

SPEAR'S

TOP RECOMMENDED

LUCIANO GIUBBILEI

Born and brought up in Siena, Italy, Giubbilei came to London in 1993 to study at the Inchtald School of Design with the intention of returning to the sun-baked climes of that seductive Tuscan city.

It was 'the great tradition of English gardens,' says Giubbilei, that kept him in London and he established his own garden design practice there in 1997.

Giubbilei has won the prestigious best in show prize at the Chelsea Flower Show and several gold medals, and has designed gardens all around the world for a range of clients.

'English gardens are almost too easy to make because the weather is so good for gardening,' he says. Currently, Giubbilei and his nine employees are working on projects in Texas, California, Formentera and Geneva.

ARABELLA LENNOX-BOYD

'The hallmark of my practice,' maintains the international landscape designer Lennox-Boyd, 'is breadth of vision, combined with our huge attention to detail from the masterplan, down to the smallest plant.'

Born in Rome, Lennox-Boyd was raised in an architectural and spatial context that informs her understanding of scale and volume in her work.

She was also significantly influenced by Lady Haddington's garden at Tynninghame House in Scotland with its deep borders, blooming patches of plants, and secret corners. Over 40 years in business, Lennox-Boyd has taken



Luciano Giubbilei

commissions from clients including pop star Sting, Sir Terence Conran and Queen Paola of Belgium.

If you want a taste of Lennox-Boyd's landscape design in London, go for a signature cocktail on the roof garden of No.1 Poultry, a striking apex design inspired by visions of a ploughed field.

ROBERT MYERS

After 24 years in business, Myers has an extensive portfolio designing private, public and commercial gardens, and has just finished a new children's garden at Hampton Court Palace. Attending to the cultural and historical context of Henry

VIII and his courtiers, Myers and his team designed a garden with 'a tournament ground, a wild wood, a strange topiary garden, and a spiral mount with moat and grotto'.

His most rewarding jobs have been with long-term clients, giving the landscape a chance to develop over time. A timeless scheme, he says, is the Holy Grail; where ephemeral planting is supported by an enduring structure that comes back to the architecture of a garden.

PIET OUDOLF

The Dutch landscape designer, nurseryman and writer Piet Oudolf was a pioneer of the 'New Perennials' movement,

favouring a plant's structure and texture, over their decorative qualities.

Behind this impulse was a desire for naturalism: to explore and exploit the boundary between control and freedom. This apparent free-form of planting is, however, meticulously plotted on one of Oudolf's hand-drawn maps, and it is perhaps this tension between freedom and control that makes his work so interesting.

Oudolf sees his approach as a break from the English garden ideal of manicured lawns, seeing gardening 'not as decoration but more of a process.' As a result of this philosophy, a garden designed by Oudolf will have character all year round.

DAN PEARSON

With regular columns in the national press, a rugged beard and a twinkly demeanour, Pearson is the Nigel Slater of gardening. Pearson established his career and firm in 1987, and has since collaborated with architects, designers and craftsmen on a number and variety of commissions, from domestic gardens to civic landscapes.

Fundamental to Pearson's practice is the naturalistic use of plants, and Pearson was one of the earliest contemporary practitioners of perennial planting in the UK. His landscapes are romantic, ephemeral and wispy, retaining a 'quiet structure' even as the plants grow freely.

His list of clients includes fashion designer Paul Smith, the art dealer Ivor Braka, and, unsurprisingly, Nigel Slater.

TOM STUART-SMITH

Stuart-Smith hones his ideas and skills on his land in Herefordshire, where he grew up and has brought up his own children. Having worked for renowned landscape architects Hal Moggridge and later Elizabeth Banks, Stuart-Smith set up on his own in 1998.

'We are a practice of eleven and work on projects from the occasional small London garden to large landscapes, from public parks and gardens in many different parts of the world to private estates,' he says.

His most notable work is in the UK, and includes an arboretum for Stephen Hester, former CEO of RBS, at his estate in Oxfordshire. The arboretum is home to five of the first Australian Wollemi pines brought to the UK. 'Underlying all our work,' says Stuart-Smith, 'is a desire to make connections between the natural world and the world of culture and ideas.'

ANDY STURGEON

Sturgeon established his firm in 1988 and has since received international commissions ranging from private roof gardens to rambling country estates to commercial projects.

'We work for lots of different people,' he says, 'CEOs, creative types, the National Trust...'

Central to his garden design is 'an obsession with modernist architecture,' he says. Sturgeon draws inspiration from the block shapes, clean lines, and stripped-back aesthetic of Le Corbusier's architecture in particular. Like Le Corbusier, Sturgeon too uses traditional materials and historical references alongside contemporary styling.

Though he works all around the world, Sturgeon says that the UK is the best place for his trade. The climate allows for a huge range of plants (even palm trees can grow here), and the British are a particularly appreciative audience when it comes to gardens.

JO THOMPSON

'There's nothing more heart-warming than tumbling roses round a door,' says landscape designer Thompson; a sentiment that pinpoints her individual style of bold lines softened by planting.

Since she quit her job as a drama teacher and established her company eleven years ago, Thompson has designed gardens all round the world, and won many gold and silver medals at Chelsea flower show.

'Clients become friends,' says Thompson, whose approach is to invest extensive time with the client, finding out what they like and factoring preference into what will work within the setting. While reflecting her clients' vision, Thompson retains her signature emphasis — the contrast between wild and structured, soft and bold.



Tom Stuart-Smith



Andy Sturgeon

KIM WILKIE

From Moscow to Pennsylvania, Kim Wilkie has crafted and shaped landscape since he established his studio in 1989.

Wilkie attends to the natural rhythms and flows of the landscape, and always considers the nature of the site as his starting point.

Wilkie studied history at Oxford and landscape architecture at the University of California, and he combines the two in the physical

landscapes he creates.

He is currently working on redesigning the grounds of Natural History Museum in Kensington.

'What I really enjoy is sculpting soil and land,' maintains Wilkie.

Charles Bridgeman is one of his inspirations; an early 18th-century landscape architect of whom the poet Alexander Pope wrote, made 'work to wonder at'.

The project he is most proud of is his own farm in Hampshire, where he tends to his cows.