

## SMART IDEAS TO STEAL

- ✓ **TRANSFORM A WALL** with fragrant star jasmine.
- ✓ **BRIGHTEN A SILL** with a pretty windowbox.
- ✓ **PLANT THYME** among pavers.

## GARDEN makeover

Want a  
showstopper  
wall too?  
Turn to p32

Shadow Diffusion  
Hanging Lamp,  
£197.99,  
[heat-outdoors.co.uk](http://heat-outdoors.co.uk)

BelleVue range in  
Willow Green  
& Anthracite,  
[fermob.com](http://fermob.com)

A THRILLING FROTH  
of *Erigeron karvinskianus*  
'Lavender Lady' and lily turf  
spills from a windowbox.

Firedstone Paving  
in Fired Yorkstone,  
£45.09/m<sup>2</sup>,  
[marshalls.co.uk](http://marshalls.co.uk)

Buff Gravel,  
£122.35/10-14m<sup>2</sup>,  
[cedstonelondon.co.uk](http://cedstonelondon.co.uk)



# *“We’ve brought sunshine to this grey & dreary garden”*

Idil Elveris Faro and David Faro’s London plot has been turned from a bare expanse into a lush and low-maintenance **MEDITERRANEAN OASIS**

When Idil and David decided to renovate the garden of their Victorian terrace home in London four years ago, they wanted a stylish outdoor space that would match up to the loveliness on the other side of the fence. “Kensal Green feels like a proper neighbourhood,” Idil explains. “It’s up on a slight hill without any tall buildings and, when the sun shines, it really shines and the place feels warm.” But a good-looking garden in which to enjoy that sunshine was a far cry from the bare plot they had. “The garden was all paved in stone and had served in part as a parking space for the previous owners,” she recalls.

Initially, resources had been concentrated on improving the house – the garden, with its paving and artificial grass, needed little tending to. But with a new kitchen extension built, the couple soon realised that the L-shaped plot that wraps around the house could offer much, much more. “We noticed that, while we spent most of our time physically inside the house, we would often be looking outside because of the glass doors, and both the kitchen and dining room have so many windows. But we were looking at brown and grey stones with a fake grass lawn!” remembers Idil. “It lacked a coherent theme and, simply, wasn’t nice!”

## CHILDHOOD MEMORIES

And so the couple began to dream of a beautiful space for outdoor living. Both Idil and David hail from Istanbul, Turkey, and longed for the sights and scents of their childhood. “I wanted to capture some of the feel, look and smells of the places I grew up in,” explains Idil.

An online search by postcode on the Society of Garden Designers website ([sgd.org.uk](http://sgd.org.uk)) took her straight to the person who could turn that dream into a reality, and Idil wasted no time in contacting her. “I found Maitanne Hunt Gardens & Landscapes and felt that a French woman who knows the Mediterranean climate would grasp what we were looking for. The Aegean region where we grew up is similar to the Mediterranean region, just drier,” Idil says.

“I have a passion for anything Aegean. In Turkey, the western part of the country is on the Aegean Sea with the most beautiful bays, beaches, little towns and farming areas with lovely vegetation and great history. Many people have summerhouses in the region and we have spent time there in the summers since our childhood.”

With gardening in her blood, Idil fell in love with the idea of capturing this magic in her own garden. “Some of my family are farmers in the Black Sea and also botanists



BEFORE

*A disconnected jumble of dull slabs and faux grass ready to be turfed out!*



AFTER

*A seamless flow of light paving and gravel lead the way around the space*





Idil & David enjoy their own slice of paradise every time they step outdoors

## OUR GARDEN PLAN

**LOCATION** London

**THE LOOK** Modern Mediterranean

**SITE Size** Shady side alley 12 x 2.6m; main

garden 7 x 7.5m **Faces** North-east

**Soil** Imported topsoil

### OUR BUDGET

Clearance & ground works **£7,400**

Paving & installing planting pockets

**£5,500** Sleeper steps **£1,000**

Trellis installation **£6,600**

Pergola **£4,000**

Brickslot drain **£1,200**

Climbers & tension wire **£1,340**

Irrigation system **£1,900**

Border prep & planting **£3,800**

Mulch **£496** Snagging **£3,200**

Plants & trees **£4,400**

Lighting & electrics **£3,900**

Furniture **£2,900**

Water feature **£300**

Pots **£1,120**

Windowboxes **£400**

Patio hanging lamp heaters **£420**

**TOTAL: £49,876**

### HOW LONG IT TOOK

Clearance & groundworks **5 days**

Paving & installing planting pockets

**5 days** Sleeper steps **2 days**

Trellis installation **2 days**

Pergola **1 day**

Brickslot drain **2 days**

Climbers & tension wire installation

**2 days** Irrigation system **1 day**

Border prep & planting **5 days**

Mulching **1 day**

Finishing **1 week**

**TOTAL: 1 month**

known in Turkey for collecting or developing new species of trees – blue pines, all colours of magnolias and golden cedars,” she adds.

