



# ESCAPE TO THE GARDEN IN STYLE

**Katrina Kieffer-Wells**, MSGD from the award-winning Earth Designs, based in Leigh-on-Sea, on how to create a dramatic landscape in a small space...

## The brief

Our busy clients had a small, shady garden with existing decking. They wanted a glamorous and exciting outside space to entertain that required as little maintenance as possible. And it had to deliver on drama and colour all year round.

## A touch of luxury

As usual, I found design inspiration in creative details, exhibitions and artwork I'd seen and admired. I'd recently discovered a series of vintage promotional posters for the cruise liners of the Twenties and Thirties. Their high gloss surfaces and rich colours oozed luxury and style. Inspired by their splendid design, I chose sleek perspex screens and brightly painted walls to set the stage for this garden of drama and delight.



## The illusion of space

A painting by Bronwen Sleight, "Jinja Road Study", inspired the garden layout. Repeating squares within squares to extend and unify the space and incorporate the existing deck.

## Colour and scale

Remembering an exhibition of gothic photographs by Tim Walker at the V&A and his playful use of scale, I added a series of giant, orange planters for colour and spectacle.

## Texture

Contrasting materials can create direction and excitement. So by placing smooth surfaces



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like porcelain tiles and planters alongside knobbly cobbles, rough decking and pointy palms, I could make pathways and define zones.

## The result

Like the ocean liners that inspired it, this garden allows you to entertain and relax in luxurious style, against a dramatic landscape of exotic colours and rich textures.

## GET THE LOOK

It's hard to plant year-round colour in a small garden. So use accessories like planters, wall paint, wall panels and cushions instead to add pops of colour. And match inside colours, outside, to harmonise the spaces.

There's no such thing as a zero maintenance garden, but you can make

choices to minimise the amount of work it needs. Choosing shrubs instead of herbaceous perennials, and evergreens over deciduous varieties, for instance, will avoid falling leaves. Long flowering blooms will reduce the need for dead-heading. And drought-tolerant plants or irrigation systems will mean less watering.

**Earth Designs is an award-winning garden design and landscaping company. They're members of the British Association of Landscape Industries and the Association of Professional Landscapers.**

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