

TUSCAN RETREAT

COURTYARD GARDEN

CAROL BRIDGES

AT HEATHFIELD FARM, SURREY, TUSCAN
FLAVOUR MEETS CONTEMPORARY STYLE

This courtyard garden in Surrey was originally part of a small farm on heathland. It was square in essence and private, although on quite an uneven downward slope towards the kitchen on the opposite side to the entrance.

The garden was to be for relaxing in, dining, sitting, reading and occasional sunbathing. The Reigate stone walling and the beams of the 18th Century barn added much character to the space.

The required style by Carol Bridges' clients was that of a Tuscan-type courtyard but more contemporary in style to match the interior style of the barn. The client had already bought two olive trees with this in mind, which were to be incorporated within the design, and wished to include a hot tub, a water feature of some description, a pergola and potentially a freestanding fire within a limited space.



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Design

The simplicity of the design was important. Carol incorporated three different levels to accommodate the tricky downward slope and wide forward-facing steps from the highest entrance level.

The planting was to be low maintenance with an evergreen base, incorporating ferns, hellebores, *Miscanthus* and *Anemanthele lessoniana* grasses, paired with the acid greens of various euphorbias. Purple and whites feature too, including veronicastrum, salvias, geraniums and verbena, with pots of herbs dotted around.

The hard landscaping preference was for a mixture of two or three materials. Carol used a subtly coloured limestone from London Stone in 'Jura Grey', Millboard composite decking board in a warm, red-tinged 'Golden Oak'. Rusted-looking, Corten-like fibreglass surrounds the planters, again with Millboard composite board edging which then served as extra seating.

Carol wanted the Olive trees to be planted into the ground so that they had a better chance of survival. She incorporated square planters into the geometric design that the levels and the square courtyard seemed to demand. Although built in concrete blocks, the Corten-like fibreglass surrounding sides were made by Livingreen Design, as were the freestanding planters.

Carol and her clients decided against the idea of a built-in fire as the client already had some freestanding fire bowls which they could move to wherever they were needed. Carol designed a bench to accommodate fire wood underneath in its place.

A bespoke freestanding steel pergola was designed, powder-coated in Lichen green, creating an eye-catching vertical element with a removable shade to create a beautiful dining area on the deck. The pergola was constructed by Harrod Horticultural, manufactured from 75mm x 75mm x 3mm thick steel box sections, discreetly joined with stainless steel fixings and supplied with welded base plates to be fixed to concrete foundations beneath the deck.

The steel has been hot-dip galvanised for a long-lasting, durable finish. It also has a marine grade material sun shade which is removable and clicks into the frame when required. Lighting was quite subtle, using existing older style wall lights combined with new inlaid deck and paving lights. Spike lights illuminate the Olive trees and ►



PROJECT DETAILS

Project value

£40,000
(including hot tub and excluding Olive trees)

Build time

6 weeks

Size of project

90m²



- 1 Kitchen view of courtyard
- 2 Outdoor dining area on central deck
- 3 Dogs on deck and Corten planters in background
- 4 Top balcony with framed birch
- 5 Water feature with evergreen-based planting
- 6 Loungers on lower terrace

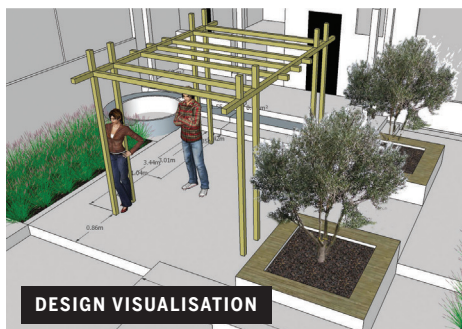
were used within the planting. Candles and lanterns provide even more atmosphere to this smaller space.

The courtyard provides various areas of sun, shade or shelter as required. Whether it's a dip in the hot tub, or the simple sounds of trickling water or bees just outside the kitchen door, this secluded space relaxes and satisfies the senses of Carol's professional clients.

ABOUT CAROL BRIDGES

Carol re-trained at Merrist Wood after working in television documentary production and has been practicing for 10 years as a garden designer in Surrey/Sussex region. She has designed contemporary and more traditional projects large and small. She leans towards naturalistic planting but responds creatively to the needs of individual clients. Carol enjoys the sense of cohesion that a design can bring in combining hard and soft landscaping.

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REFERENCES

Designer

Carol Bridges

www.carolbridges.co.uk

Landscaper

Rice & Co.

leericeco@gmail.com

www.riceofreigate.co.uk

Dura Limestone Paving

Millboard decking at London Stone

www.londonstone.co.uk

Corten-like fibreglass planter

surrounds and freestanding planters

Livingreen Design

www.livingreendesign.com

Plants

North Hill Nursery

and **Evergreen Exterior**

www.northhillnurseries.co.uk

www.evergreenext.co.uk

Lighting

Landscapeplus

www.landscapeplus.com

Dining Table

Alexander Rose/Dining Chairs: Devane

www.alexander-rose.co.uk

Corten water feature

Halton Corten Steel Waterfall planter

www.primrose.co.uk

Bespoke Contemporary Pergola Gazebo

Harrod Horticultural

www.harrodhorticultural.com