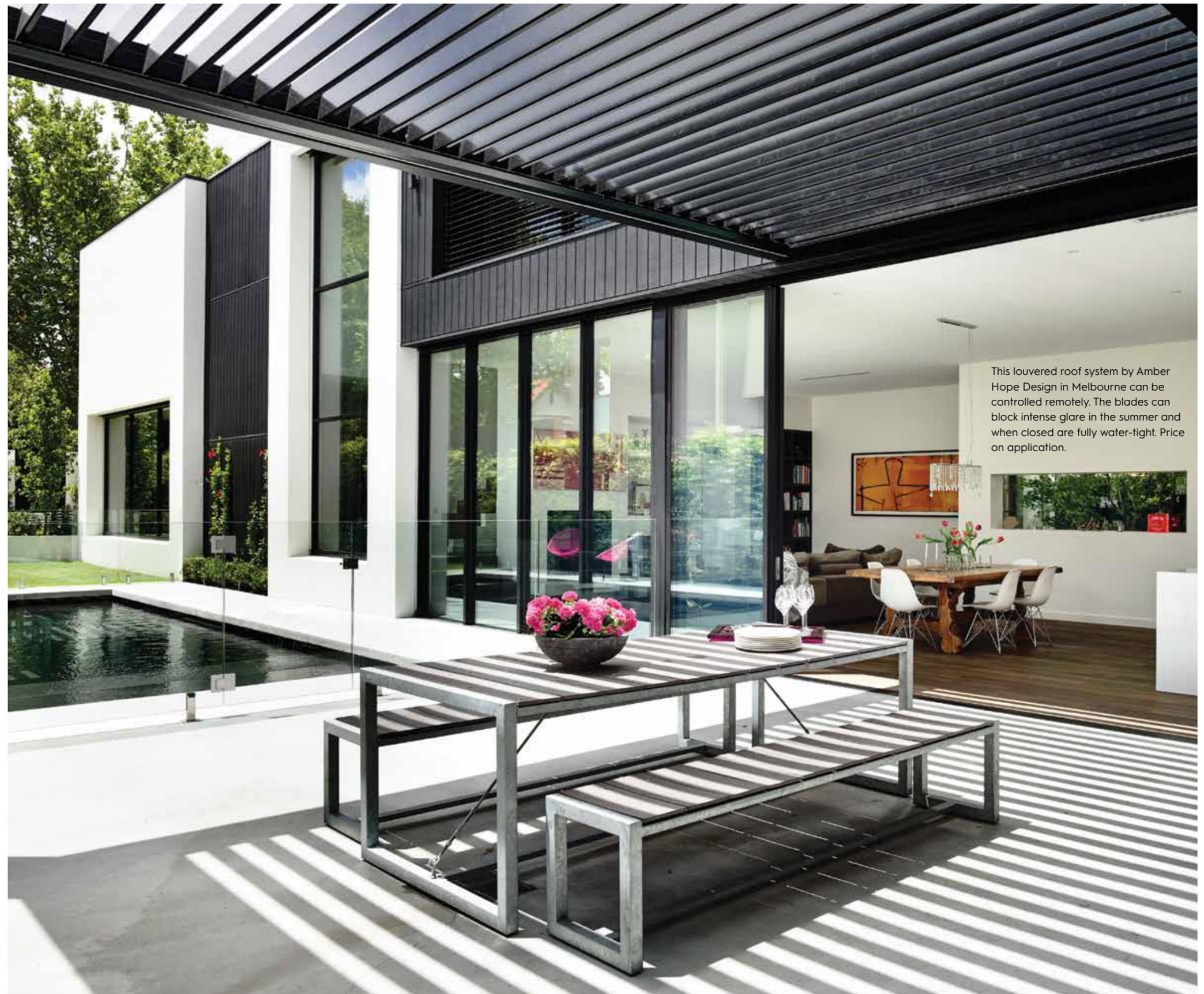


Bring the outdoors in

Transform your home by creating a natural feel in your kitchen, bedroom, or bathroom.

