

*All products are independently selected by our editors. If you buy something, we may earn an affiliate commission.*

GARDENS

# Stylish conservatory ideas for every kind of house

Whether you are hunting for conservatory design ideas, or just want to gaze longingly at glass houses, get inspired by these stylish structures.

By Emily Senior

28 February 2022

In the past, the word ‘conservatory’ has not always conjured the most desirable images to mind. Many of us are instantly transported by it to ill-advised and out-of-character additions to otherwise beautiful houses, or to the depths of morbid suburbia, where we dread being subjected to lukewarm gin and tonics and stale conversation. In all, the imagined conservatory is not a place whose reputation necessarily brims with generosity or good cheer.

So: conservatories have a bad reputation after years of misuse, but we’re here to bring them back into the spotlight. A conservatory or [greenhouse](#) offers a way to feel like you’re experiencing the outdoors – even when the weather isn’t up to scratch – and for making the most of any sunshine on a chill winter’s day. They can be highly atmospheric, too: just imagine sitting under the glass, warm and sheltered, perhaps with a glass of wine or even a single malt, while it rains heavily outside. It’s a deeply calming experience.

Here, our deputy editor David Nicholls discusses the art of designing and decorating a conservatory with designer Guy Goodfellow.

# Why you should fall back in love with the conservatory

One of the most beautiful spaces I have ever been in is an extraordinary Victorian conservatory belonging to a client in Warwickshire,' Guy explains. 'It was a winter garden, which we filled with tall trees and enormous, colourful parasols.' Guy is an architectural and interior designer well versed in the language and nuance of English classicism. No stranger to projects in the country, he is the perfect sounding board for advice on making a conservatory as lovely as it ought to be. One of his all-time favourites has a starring role in the 1990 rom-com film *Green Card*, in which Andie MacDowell's character's rooftop apartment has a lush, palm-filled conservatory complete with a fountain and bamboo furniture.

'And I designed an orangery in Sussex a few years ago,' Guy continues. 'It has a huge French chimneypiece with a dining table that extends to seat large numbers.' Guy loves putting fireplaces in these structures: 'It gives focus to a room.' (And in case you are wondering, the main differences between a conservatory and orangery are the glass-to-frame ratio and the shape of the roof.)

'For me, the joy of decorating a house is in creating different areas, each of which has its own atmosphere,' Guy says. A conservatory should not be thought of as just another sitting room. 'I think they make wonderful places to dine,' he adds. 'You don't have to have rattan or whatever is perceived as conservatory furniture, but it shouldn't be filled with duplicates from another room.'

Traditionally, these spaces were inhabited during the day rather than in the evening. All the glass can become ominously black at night, and there is increasing concern about light pollution caused by electric light beaming into the stratosphere. However, in the daytime, plenty of glass means plenty of sunlight, which was, of course, the original purpose of these rooms. If you wish to reduce the amount of light coming into a fully glazed conservatory, Guy advises caution. 'Curtains would kill it, but you can use the lightest possible blinds. We use 'Sang Sacre Tristan' linen by the Irish fabric house Alton-Brooke all the time – it has the most beautiful warp and weft.'

## Conservatory specialists

- [David Salisbury](#)
- [Malbrook](#)
- [Marston & Langinger by Alitex](#)
- [Oakwrights](#)
- [Prime Oak](#)
- [Rhino Greenhouses](#)
- [Vale Garden Houses](#)
- [Westbury Garden Rooms](#)

We've rounded up our favourite conservatory styles from our archives, so you can be inspired to set up your very own room with a view.



Davide Lovatti

1/26



This double-height, steel-framed glasshouse built within the old castle walls of [Castello di Reschio](#) serves as a glamorous, light-filled seating area.



2/26



This stylish painted orangery in Rutland by Vale Garden Houses features full-length timber and lead panels, neoclassical columns and entablature and an inset glazed roof. Used by the owners as a living and dining area, the orangery provides access to the garden through multiple sets of doors which can be left open during warmer seasons, or left closed to enjoy views of the garden all year round.



Though an orangery or garden room is traditionally joined to a house, having a free-standing design positioned deeper into the garden is a clever way to add indoor space that feels integrated with nature. For this walled garden in Wales, the specialist David Salisbury designed a structure that echoes the garden's extensive stone works and the architecture of the main house, constructed from local stone with hardwood frames.



4/26



Besides the obvious advantages of providing extra living space, an oak-framed extension can also add character and charm to the exterior of your home. Using different materials can create architectural contrast and add layers to a building – imagine an oak extension against beautifully aged stone or red brick, as seen in this Cheshire farmhouse. The design team at Oakwrights opted for symmetry by placing the oak trusses centrally with double doors leading out to a patio.



Paul Massey

5/26

The search for a London pied-à-terre brought Ben Pentreath's clients unexpectedly to [this Georgian house](#), which he has reconfigured and decorated in his layered signature style. A steel-framed conservatory by Serres d'Antan contains rattan 'Wengler' chairs from Sika-Design and a vintage linen table runner. A large Georgian cupboard from Alexander von Westenholz holds gardening equipment.





Simon Brown



Garden designer Butter Wakefield and her now ex-husband bought this [London Victorian villa](#) in 1991. She described the original kitchen as 'so poky, you could barely open the oven.' But she was able to see the potential when she saw the light 'pouring in across the west-facing garden.' This elegant conservatory was added 10 years ago. The green, black and white palette runs throughout the house but is most prominent in the conservatory and kitchen, where there is a cornucopia of lettuceware plates and monochromatic fabrics. A smart green window seat is luxuriously heated by the radiator below and is the perfect spot from which to contemplate the garden.



Lucas Allen



Designer Henri Fitzwilliam-Lay, the owner of this [Victorian country house in Shropshire](#) has enhanced the interiors of this grand property with her signature mid-century aesthetic without compromising original features. The conservatory attached to the side of the house provides a bright space. It is decorated with a neutral palette for a calming atmosphere, and striped wallpaper emphasises the height of the space.



[Kate Aslangul of Oakley Moore](#) designed this conservatory in Paris. The mosaic tiles are original the house previously hidden underneath a carpet. They feature a white and green hexagonal pattern surrounded by a deep border with accents of coral and yellow tiles, complemented by the green paint on the woodwork. Kate chose a Gilles Nouailhac sofa, upholstered in Pierre Frey's moss green velvet from the India Mahdavi collection, with GPJ Baker's Orinoco fabric cushions using only the pineapple section of the design. A pair of yellow glass table lamps from Porta Romana were chosen together with Julian Chichester's side tables, inspired by a 1940s French design. The Rococo-style settee was a lucky internet find that Kate had hand-finished and stained by a furniture restorer, later upholstering it in Zak and Fox's Khotan's fabric trimmed with double piping from Turnell & Gigon.



Simon Brown

9/26



This is a modern take on a conservatory by [Philip Hooper](#), who added a clerestory, supported by a steel frame, to let more light into the dining room.



Lucas Allen



To restore a feeling of equilibrium to [his Queen Anne house in Herefordshire](#), interior decorator Edward Bulmer remodelled the layout, added a new wing, and painted the walls in interesting colours to create a contemporary family home. The kitchen's eating area is housed in the conservatory, part of the newly built wing.