

Living

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APRIL 2021 • HOMES & INTERIORS • PEOPLE & PLACES • FASHION & BEAUTY • FOOD & DRINK • COMPLIMENTARY

25

Local firms fighting back post-pandemic

ALFRESCO DINING

Where to get your foodie fix from April 12

COLCHESTER CHIC

Home style with Samantha Morpew

DANBURY DELIGHT

Through the keyhole at £3.95m Dane Court

Inside
ARTS & CULTURE
FOOD & DRINK

READY STEADY RYLAN

Stanford-Le-Hope star's tasty new gig

Exclusive

LOCKDOWN LEE

Southend's Mr Mead on seafront walks with his girl



GARDEN GROW-HOW!

Escape to your own backyard...Leigh-on-Sea-based garden designer **Katrina Kieffer-Wells** reveals how to find sanctuary in your garden

Switching-off is essential to our well-being. From lying on the beach, to reading a book by the pool or being pampered at the spa, we all need time to rest and recharge. Sadly, holidays and spa days tend to be few and far between. But turn your garden into a secret sanctuary and you could have that feeling of rest and relaxation on-tap all year round.

Gardens are good for your health

Fresh air and time outdoors are proven to boost physical and emotional well-being. Your garden is your own personal oasis. A convenient (and free!) place to exercise, relax and unwind. With selective planting and a few clever design details, you can have your own private retreat to soothe the mind, body and soul whenever you need it.

Quiet spots and active zones

When designing gardens I often create zones, separating areas for being sociable and active, or quiet and alone. Make the most of all your garden has to offer by carving out space for different activities. For your quiet spot, choose somewhere away from the house and get more privacy by surrounding it with screens or tall plants. Install a bench or garden seat, or invest in a cocoon chair to lull yourself into tranquillity. Leave other spaces open for sports and physical activity, with a sociable seating and eating area for when you want company.



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Grow your own well-being

Calm the senses by filling your garden with soothing sensory experiences. Tall flowering plants and grasses encourage wildlife and make hypnotic sounds and shapes. Water features similarly inspire feelings of relaxation, while the sweet scent of plants like lavender and jasmine can transport your mind to faraway places.

Take care of your garden and it will take care of you

Caring for your garden is mentally and physically rewarding. A spot of digging or weeding is great exercise and helps to relieve the stress of work and family life. And there is

huge gratification in growing things, whether you stick to plants in pots or try fruit and veg. So make time to get your hands dirty. You’ll feel fitter and happier and experience the joy of seeing your garden come to life.

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

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