From structural glazing, boosting natural light, and living walls, to botanical decorating choices, we've rounded up the latest ideas to inspire your next renovation ▶

Words: Sally Smith



This louvered roof system by Amber Hope Design in Melbourne can be controlled remotely. The blades can block intense glare in the summer and when closed are fully water-tight. Price on application.



This is part of an extensive warehouse project by Alexander Owen Architecture that is full of colour and vibrancy. The bathroom provides an area of tranquility and is a great illustration of how to mix exotic palms with the latest botanical prints. This standalone green bath tub adds wow factor to the room.

From framing a view with an oversized window to incorporating a living wall in your bathroom or simply filling your bedroom with an abundance of exotic plants, there's no doubt the recent outdoor-indoor living trend has inspired our interior designs and provided a wealth of new ideas to update our spaces. Whether you are planning to extend your kitchen or update your bedroom or bathroom, think about how you can integrate more elements of the outdoors into your home to create a versatile, light-filled and uplifting place to live. We've asked the experts for their advice on bringing the outside in and put together a few tips to help get your ideas started.

How do I get the layout right?

The objective to a successful outdoor-indoor living space is to allow for as much natural light as possible to flow through your property. At the beginning of a project – whether that be a total home renovation, extension, or a room reconfiguration – it's important to optimise the garden or outdoor aspect and create a connection to the natural light sources when drawing a new floor plan. A combination of well-positioned glazing via windows, doors, rooflights and even sun tunnels will help you achieve this. "The orientation of your property is a vital component in a successful design that links to the outdoors," says Sebastian Camisuli of Martins Camisuli Architects. "It's a balance between privacy and letting in as much natural light as possible.

"However, bear in mind practicalities too. If your building's rear faces south, I'd recommend installing solar shading to account for the glare. And don't forget to maintain the garden as well." You may also be subject to planning restrictions if a design is deemed to overlook a neighbouring property too much. Always check with your local authority first or visit planningportal.co.uk for guidance.

What are the latest glazing styles available?

There are a variety of options on the market, ranging from bi-fold and sliding doors, Crittall designs, and single fixed panels of glass to picture windows, skylights, and glazed roofs. If you are limited on space for vertical windows, be more adventurous and incorporate a glazed sliding roof panel to let in more light and boost the feeling of being connected to the outdoors from above. For doors, always make sure the opening not only allows room for the glazing but also the mechanisms and drainage systems too. Look out for the latest slim-frame and flush-threshold solutions for a seamless finish. "If your budget allows, it's worth selecting a higher-end door system that has a minimal bottom frame at floor level, which will provide the greatest sense of outside-in when the doors are closed, which – let's be honest – in the UK is most of the time," says James Owen Webster of Alexander Owen Architecture. "If you really want to push the boat out, some brands conceal their bottom racks completely, making them invisible – but it could cost you up to £18,000 for an opening as wide as 3.5m x 2.5m."

How can I bring light in from above?

"When looking at the structure of your home or new extension, consider how and where daylight will enter and think about not only the number of windows but also in what direction they will face," explains Grant Sneddon, daylight expert at Velux. If you're not planning on building a new

structure, you could consider adding roof lights to your existing property – especially in smaller spaces, such as a bedroom or a bathroom, where light may be limited. "A roof window can typically let in up to twice as much daylight as a conventional vertical window," says Grant. A strategically placed roof light could transform a once-dull space to a light-filled suite or create a spa-like bathroom. Consider installing skylights in a top-floor bedroom or replacing part of a roof with a glazed panel – great above a shower room where you'll still retain privacy, but get the feeling of showering beneath the stars, too.

