

NEWS & VIEWS

GEORGE CLARKE

The architect and presenter of Channel 4's *Amazing Spaces* and *The Restoration Man* shares his latest tips and ideas

TRADE SECRETS

Embrace new developments in glazing

'Glass technology over the past 30 years has moved on at an incredible pace. While so many other building materials in the industry may be lagging behind, the level of research and development that has gone into glazing means that this single material has had the most dramatic impact on architecture.

'Toughened and laminated glass is now as common as brickwork and blockwork, and there are actually very few technical reasons why something cannot be made out of glass. Structural glazing allows us to build invisible systems in which virtually every surface – from the floor and walls to the roof and all the structural supports – can be made from this material. Glass can be manipulated into many wonderful shapes, as well as being textured, coloured, etched and sandblasted to change the level of translucency and transparency.

'Pilkington (pilkington.com), one of the world's leading glass manufacturers, has famously designed a self-cleaning product called Pilkington Activ – a coating on the glass breaks down dirt and allows the material to remain clear and clean. Another recent innovation is glass that changes from transparent to opaque at the flick of a switch. And one type of glass that my practice is beginning to use more and more is heated glass. A transparent, metal-oxide coating covers the entire panel and provides a heating element in a similar way to a heated car windscreen. This means that any large panels of glazing can act as sizeable and efficient radiators. These panels work so well that I've designed spaces that need no radiators or underfloor heating as the glass provides all

the heat and comfort that a room needs. We used curved, structural and heated glass in the extension of the nineteenth-century ice house in Scotland (right and below) in the first series of *The Restoration Man*. This would never have been possible 30 years ago, or even 10 years ago. The developments in glass technology mean that the beginning of the twenty-first century is one of the most exciting times in the history of architecture.' →



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