

BOTH PAGES In this month's line-up of top garden designers, photographed in the Chelsea Physic Garden, are, from left, Robert Myers, Dan Pearson, Arabella Lennox-Boyd, Tom Stuart-Smith, Cleve West, Andy Sturgeon, Brita von Schoenalch, Arne Maynard and Kim Wilkie. Shown overleaf but not pictured here is Todd Longstaffe-Gowan

# *The House & Garden* guide to the LEADING GARDEN DESIGNERS OF TODAY



*Clare Foster has scoured the country to identify the UK's most talented*

*garden designers. Here, for part 2 of 3, she presents L to Z of her findings*

PHOTOGRAPHS ANDREW MONTGOMERY

ARABELLA  
LENNOX-BOYD

Combining an Italian love of design with the English love of plants, Italian-born Arabella Lennox-Boyd is one of the UK's longest-established designers. Over the past 40 years she has designed more than 400 gardens and landscapes in this country and abroad, ranging from large British estates to a modern roof terrace in Hong Kong. Arabella's style is diverse, varying widely from site to site: 'I have my trademark motifs – formality around the house merging into a more informal wider landscape, box or hebe under trees, using grey-leaved trees or shrubs to relieve darker planting – but as every site is different, my designs vary from the very modern to the more traditional.' Her work, she says, is not influenced by any fashionable trend or a dictatorship of her own ideas: 'The client's needs are paramount and it is my job to combine these with the nature of the site to achieve an improved, artistic solution that is interesting, practical, beautifully executed and original.' In July 2010, Arabella received the RHS Veitch Memorial Medal in recognition of her contribution to horticulture. Design trend: 'An increased use of trees and shrubs in gardens. Herbaceous planting, however irresistible, is for today while trees and shrubs are for a lifetime.' 020-7931 9995; [www.arabellalennoxboyd.com](http://www.arabellalennoxboyd.com)



*'My job is to combine the client's needs with the nature of the site'*

ARABELLA LENNOX-BOYD



TODD  
LONGSTAFFE-GOWAN

The work of landscape historian and garden designer Todd Longstaffe-Gowan is eclectic and idiosyncratic, encompassing both large-scale public projects and smaller private gardens. With an academic background in environmental studies, landscape architecture and historical geography, Todd leans towards projects with a sense of the past. His most exciting current commission is to recast the royal gardens at Kensington Palace for the Queen's Diamond Jubilee in 2012. 'My work is often informed by historical precedent, but carried out in a modern idiom. I'm not interested in slavish recreations of historic gardens; I prefer instead to build on the legacies of the past and to add new layers to established landscapes,' he says. Past projects include work at Waddesdon Manor, and Hampton Court, Kensington Palace and Kew (to all three of which he is also gardens adviser). He has worked extensively abroad as well, in the Caribbean, France and, most recently, Greece. Todd is the author of two books: *The Gardens and Parks at Hampton Court Palace* (Frances Lincoln) and *The London Town Garden, 1700–1840* (Yale University Press), and his third book, *The London Square*, will be published by Yale in spring 2012. Design trend: 'Weeping trees'. 020-7253 2100; [www.tlg-landscape.co.uk](http://www.tlg-landscape.co.uk)



ARNE MAYNARD

A clever blend of classic and modern characterises the work of Arne Maynard. Known for his elegant, seamlessly designed country gardens, he also works internationally, with projects in countries including Jordan, Germany and the US. Typically, his gardens have strong, formal frameworks of walls or hedges to give a sense of permanence, contrasting with lush, expansive planting schemes. It is the juxtaposition of divergent elements that excites Arne most: 'Gardens work well when they are hinged around a set of contrasts – between formal and informal, natural and man-made, cut and uncut, closed and open views,' he explains. Taking a holistic approach to design, he believes passionately that each garden should reflect a perfect harmony between house, garden history, the owners and the surrounding landscape, giving it its own unique sense of place. He particularly enjoys working closely with each client to create 'a highly individual garden, entirely personal to them, their lifestyle and their home', and for this reason he designs only private gardens. Arne is the author of two books on garden design, *Gardens with Atmosphere* and *Garden Design Details* (both Conran Octopus), and has also designed a series of bespoke garden products. Design trend: 'The juxtaposition of asymmetry and symmetry'. 020-7689 8100; [www.arne-maynard.com](http://www.arne-maynard.com)

