

# GREEN FINGERS

Andrew Bullock and Simone Thorogood get their hands dirty for *Latest Homes Live* ... and we mean literally



**S**imone: A couple of weeks ago we wrote about the fabulous Geoff Stonebanks and his amazing garden, Driftwood. Andrew got to visit it over the summer for the annual MacMillan Garden Trail. I was very jealous indeed. Well, last week I finally got to see the place for myself, as we went back to Driftwood to shoot a series of weekly segments for *Latest Homes Live* with Geoff, who is our resident Alan Titchmarsh (minus Charlie Dimmock and a chat show). We had so much fun! Geoff set Andrew and I a series of tasks, all based around the kind of useful tips that will come in handy to the viewers at home, when it comes to prepping your garden for the upcoming colder months. From propagating ferns to turning an old piece of furniture into a garden ornament, we took a stab at several of the gardening skills that Geoff is a dab-hand at.

between takes, Geoff kept us well sustained with coffee and biscuits – always a great host. Must be why so many flock to his garden; it's had nearly 3,000 visitors in four years! Plus an extra four in the shape of myself, Andrew and our cameramen William and Ant. We had such a great morning in the sunshine shooting this fun new piece, which will teach our viewers a lot too.

So, if you're a keen gardener and you want some autumnal gardening tips, or if you simply want to see what happened when Andrew and I were made to get our hands dirty and compete against each other for the best designed flower display, be sure to tune in. The segments will be airing in the forthcoming few episodes of *Latest Homes Live*.



## The gardening gloves were most definitely off

Things got pretty competitive, too, between Andrew and I. It was a case of garden shears at dawn! The gardening gloves were most definitely off, literally (I got very muddy nails). Geoff pitted us against each other and against the clock, and judged us on our horticultural abilities. What's wrong with a bit of friendly competition between co-hosts, right? The thing is, we learnt so much along the way! And in

**A**ndrew: After we'd washed the compost from underneath our fingernails, I then headed off to visit a fantastic property, designed by the extremely talented Catherine Smith and Jim Bennett of ar:ior designs. In a first for *Latest Homes Live*, I actually met the visionaries behind one of our exceptional homes. We landed an exclusive interview with the directors of the company, who let us into one of their clients' properties to walk us and talk us through the inspiration, the idea and the finished design. ar:ior design is an independent practice with a plethora of inspirational and practical experience through a diverse range of projects – of which this project was just one! What stands them out from other companies is the very honed combination of design experience that Jim and Catherine provide. They have balanced the skills and expertise of a chartered architect, a historic building conservation specialist and interior designers, and have a combined experience of over 40 years.



Their range scales from conceptual and feasibility studies to small scale detailed bespoke joinery and interiors, which was what I got an exclusive look at. It's amazing what you can do to a space by having a designer develop the storage potential in your home. You'll see what I mean when you watch the show, but look out in particular for their ingenious hiding of household appliances such as washing machines and tumble dryers.

Their other projects also include a variety of sectors and end users from commercial office, hotel, bar and restaurant fit-outs to residential extensions, refurbishments and show home styling. It has to be said that the client base of this team reflects their diverse range of projects with clients ranging from private residential clients to multinational corporations. It was great to feature Catherine and Jim on *Latest Homes Live* and we hope to work with them again soon! **LH**

