

Chelsea Flower Show: the highlights



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Wednesday 21 May 2014

# Homes & Property

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## ANDY STURGEON

### GARDEN DESIGNER

**A**NDY STURGEON, daily commentator on the Chelsea Flower Show for BBC TV this week, is a leading garden designer and has won Gold at the show six times, as well as Best in Show. Renowned for dynamic, architectural spaces that fuse traditional materials with contemporary styling, he has been commissioned to create three vast roof gardens on top of Battersea Power Station. Projects for his Brighton-based company range from town terraces to large country estates, and he works in Russia, the Middle East, Asia, Europe and throughout the UK. He regularly presents TV gardening programmes for the BBC.



#### MY LATEST PROJECT

We are working on a public park which will replace the exhibition centre as part of the Earls Court redevelopment. But perhaps our most exciting current project are the three "Gardens of the Elements", private and communal gardens of two and half acres sitting on Battersea Power Station. Inspired by fire, water and air, they reference the history of the site and materials will incorporate recycled brick and steel from the original power station.



**Bright lights:** the neon wonderland, above, of shop God's Own Junkyard

**Contemporary:** garden furniture, left, at Barbed, Barnes High Street

**Double deal:** lunch, right, to match the views at the Aqua Shard, level 31



#### MOST COVETED DESIGN OBJECT

I am obsessed with architecture. London is probably not the best city for contemporary buildings but there are some real jewels. One is the copper Leaf House in Mayfair by Squire and Partners. Inspired by a nearby Virginia creeper, the detailing is exquisite, the building is beautiful and it sits so comfortably in its historic surroundings.

#### GREAT FOR GARDEN BUYS

Barbed in Barnes High Street is probably the best place to find contemporary garden furniture,

sculpture and things you just didn't expect. The internet is all very well – but you shouldn't buy a chair without sitting in it.

#### WHERE I SEEK DESIGN INSPIRATION

I'm a member of the Royal Academy and I'm a constant visitor. I tend to get much of my inspiration from art and they have had some incredible and

extremely varied exhibitions in the past including Anish Kapoor and the recent architectural Sensing Spaces. I can't wait for next month's Dennis Hopper photography exhibition.

#### WHERE I LIKE TO ESCAPE

Wandering around London aimlessly is one of my favourite pastimes and with my three young boys in tow, the South Bank is unbeatable. We ignore

the London Eye and the Aquarium and usually start with the Leake Street graffiti tunnel near Waterloo, and then whatever off-the-wall show is on at The Vaults gallery there. Then it's buskers, food markets and maybe a performance at the Festival Hall.

#### BEST RESTAURANT

Lunch at Aqua Shard on level 31 is unexpectedly great. The food, wine

and service are all pretty good, but the views are awe-inspiring. I get a kick out of how green London looks from up there.

#### BEST PLACE FOR PLANTS

New Covent Garden is open to the public and it is worth an early start to see just how colossal the gardening business is in all its many facets, as swarms of florists graze the endless

By **Pattie Barron**

# My design London

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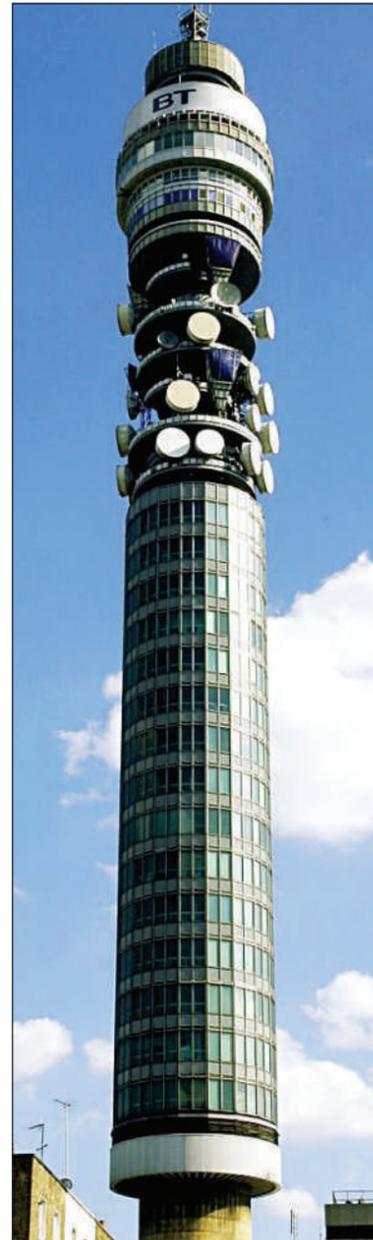
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**Object of desire:** The Leaf House in Mayfair, above, clad in copper

**Magical space:** azaleas in bloom, left, at the Isabella Plantation

**Classic design:** the BT Tower, right, has become one of London's most familiar landmarks – especially for cyclists



shop is open from Friday to Sunday only, but he now has an outlet in Selfridges as well. His incredible neon creations definitely have a place in the garden or home.

**FAVOURITE LANDMARK**

I've loved the BT Tower since I was a child, and as a cyclist, it's an excellent landmark for navigating your way around that part of London.

Centre Point is a close second. Its architect, Richard Seifert, was much maligned in his day but it's interesting to see how his buildings have actually stood the test of time.

At the other end of the scale, I can't stand the Walkie Talkie building and think it's a real blot on the London skyline.

**NEXT GARDEN TREND**

I don't think gardens really follow trends as we are a bit slow at adopting the latest thing. I've been making modern gardens for decades but people still love the Arts & Crafts and 19th-century landscapes. I would love us all to be a bit more forward thinking in the garden.

**FAVOURITE CHELSEA FLOWER SHOW MOMENT**

Possibly seeing a well-known journalist fall backwards into my pond clutching a glass of champagne. I don't think a drop was spilled. That was a fun night. Winning Best in Show in 2010 was also pretty special.

**BEST OUTDOOR SPACE**

Richmond Park has a really special place in my heart with its unobstructed views of St Paul's and the City. I have cycled, run and dog-walked there, and have very fond memories, especially of the magical Isabella Plantation with all its rhododendrons and azaleas.

**TOP DESTINATIONS**

Players Bar in Villiers Street, Charing Cross, is an unexpectedly random, boisterous piano bar over a theatre. It stays open late and gets quite raucous. I have ended many happy nights out there during Chelsea Flower Show, though I can't remember all of them in detail.

stalls and traders rush plant-laden trollies towards the waiting vans of gardeners. You can get some real bargains but you have to buy in bulk.

**TIPS TO TRANSFORM A GARDEN**

London gardens are frequently overlooked so creating privacy can be vital. Don't be tempted to wall or

fence yourself into a box, but aim for a sense of privacy with a strategically placed tree or large shrub, or perhaps a row of pleached hornbeams, like a hedge on sticks, that takes up very little space at ground level.

Avoid putting too much into your garden, as it will look cluttered. A row of three large matching pots is better than lots of small ones, and the

larger the pot, the less frequently it needs watering. Road and aeroplane noise can be a problem in London. A simple water feature with a fountain of some kind takes the edge off, and helps to enforce that oasis quality of a town garden.

Don't add furniture as an afterthought. It will probably be very visible from the house, so

should be considered as part of the design and can contribute enormously to the overall look.

**SECRET SHOP**

God's Own Junkyard. Artist and owner Chris Bracey likens the new home for his neon-sign wonderland in Walthamstow to the look of Blade Runner – and you certainly get transported to another world. The



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