ROBERT MYERS

Robert joined Elizabeth Banks Associates in 1993, and continued the practice under his own name when she retired in 2006. Working with a team of seven, he takes on both public and private clients, and describes the practice as 'large enough to be able to handle complex, long-term projects, but small enough for the work to bear the imprint of a personal approach'. Many of his projects are historical in nature, and the practice has built a reputation on providing innovative, current solutions within this historical context. 'It's more about adding layers to what's already there than pure restoration,' says Robert. As a result, his gardens are timeless and elegant, exploring the relationship between formal and informal, and drawing inspiration from both architecture and the natural world. Designs for private gardens include the dramatic parterre at the Tregothnan Estate in Cornwall and a modern garden in Geneva. Robert has also designed six gardens at the Chelsea Flower Show, and is designing a seventh for this year's show, sponsored by Cancer Research UK. Design trend: 'Combining strong architectural structure with naturalistic planting; blurring the distinctions between interior and exterior, wild and cultivated'. 01544-232035; [www.robertmyers-associates.co.uk](http://www.robertmyers-associates.co.uk)



*'My work is more about adding layers to what's already there than pure restoration'*

ROBERT MYERS

DAN PEARSON

Internationally renowned for his design and planting excellence, Dan Pearson trained at the RHS Gardens, Wisley, and the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew. An innate and deep understanding of plants, together with an appreciation of natural landscapes and landforms, shapes all his work. 'Our work focuses on heightening the existing sense of place with the aim of evoking an emotional response,' states Dan. Typically characterised by combinations of understated hard landscaping and subtle, often naturalistic planting, his gardens work with nature rather than trying to dominate it: 'We're committed to creating better environments for wildlife and people

*'We try to make as gentle a mark on the land as possible'*

DAN PEARSON

and making as gentle a mark on the land as possible,' he says. Perhaps more than any other designer, Dan is as happy working in an urban environment as in the country, and prides himself on being able to adapt to any situation, climate or native flora. Although much of Dan's work involves designing private gardens, one of the projects that he feels best represents his ethos is the Millennium Forest in Japan. This large 200-hectare ecological park near Hokkaido is being landscaped into a series of more intimate spaces, and includes a giant earthwork that echoes the surrounding mountains and a large perennial garden inspired by the natural layers of plants found in the surrounding woodland. Design trend: 'Using gardens and landscape to encourage people to reconnect with the natural world, and to re-engage with bigger environmental issues'. 020-7928 3800; [www.danpearsonstudio.com](http://www.danpearsonstudio.com)



## BRITA VON SCHOENAICH

Brita von Schoenaich studied landscape design in Germany after training as a gardener, and came to Britain in the Eighties to continue her studies at Kew. Her practice embraces residential, private and large-scale public projects, both in this country and abroad, and she is also working with Christopher Bradley-Hole on a number of commissions, including a project at Cambridge Botanic Garden. A known authority on Continental perennial planting, Brita acknowledges that her practice has a strong horticultural bias. 'Planting design is evolving all the time. We are currently interested in a layered planting that gives sequential interest throughout the year. Each plant has to earn its keep and, as a result, we find ourselves working with a smaller palette of plants,' she explains. The depth of horticultural knowledge is spread throughout her team, most of whom trained at Kew, allowing them to work across a wide range of climatic zones from Russia to sub-Saharan Africa. Design trend: 'People are becoming more aware of the relative short-term nature of perennial planting schemes and will focus more on the permanent structure of trees, hedges and built elements.' 020-8948 4445; [www.schoenaich.co.uk](http://www.schoenaich.co.uk)