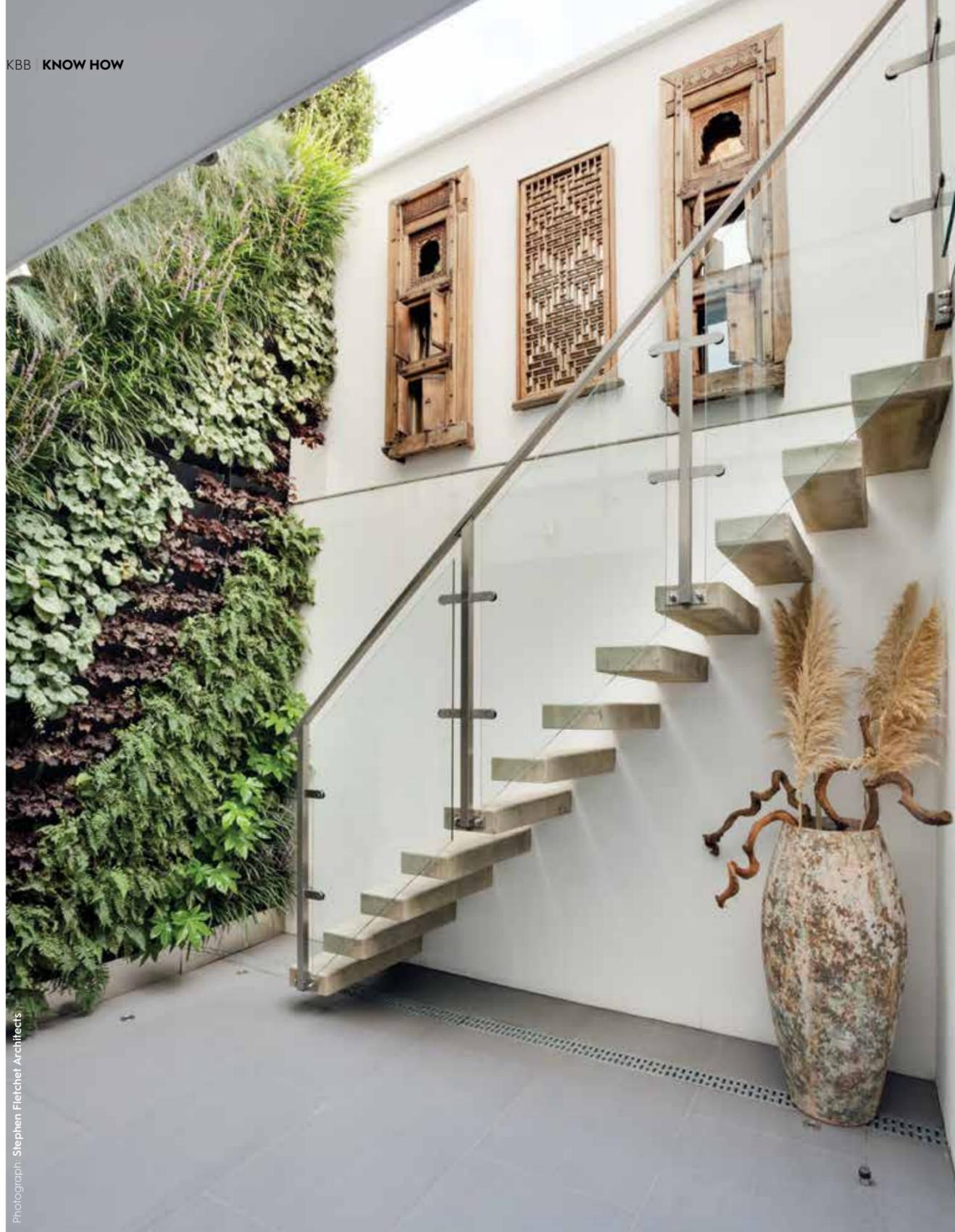
How can a decorating scheme help create an outdoor-indoor feel?