### HOT HOT HOT!

Having listened to Maitanne's ideas and seeing how passionate and dedicated she was, they knew they'd chosen well, and the designer got to work. “She has a very good eye and a great sense of gusto, she was patient and tireless,” says Idil. And the brief was clear – a stylish low-maintenance garden crammed full of the trees and aromatic plants that evoked the hot dry landscape Idil and David loved and knew so well. “Colours and vegetation that were reminiscent of the Aegean region were top of our list,” explains Idil. “We wanted lemon and olive trees, grape vines, wonderfully scented jasmine, and cypress trees.”

Fulfilling the brief was far from straightforward though. “The plot is north-east facing so it has a lot of shaded areas, which meant planting a hot Mediterranean-style garden was a challenge,” explains Maitanne. “So we utilised colour to give the impression of a Mediterranean terrace instead, laying pale slabs, adding light-toned gravel, and placing terracotta pots with citrus, lavender, rosemary and other evocative plants where they could get the most sun. That simple choice of pale paving and gravel injected light into a largely shaded area and gave the impression of a hot climate.”

All this paving was a big factor in the necessary budget increase. “We did not intend to change all the existing stonework to start with,” says Idil, “but we couldn't create the effect we wanted if we did not spend more. The slabs have made all the difference, to have such a light colour when it's grey and rainy.”

Laid in an informal pattern amid gravel, the hard surfaces have been softened with sporadic mounds of low-growing thyme, bringing a glorious splash of colour and fragrance.

### AEGEAN OASIS

Adding to the lushness is a fence covered with vigorous star jasmine, an evergreen climber with superbly fragrant flowers in mid to late summer. Supported by a 13m run of trellis, 90cm high, it's an impressive sight and the glossy leaves also make the most of the light in this shady plot.

“The jasmine smells so nice, we sometimes hear people passing by on the other side of the fence discussing it,” says Idil. The climber is underplanted with hellebores, who are happy in the shade and keep this area blooming in winter.

Maitanne had other solutions to ensure the shady situation didn't interfere with the clients' wish for a Med-style garden. “The beds are often in fairly deep shade, so we had to adapt our planting plan, using plants that can tolerate shade better than the more commonly used Mediterranean plants,” she explains. “And anything that wouldn't thrive in the shaded beds – santolinas, rosemary and *Convolvulus cneorum* – were planted in colourful glazed pots. We also arranged large terracotta pots planted with lemon and olive trees near the seating areas, to

**SLEEK BLACK SLATS** add privacy while still letting in light, blend into the background and make the greenery pop.

Luxembourg range in Willow Green, fermob.com



act as focal mini-groves to evoke a sun-soaked Mediterranean veranda.”

Privacy was an issue as this is a corner house at the end of a terraced row, so the trees were planted to the east and north to give a sense of privacy in this relatively small space without blocking the precious sunlight. “The trees instantly transported the clients to hotter climes, as well as offering much needed height and privacy,” adds Maitanne. “And these were underplanted with a mix of free-flowering plants such as geraniums, salvias, anemones, euphorbias and *Erysimum* ‘Bowles's Mauve’, with a palette of blues, mauves and bronzes.”

### A SPACE TO RELAX

The design divides the plot into three areas, each offering a space for outside living. A small seating zone with a bistro table and chairs sits directly outside the bifold doors, providing the ideal spot for a quick break. “It's perfect for simple morning pleasures like coffee,” says Idil.

A larger area with a sofa and chairs provides plenty of room for relaxing and hosting guests, while a dining zone, clearly demarcated with a black pergola hung with pendant heaters, nestles by the side of the house.

The final touch is a water feature. “The sound of water soothes the soul,” says Idil. “We liked the water fountains seen in Ottoman architecture, and in Turkey they can be seen in houses, on streets and in mosques too. But they were very expensive so in the end we opted for a Moroccan one – it's really completed the area where we sit around the coffee table.”



## GARDEN MAKEOVER

*Treat yourself to weatherproof furniture, p29*

**MAKING THE MOST** of the narrow space at the side of the house with an illuminated heated dining area.

**SWIMMING IN THE** soothing sounds of a mini water feature, the patio is a paradise of relaxation.

Although there is plenty of lighting in the garden, the couple don't use their outside space much once dusk falls. "Instead, we turn the lights on from the inside and enjoy, as much of the pleasure comes from merely watching the garden from various locations in the house," says Idil. "Sometimes we just open the door to the garden and turn on the water feature to listen to the sound of water. Or when we are in our home offices, we take a break and look at the garden from above and just love it. And when we hear the sound of singing birds, we are so happy. It is like a paradise now. We catch ourselves staring out at the garden with a smile on our faces.

"This experience has made us so much more aware of nature, and of life in general, but has also added to the value of the house as well.

*Watson the cat approves of the upgraded outdoor space!*

"Now we relax by watering and spotting changes in the colour of the plants and flowers! And we ate the grapes from our own vine in the summer, which was priceless."

**PLANT HEAVEN**

Low-maintenance meets lovely with garden designer Maitanne's clever choice of pretty easy-grow plants...



Star jasmine



*Euphorbia amygdaloides robbiae*



Creeping thyme



*Erigeron karvinskianus 'Lavender Lady'*



Geranium 'Rozanne'