## TOM STUART-SMITH

Elegant, modern and effortlessly stylish, the gardens of Tom Stuart-Smith are like giant, painterly canvases where the plants take centre stage. Contained by strongly architectural, yet minimal frameworks, his planting is relaxed, naturalistic and richly textured, often echoing the colours, shapes and contours of the surrounding landscape. 'My aim is to make landscapes that offer a rich and multi-layered experience, and an emotional depth,' he says. 'I want to make the garden a place of imaginative possibility.' Sustainability is central to Tom's approach, and he makes it his mission to increase the ecological diversity of any landscape in which he works. 'We use local materials wherever we can and select plants fitted to their surroundings,' he says. Within the context of these plant-filled spaces, juxtaposition and contrast is an underlying theme – from simplicity to complexity, subtle intervention to decisive statement. Having built a reputation for designing large country gardens, Tom has also designed eight Chelsea show gardens, all of which have won gold awards. An exhibition about his work will be shown at the Garden Museum, Lambeth, in May. Design trend: 'More seeding of perennials, more naturalism, more improvisation; more emphasis on nurture and less on the instant fix'. 020-7253 2100; [www.tomstuartsmith.co.uk](http://www.tomstuartsmith.co.uk)



*I am a modernist,  
not a minimalist.*

*I spend a lot of  
time obsessing  
about details'*

ANDY STURGEON

## ANDY STURGEON

Andy Sturgeon has risen to fame with a run of gold awards at Chelsea, culminating in the coveted Best in Show prize in 2010 for his modern gravel garden. His gardens combine plants and hard materials in original, often sculptural ways, creating spaces that look modern without being gimmicky. 'I am a modernist but not a minimalist,' says Andy. 'I spend a lot of time obsessing about details, and also make quite intricate planting schemes. I get inspiration from shapes, places, people, architecture, sculpture, bars, clubs, shop windows, theatre and film sets.' Whether designing an ultra-modern city rooftop or a neoclassical country garden, he aims to put a certain stamp on each space: 'I will always try to define it as an Andy Sturgeon garden, and I hope that if you were to put all the different schemes together, you would see the common thread,' he says. Although he has a string of overseas projects to his name, the main focus of his work is in the UK, where he designs mostly private gardens. Design trend: 'A return to more traditional gardens, moving away from grasses and perennials towards shrubs'. 01273-553336; [www.andysturgeon.com](http://www.andysturgeon.com)

*I love the process of meddling with the landscape and making it more beautiful, whether with plants, sculpture or a combination of both'*

CLEVE WEST

## CLEVE WEST

A protégé of John Brookes, with whom he trained in 1990, Cleve West is a creative force in the world of garden design, making gardens that he describes as 'adventurous'. Responding in different ways to each site, he produces imaginative, sometimes experimental designs, introducing new and untried elements where possible. 'I just love the process of meddling with the landscape and making it more beautiful, whether with plants, sculpture, or a combination of both,' he says. Ecology and biodiversity are key motivating factors in his work, although he comments that reclaimed materials are becoming increasingly scarce and more expensive. Cleve is designing a garden at this year's Chelsea Flower Show for *The Daily Telegraph*, which explores the relationship between old and new. His innovative sunken garden will mix traditional stone and modern concrete, old-fashioned species plants and modern hybrids, to illustrate how both the old and the new can exist in harmony and 'keep a space vital in perpetuity'. He has also written a book that 'tells the truth' about allotments, due to be published in autumn 2011. Design trend: 'I hope the trend will be a release from any obligation to be a slave to fashion.' 020-8977 3522; [www.clewest.com](http://www.clewest.com)



*Landscape  
architecture deals  
with man and  
land, and the  
stories they tell  
about one another'*

## KIM WILKIE

Kim Wilkie is the thinking man's designer. His projects, both in the public and private realm, are not only aesthetically driven, but imbued with many layers of meaning and imagination to make sense of the landscape they sit in. 'Landscape architecture deals with man and land, and the stories they tell about one another,' states Kim. 'We need to listen to the stories and continue the tale, allowing what has gone before to inspire fresh design in the evolving pattern. Our

KIM WILKIE

designs spring from the character and use of the site – each is different and inspired by the individual combination of memory and imagination.' It is the history, as well as the social and cultural aspects of the land that motivate this designer, whose portfolio embraces such diverse projects as the redesign of a city-centre plaza in Beirut and an intriguing new earthwork within the eighteenth-century estate of Boughton Park in Northamptonshire. Sculpting the land is something that Kim particularly enjoys, and this is a theme that appears repeatedly in his work. Design trend: 'Landscapes of the future will have to deliver on many different levels at once, particularly on the stewardship of soil, water and air.' 020-8332 0304; [www.kimwilkie.com](http://www.kimwilkie.com)



NEXT MONTH *Emerging talent:*  
Clare Foster identifies the next generation