Thanks to the unpredictable British weather, we tend to spend a lot of our time indoors with our outdoor spaces limited in size as well as décor wow factor. However, there are many ways you can introduce the feeling of the great outdoors in your kitchen, bedrooms, or bathrooms, that are on trend, too. A botanical look is a popular and contemporary choice that won't go out of style quickly, so think about tropical-inspired wallpapers, murals, or accessories in nature-inspired prints. Go for bold green palm prints for a really modern look. An exposed brick wall is an inexpensive way to add earthy tones to a room and the perfect canvas for banks of greenery, whether faux or real. If your home doesn't have a wall of quality bricks you can expose, look out for brick slips or brick-effect tiles, or even wallpaper to recreate the aesthetic.

Amanda Durham of Creative Interior Design recommends using a colour palette that compliments and links with the textures and foliage you can see through the windows to your garden. "This could be flowers, furniture, or even the sky." Also think about matching the materials used in your garden design, such as pots or paving, to those used indoors. Continuing the colour and style of flooring inside to the outdoors is a great way to connect spaces, too, while a concrete kitchen worktop and coordinating pots outside, or terracotta details in both areas, will help visually connect the spaces.

Is a conservatory a good idea?

The design of the traditional conservatory has been brought right up to date in line with modern trends in architecture. Extensions and orangeries are now favoured, as they avoid the need for a door between the existing house and new addition and allow for better temperature control. There are a variety of other options, including link structures and glass box extensions, and with the advances of energy-efficient designs you can enjoy a comfortable environment all year round. Glazed structures may pose worries in terms of keeping the space cool in summer and warm in winter, so look out for specially designed glazing solutions that regulate the temperature and reduce glare. "There have been significant developments in technology, with modern coating on various surfaces of the double-glazed unit that can keep both the heat in and the cold out. Now with Argon gas-filled cavities and a warm-edge spacer bar separating the two panes of glass, the insulation level has never been as good," explains Brendon Day, designer at Apropos Conservatories. Plus, for added protection, you could invest in specialist window dressings for the roof that are operated mechanically and can slide away seamlessly when not in use. ▶



Photograph: Stephen Fletcher Architects

↑ This living wall by Oasis Interior Landscaping is part of a lightwell, which in turn is part of a basement development in London. A living wall with full water system and plants costs around £700 per sq m; monthly maintenance costs around £8-£10 per sq m. "They do need to be watered, so when it drains your floor can get wet. The watering system is adjusted three times a year in line with seasonal changes. The key thing is to choose the right plants to account for the intensity of the sunlight exposure," explains homeowner Tea Johnston.



This bathroom is part of a renovation of a six-floor house in Chelsea. Stephen Fletcher Architects designed the waterproof polished plaster partition wall, screening the shower and toilet, with a recess to fit in petrified moss. It needs no irrigation system or monthly maintenance and costs around £300 to £400 per sq m. ▶

Photograph: Stephen Fletcher Architects



This loft extension designed by Mulroy Architects adds a bedroom, dressing room, and bathroom to an Essex family home, creating a luxurious retreat for the homeowners and adding an extra 25 sq m of habitable space. Two dormer windows maximise natural light to a dressing room, while a sliding door system and glass balustrade offer uninterrupted garden views. A similar design with a 10cm bottom frame costs between £6000 and £8000, says James Owen Webster from Alexander Owen Architecture.

Photograph: Siobhan Doran



A bespoke statement lean-to with bi-fold and patio doors built on the back of this period property illustrates the versatility of glass and aluminium, creating a stunning dining area that makes you feel like you are sitting in the garden even when it's raining. Designed and created by Apropos Conservatories, prices for similar designs start from £32,000. ▶



↑ “The client wanted as much light as possible in the kitchen for the whole family to enjoy, and it’s the main link to the garden,” says Amanda Durham of Creative Interior Design. Snell David Architects built a 1.5m extension replacing an existing conservatory with a double height space with Fine Line Aluminium System 22 Frame sliding doors. Similar glazing would cost about £1200 per sq m. The kitchen design is by Kitchen Architecture.



TURN OVER FOR A HOW-TO GUIDE ON CREATING AN OUTDOOR KITCHEN

SOURCE BOOK

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