



KATRINA WELLS

OUTSIDE LIVING IN A GARAGE

Transforming style, retaining use

It is not every day that a garden designer is faced with creating an actual outside 'living room'. But at the beginning of 2004, Katrina Wells was engaged to undertake just such a project.

The space was formerly a double garage (see photograph far right), and as a consequence has large steel girders crossing the space at roof height. Even though Wells's clients did not own a car, they wanted to retain the provision for parking to help maximise the resale value of the property. As a result, the original double garage doors were removed, and new bespoke wooden gates put in place. Wells states: "In creative terms, the brief was fairly open: to design a clean and contemporary space, suitable for entertaining, yet functional enough to accommodate off-street parking."

The design was inspired by the strong sense of enclosure, taking elements of a typical lounge but adapting them for external use. For example, new railway sleepers were used to create: raised beds around the boundaries; an integrated 'sofa' and coffee table; and a dresser-style shelving unit. Up and down lighters have been used to give an ambient atmosphere, and white fairy lights draped over the metal girders.

Pattern-imprinted concrete was used as flooring, chosen for its look and durability. The steel girders were chemically stripped of rust and treated with a blue preventative re-oxidisation paint — as a focal point, a metal chandelier with ivy growing from it, hangs from the point where they meet.



Katrina Wells introduced domestic elements to this 'living room' — such as a sofa and dresser made from railway sleepers. Wisteria and *Clematis armandii* have been trained across the girders, white exotic palms such as *Cordyline australis* and *Trachycarpus fortunei* sit in the raised beds.

GARDEN FACT FILE

Designer: Katrina Wells, Earth Designs. Tel: +44 (0)20 8521 9040.

Website: <www.earthdesigns.co.uk>

Location: Balham, London **Size:** ????m²

Aspect and soil: south facing, imported soil

Design started: January 2004???

Construction started on site; finished on site: April 2004; May 2004

Cost: £13,000

Design fees: £?????

Hard landscape (including lighting): £11,500

Soft landscape: £1,500

Contractor: ??????????