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G A R D E N
D E S I G N E R S

Britain has such a long and illustrious history of gardens and gardening that it is no surprise we are able to boast some of the world's leading garden designers, many with a truly international client base. Within this context of gardening excellence, the designers we have selected here all possess a deep knowledge of plants, an intuitive sense of space and setting – and a certain extra something that sets their work apart from the rest. Focusing on domestic-scale garden design rather than large-scale landscape architecture, we have, after much deliberation, picked our top 25: the creatives whose work we think represents the very best of British garden design.

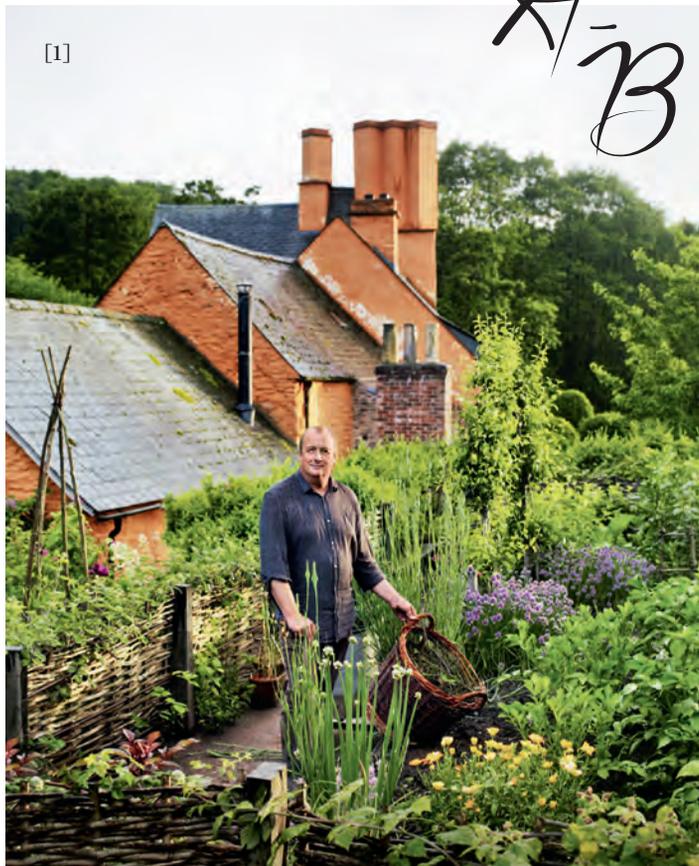
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[1]



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[1] Arne Maynard in his garden in Monmouthshire.
[2] Andy Sturgeon is an RHS Chelsea Flower Show regular

ACRES WILD

Last year Debbie Roberts and Ian Smith celebrated 30 years as Acres Wild. Specialising in large rural gardens, they blend contemporary and traditional elements to create generously planted designs within tightly structured frameworks. The projects they most enjoy are those in beautiful locations, which have a strong sense of place and plenty of detail in the design.

We say 'Acres Wild is experienced at making beautiful gardens, which are designed to be used and are easy to maintain.' acreswild.co.uk

ANDY STURGEON DESIGN

A high-profile designer of innovative, contemporary gardens, Andy (below left) is a regular at the RHS Chelsea Flower Show. This year, he will reveal his ninth show garden for M&G - a woodland glade with dramatic pools and burnt timber sculptures. From his Brighton base, he designs public and private gardens in the UK and abroad, and current work includes a new garden for the National Trust at Beningbrough Hall, North Yorkshire.

He says 'It's a very exciting project - we're working on different areas, including a Mediterranean garden and circular hedged enclosures in the walled garden.' andysturgeon.com

ARABELLA LENNOX-BOYD LANDSCAPE DESIGN

One of the most accomplished garden and landscape designers of our times, Arabella has more than 40 years of experience. She decided recently to wind down her business, but still designs on a more personal basis. 'I'm enjoying myself more than ever with wonderful old clients and appreciative new, younger ones.'

She says 'In recent years, I have loved travelling to see plants in the wild. Nature is a wonderful teacher.'

We say 'Arabella's gardens are based on solid design principles with beautiful planting. Her own garden at Gresgarth Hall in Lancashire is the perfect representation of her work.' arabellalennoxboyd.com

ARNE MAYNARD GARDEN DESIGN

Over the past 25 years, Arne (left) has become synonymous with elegant country-garden style, combining romantic planting with strong green architecture and beautiful detailing. Recently, he has been taking on more work abroad, relishing the challenge of new climates. At home, in response to demand for cut-flower gardens, he is designing complex planting plans that work on the idea of colour gradation.

He says 'We're not designing fashion or statement pieces; our gardens are all about horticulture and the art of gardening. They are landscapes to be gardened, from the compost heap up.' **We say** 'Arne makes real gardens that blend seamlessly into their setting. Designed to be lived in and used, they are as functional as they are beautiful.' arnemaynard.com

BALSTON AGIUS

Michael Balston and Marie-Louise Agius have worked together since 2010 and have a large portfolio of private and estate gardens. Michael's background is in architecture, while Marie-Louise is a director of Exbury Gardens in Hampshire. Their beautiful designs combine sophisticated landscaping with interesting planting, and current projects include a new Maggie's Centre in Leeds, working in partnership with Heatherwick Studio, and a new garden area at Exbury.

They say 'Making a garden is like conducting an orchestra. We work throughout with other specialists to create gardens that work hard in every season.' balstonagius.co.uk

BUNNY GUINNESS DESIGN

Bunny Guinness has been creating gardens for 30 years and now works with her daughter, Unity, on both private and public projects. Recent projects have included a garden for a hotel and spa in Gloucestershire, and a Horatio's Garden for the Midland Centre for Spinal Injuries in Oswestry.

She says 'We work in a very personal way. When we visit clients for the first time, we spend the whole day with them, sketching out ideas on a survey plan so that they feel part of the process.' bunnyguinness.com ▷