



Box fresh

Why add a small, pokey conservatory on to a Victorian house when you can have a whole wall of glass with panoramic views of the garden?



The extension has been divided into three living 'zones': the lounge area with a giant leather B&B Italia sofa and TV; the dining area, created by adding a simple but beautifully crafted oak table from Viaduct; and a stainless steel kitchen from Alternative Plans, which has a beech bench where the family eat breakfast

**EXTENSION:
STYLE STEAL**

Even if you don't have this much space available, you don't have to go for a typically narrow conservatory. Extending across the entire back of the house with a window 'wall' that opens up creates a room that feels decadently spacious. 'It's like living in a floating room,' says Jonathan. A solid roof stops it getting too hot in summer while the pale limestone floor tiles (try Stonehouse Tiles for similar) create a feeling of space. Evergreens in the garden ensure the view is never cold or bare.



brief to the architect was simple: they wanted to be able to see the back garden the minute they stepped in the front door. Phillips's answer was to create an extension that spans the width of the back of the house with giant picture windows – a wall of glass – drawing the eye to the garden, a private oasis. This tranquillity is accentuated by the use of high-quality unfussy materials, such as limestone, stainless steel and wood, and the creation of plenty of storage to ensure the house remains uncluttered. Not surprisingly, this area is where the family spend most of their time. 'Which is what we wanted,' says Jonathan. 'So often, families split up into different rooms. We wanted a place where we could all be together, without feeling crowded.' But the property isn't just about practicality. Some luxurious treats have also been added. There's an outdoor hot tub and sauna, both with surround-sound. Says Jonathan, 'When we are here, we feel we can breathe.' And have more than a little fun. ■

When you step inside the home of Judith and Jonathan Brenner, it's difficult to decide which is the more jaw-dropping – the sheer scale of the project, which involved laying 10km of cabling and importing glass from Spain, or the fact that this project finished on budget and a month ahead of schedule. (The name of the builders, please...) But, says architect Gregory Phillips, the secret of the project's success was not so much the builders as the clients. 'Jonathan and Judith are such nice people that the builders all wanted to do a good job for them,' he says. 'Which just goes to show that you really do get the house you deserve.' So, how many cups of tea did Jonathan make? 'Endless,' he jokes. 'No, really, all we did was treat the builders as human beings.' It also helped that Jonathan, a recruitment consultant and lawyer, was able to take a sabbatical and be on site almost every day of the 11-month building project. 'We also invited the builders to the house warming. They said that in 20 years that had never happened before.' In adding an extension to their Victorian property in Surrey, Jonathan and Judith, a painter, wanted to create a family space for themselves and their three children, Alex, 13, Oliver, ten, and Evie, five. Their



STAIRS: STYLE STEAL

Loft stairs don't have to be straight up and down. The sensuous curves of this staircase, which leads to Jonathan and Judith's private penthouse space, mirror the shape of the original stairs to the first floor. 'It's made from 50 slabs of MDF, which arrived dampened and were then moulded into place using hundreds of clamps,' says Jonathan.



Above and top: Judith's garden studio mirrors the extension with a wall of glass, which allows the natural light to flood in



THE LOFT: STYLE STEAL

As well as building the extension, Judith and Jonathan refurbished the house, turning the loft into a luxury penthouse just for them. A door at the end of a short corridor leads to the couple's bedroom, complete with a kingsize bed and romantic balcony-for-two that overlooks the garden. The uncluttered feeling continues with plenty of storage and doors that, when open, slot into an alcove for a sleek look.

WHERE TO BUY...

Alternative Plans
(020 7228 6460; www.alternative-plans.co.uk).
B&B Italia (020 7591 8111; www.bebitalia.it).
Gregory Phillips Architects
(020 7724 3040; www.gregoryphillips.com)
Stonehouse
(0800 0939 724; www.stonehousetiles.co.uk).
Viaduct (020 7278 8456; www.viaduct.co.uk).



Above: the couple's bathroom continues the theme of simple, clean lines and plenty of natural light. For similar square basins and taps, try www.bathstore.com. Right: the master bedroom's balcony, just for two

