

Patrick Blanc House

Paris
 2009 — Residential
Patrick Blanc



Known for his 'vertical gardens', Patrick Blanc is a French botanist who specializes in plants from tropical forests. He has created a number of these vertical gardens around the world, firstly on exterior walls, then on interior walls. They are constructed from metal frames attached to the walls, which are then covered with PVC sheets and rot-proof felts. An irrigation system dampens the felt, which in turn waters the plants.

Using this method further, Blanc created his own dream house in Paris with the architect Gilles Ebersolt. The house stands behind a dreary facade; when we open the gate, another world appears. First we step into a courtyard with three walls covered with plants. Entering inside, there is an open-plan kitchen, dining room and Blanc's study, which is on the top of a huge 20,000-litre (4,400-gallon) fish tank. Measuring 6 x 7 m (20 x 23 ft), the tank's glass ceiling acts as the study's floor, from which Blanc's desk looks down onto fish, turtles, tropical birds and water plants. The temperature of the water is kept warm all year, acting as underfloor heating in the winter.

The surrounding walls are covered with mosses, ferns and leaves in all different sizes and shapes. One of the walls is dedicated to his books, stored in boxes made of plywood piled up to create shelves, reminding us that we are not in a jungle. Upstairs, there is a bathroom with an outdoor shower facing the courtyard. Blanc says that he is not interested in architecture or interior design. Instead, he is interested in plants, fish and water. He designed the house with his extensive knowledge of plants and his innovative systems, but most of all with his passion for what he loves.

Ko Matsubara

→ 1 / 3 Courtyard; three walls of the courtyard are covered with plants, some of which are 30 years old; the Vertical Garden is composed of three parts: a metal frame hung on the walls, a 1 cm (½ in) thick PVC sheet riveted to the metal frame and a felt layer, made of polyamide, stapled to the PVC; the felt is rot-proof and its high capillarity allows water distribution; plants are installed on the felt as seeds, cuttings or already-grown plants; an irrigation system keeps the felt moist to feed the plants. → 2 Blanc's desk is set on top of the glass-covered fish-tank area; temperature of the water is kept warm all year, acting as underfloor heating in winter. → 4 Original concrete stairs leading to the fish-tank area.

ROOM



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→ 5 / 6 Courtyard; a huge tank containing fish and turtles is under the glass floor; the walls are covered with mosses, ferns and leaves in all different sizes and shapes; one wall is filled with book shelves. → 7 Detail; tropical birds thrive in the garden. → 8 Living room looking towards the courtyard; trailing plants hanging from the balcony. → 9 Entrance to the building. → 10 Semi-outdoor shower room leading to balcony overlooking the courtyard.