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in[sight]

In keeping with the exterior events taking place this month, Inex interviews Landscape Designer Christian Preaud

ex[rated]

With the Chelsea Flower Show in all our calendars this month, Inex previews the show, highlighting what to expect this year

in[spire]

Vintage Matters has given a new lease of life to vintage pieces selected for PR agency Citizen based in London

ex[pose]

A look at the Baker Street Boys' design for THE LINE coffee table, inspired by the industrial revolution and 19th century London



Image © St George PLC 2012

External spaces can add significant value to lifestyle

The world is changing more rapidly than ever before. Technology is at the forefront driving these changes, but interestingly, what's changing the most is people's reactions to the lifestyle. Here, Patricia Fox, Founder of award-winning landscape architects Aralia, explains some of the key trends within the industry, and how to maximise external spaces.



In landscape terms, this means that in the commercial world clients are now looking to provide an ever improving experience for their clients. With private clients, expectations are not just for gardens or terraces that look great; the space has to really deliver on an experiential level.

Roof terraces

As a specialist landscape design practice, we have been involved in the design of many roof terrace gardens and we have definitely seen a major uplift in the activity on roof terraces over the last three years,

both here in London and abroad. Outdoor space is of a real premium in city centres and urban settings and the addition of a beautifully designed roof terrace will have significant impact on the return on investment.

St George (Berkley Homes Group) commissioned us in the summer of 2012 to design a series of penthouse roof terraces for their prestigious mixed-use development at Chelsea Creek, London. At the time, London was in the depths of a recession and property was generally pretty hard to shift. Aralia were given an open brief to design and deliver some truly amazing, original roof terrace

Top: St George commissioned Aralia to design a series of penthouse roof terraces for its prestigious development Chelsea Creek
Above right: Patricia Fox is the Founder of Aralia Landscape Architects

designs which included features such as outdoor kitchens, outdoor fireplaces, automated pergola structures, water features, bespoke art (original paintings on glass and bespoke sculptures), green walls and lush abundant planting.

Roof terraces generally up until this time comprised mainly paving or decking and some planters. The twist in the trend was to offer a much fuller experience to the end user, not just a swanky looking roof terrace, but a usable space which was cleverly arranged to also work well on multiple levels; as an external space for entertaining >>

Right: Aralia has seen a major uplift in the activity on roof terraces over the last three years, both in London and abroad

Below: Outdoor space is of a real premium in city centres and urban settings and the addition of a beautifully designed roof terrace will have significant impact on the return on investment

Far right: Interior gardens are the next major worldwide trend

Below right: Westlands is a new private residence incorporating an ultra-modern home; cutting-edge glass and stone, with floating linear blocks hovering above the spaces below



larger groups, somewhere to relax with a few friends, intimate spaces for solo reflection, somewhere to cook and finally, a private space to enjoy the hot tub. Clients were then purchasing a lifestyle, not just a penthouse apartment. This is the essence of what great landscape design is currently about.

Large landscape schemes

This translates equally well into larger landscape schemes, whether it be within the hospitality sector or for a private estate. The end user is now expecting a broader, more in-depth experience.

As an example, a recent project we have been working on, Westlands, was for a new private residence incorporating an ultra-modern home; cutting-edge glass and stone with floating linear blocks hovering above the spaces below. Aralia designed a rustic contemporary woodland of silver birch and angular oversized granite boulders for the owners to drive through as a journey for them to take every day on entering their property.

We could have just designed a more direct drive leading directly to their entrance (which was the brief we were originally given), but we chose to maximise the experience for the clients. On the south side of the property, glass extends full width across the home, the clients asked us to omit the obligatory terrace, so as to retain the open aspect with no interruption.



Image © Aralia 2014

Image © Aralia 2012

We understood our client's concerns, but felt that they needed the option of a usable terrace close to the house, in reality they weren't going to walk extensively to the far terrace for a quick morning tea. We didn't want them to lose out on that opportunity for an experience in the garden. Our response was to design a sunken terrace, immediately adjacent the glass expanse. This was hugely practical due to its proximity to the house, whilst still retaining the open views – and, more importantly, providing a beautiful secluded space, with an incredibly intimate feeling, that will provide the client with somewhere very unique to sit. Unexpected, but now hugely anticipated by the client (landscape is still in the build stage) this terrace we believe will become a real favourite external space for the clients.

It's not just about adding features, yes these are important, but full consideration and focus

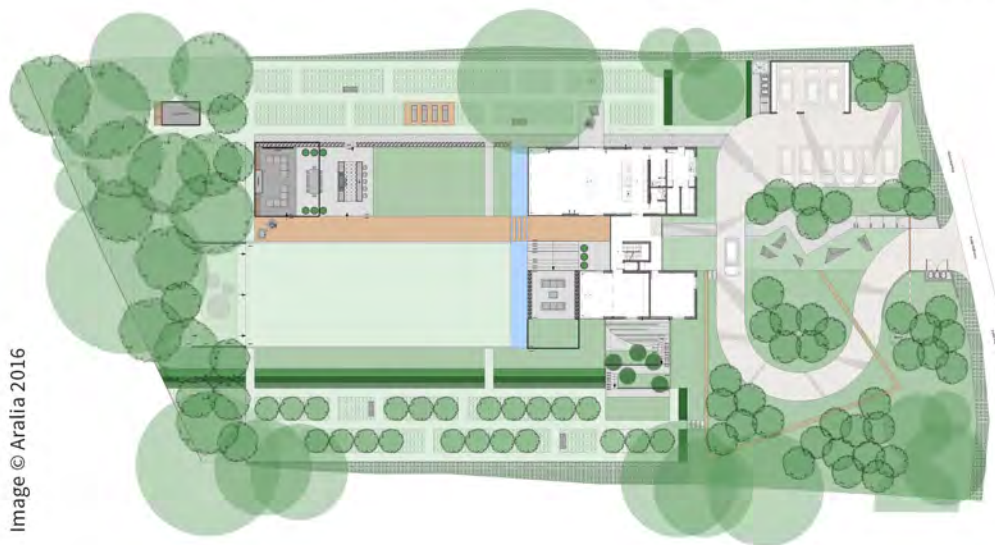


Image © Aralia 2016

must be given to how the space is blended as a whole. How does the space work for the user? Is it easy to use? Is there a natural journey that enriches their experience? Is there a holistic approach to blending not only the external spaces, but also the interior with the exterior, and also the exterior with the wider landscape – or skyscape? An external space that considers

and responds to all these issues, and provides multiple experiences, will be a space that clients enjoy and want to spend time in, and return to, time after time.

And for the future? Interior gardens are the next major worldwide trend. Why? Well without doubt they will provide the opportunity to deliver amazing new experiences for interior space. There is endless scope to what and how these interiors can be developed and we are very much looking forward to making this trend happen.

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