yourself well and sit back and watch the magic!

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## THE COMMUNICATION AND RESPECT BETWEEN AN ARCHITECT AND GARDEN DESIGNER IS OFTEN WHAT MAKES OR BREAKS A LANDSCAPING PROJECT



**THINK ABOUT:**  
TEXTURE AND COLOUR

- It's important to consider the way in which textures meet and interact with each other - the differing materials of the hard elements (floors and walls) against the soft

materials (lawns and plants).

- How will the colours of building materials and plants interact with each other? I believe that not enough attention is paid to this. Remember, green is not just green.

**THINK ABOUT:**  
CREATING UNITY (AND ADDING A FEW SURPRISES)

- Bulking can create balance. If you have a large terrace, the corresponding plantings can't be unobtrusive and ineffective.
- Details are key. For example, the way that the horizontal paving

meets the walls - maybe this needs detailing with a tiny strip of planting.

- There should also be a few surprises. A buoyant bougainvillea suddenly appearing over a wall or a grid in the terrace with planting beneath that you can walk over are ideal for creating points of interest.

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