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Outdoors Homes & Property



Right: the colour and cut outs were inspired by a Fifties poster

Left: red-hot pokers, geum and cotinus pick up the vibrant shade of the wall



With inspiration rooted firmly in the Fifties, this garden is chic, contemporary and cool

Photographs:
Marianne Majerus

Orange rocks in this Mad Men design

WITH PERSPEX bubble chairs, sizzling orange walls and a plunge pool, this small urban garden has a contemporary edge, yet its roots are firmly in the Fifties.

The Mid Century Modern garden, dreamed up by design duo Susan Willmott and Adele Ford, won gold as well as best in category of the low cost, high impact gardens at this year's Hampton Court Flower Show.

Ford confesses to a Mad Men habit and Willmott has a hankering for her parents' era, so they decided to take the bold graphics and vibrant colour from a Fifties advertising poster and run with it.

"We translated those clean, circular shapes and key colours of the time – orange and grey – into a garden design, altering the proportions to suit the space, which is just 42 square metres," explains Willmott.

"We wanted to show how it is possible to divide even a small garden into two separate areas without cramping them, so we used the circular motif for a moongate in a bright orange wall. On

Pattie Barron



one side, the main part of the garden, we created a dining area and plunge pool and on the other side, a shadier, more intimate seating area of two bubble chairs that, made of see-through Perspex, don't clutter the landscape.

"One chair is suspended from the moon gate to face the other, which is on a stand and can swivel around."

Made of rendered blockwork, the wall has Fifties-style open shelving that affords enticing glimpses of the view beyond and displays a trio of succulents in containers, which can be changed seasonally.

Using an accent colour of grey, Willmott and Ford designed a solid party fence as well as a slim, linear slatted canopy to provide dappled shade over the iconic Saarinen dining table and chairs. The long, lean shape of the canopy is echoed in the granite plank paving, and the coping around the edge

of the pool, in lighter grey granite, was cut to shape to deliver a crisp edge.

With a bold design like this, the planting needs to be equally dramatic, says Willmott. "We also wanted to capture the exuberance and lushness of Great Dixter's tropical garden, which we both love. That garden is tiny, but it shows perfectly how, in a small garden, bigger leaves create a bigger overall impression."

FOR large-leaved foliage, they brought in *Fatsia japonica*, *Geranium maderense*, deep red *Rodgersia* and dark garnet *Cotinus Grace*, as well as a silvery *Melianthus major*, to cool things down a little. The orange wall colour is picked up with three kinds of geum ranging from apricot to rust – *Prinses Juliana*, *Tangerine Dream* and *Koi* – as well as the flat, rust-coloured flower-heads of *Achillea Walter Funcke*.

Against the wall, the white blooms of *agapanthus* and the dark chocolate leaves of elder *Sambucus Black Lace* make a striking contrast.

That hot orange is perfect for summer days, but is it a good choice for the rest

of the year? Says Willmott: "It's such an upbeat, joyful colour and one that works well not just with summer planting but autumnal tones, too. And orange is a good foil for grey, so pitched against our grey skies, I reckon it's a great choice. To look out on to that vibrancy on depressing, grey, winter days would be wonderful."

GET THE LOOK

The garden, minus furniture and designer fees, cost £15,000 to create; call in the design team on willmottford.com. **Garden** built by outdoorcreations.co.uk; **perspex bubble chairs** from bubblechairsdirect.co.uk; **white Saarinen Tulip table and chairs**, vertigo-interiors.co.uk; **orange paint** Crown's Seville Orang; **grey woodstain** Urban Slate from Cuprinol's Garden Shades range, and **paving** from rock-unique.com

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For Pattie Barron's gardening blog, visit homesandproperty.co.uk/blogs



In the swing: Perspex bubble chairs make relaxing retro seats

See it buy it

See it: sculpture in the garden

VISIT Godinton House Gardens, Ashford, Kent, this weekend to see an exhibition of outdoor sculptures, presented against a backdrop of formal and wild gardens.

You can admire – or buy – Guy Portelli's 7ft-high stainless steel horse at full gallop, Michael Kusz's quirky copper heron or Wendy Love Hinds's stoneware hare. Prices range from £85 to £18,000 for sculptures of fused glass, ceramics, wood, bronze and other metals, from leading as well as local artists. Exhibition runs to August 18. Gardens are open from 2pm to 5.30pm daily; entry is £5 for adults, children free. For more info, see godinton-house-gardens.co.uk

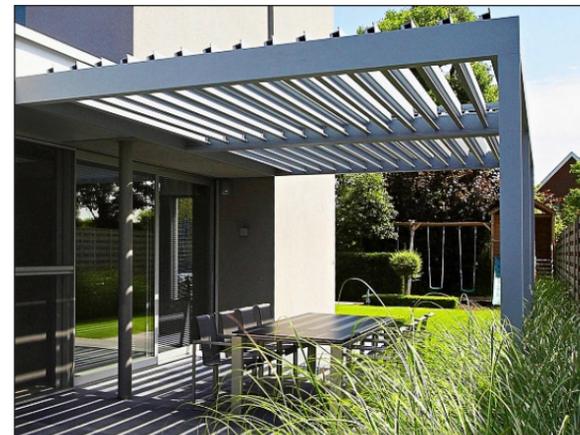


Stoneware hare: charming sculpture by Wendy Love Hinds

Buy it: contemporary canopy

WEATHERPROOF your patio or terrace with a sleek aluminium covering that will provide sun protection as well as a waterproof roof system. The blades along the canopy rotate 150 degrees to provide cooling ventilation when it's hot, or drain off rainwater sideways into a gutter on wet days.

Renson's terrace coverings can be fitted free-standing, attached to an outside wall or built into an existing opening. And for year-round use, they can be equipped with wind-resistant screens and sliding glass doors or panels. Extras include lights, heating elements and flat panel speakers. For details and prices, see gardenhousedesign.co.uk



Cool cover: new roof system adapts to suit the weather