

Tranquil Modernity

A visit to the inspirational Chelsea Flower Show in London, was all it took to convince County Antrim couple Bobby and Bernie to undertake a bold and exciting project at their home on the picturesque Antrim Coast.

Inspired by the clean lines and bold use of materials in the show gardens at the Chelsea Flower Show, Bobby and Bernie decided to create their own outdoor room. They wanted a place where they could escape to and relax in peace and quiet, yet also have the 'wow' factor for entertaining.



PHOTOGRAPHY BY KEVIN COOPER



'We wanted a special garden and went to the Chelsea Flower Show for some ideas,' says Bobby. 'After the show we knew exactly what we wanted, but it was too much for us to plan. So, we contacted landscape designer, Kevin Cooper, who came up with an amazing garden plan that captured everything we wished for and more, much more!'

Turning dreams into reality is always challenging, and while a cutting edge, contemporary project such as this begins in the imagination, it takes the vision and know-how of a landscape designer to bring it to life. 'No matter how good the idea is, it takes a dedicated team of professionals to turn it into reality, people who share the pride and the passion,' comments Kevin Cooper.

1 Clean lines and bold use of contrasting colours and natural materials are the key to success in this garden. The sharp and cool silver granite paving being gently warmed by the gorgeous hardwood wailing, while the fascinating wall of interwoven slate sourced from Islandstone in London and the sleek polished sculpture add a real depth with their tones. **2** With an all glass front, the summer house nestled on the upper tier of the garden, provides the perfect bolt-hole to escape to and savour this exciting garden. The comfortable sofas, music system and outdoor infra-red heaters mean this outdoor lounge can be enjoyed all year round, no matter what the Irish climate. **3** At the heart of this garden design is the amazing water feature. The large pool gives the space a lovely calm and tranquil feel, while the spectacular waterfall mysteriously appearing from the woven slate wall provides a real sense of drama and life. The sculptural feature of polished stone erupting from the water creates the central focal point which can be savoured from every part of the garden. While the bold stepping stone path crossing the pool takes the couple within touching distance of the waterfall.

On this project Kevin worked alongside craftsman, Trevor Ford and his team from the landscape company Hardscape, who undertook the whole project construction and completed it to a high standard.

'Much gratitude and respect must go to Trevor and his team, who had the skill and the patience to stick with me as we pushed the boundaries on this scheme,' adds Kevin.

To compensate for the severe slope of the original site, Kevin designed a series of split level terraces, creating several user-friendly spaces, or 'rooms' where the couple could enjoy the garden at different times of the day.

'By creating several different rooms within the garden, we were able to develop a real feeling of space and depth at the same time as delivering a sense of intimacy,' he explains. He goes on to say, 'It was very satisfying to take some simple, natural materials and give them a contemporary twist.'

Whether it be a quiet coffee with a book or a large family gathering, this garden now caters for all of Bobby and Bernie's needs.

Below A bold 45-degree diagonal design was used to maximise the feeling of space in this relatively small and narrow garden, with three different levels of terracing removing the severe slope.

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