

CHELSEA PREVIEW 2015
by Zia Allaway

SHOW STOPPERS

RHS Chelsea Flower Show 2015 promises eclectic designs, from landscapes inspired by nature to gardens celebrating artistic movements of the early 20th century

INSPIRATIONS FOR this year's RHS Chelsea Flower Show range from the beauty of the British countryside to exotic landscapes of the Middle East, Asia and Australia, with each design promising a rich seam of ideas to enthral the visitor. Themes for 2015 are varied, but a thread that runs through many of the designs is the portrayal of the garden as a 'sanctuary', a place where conflicts can be resolved and families and communities are brought together. This concept is seen in 'The Beauty of Islam' garden, through which designer Kamelia Bin Zaal presents a positive image of Arab culture and Islam, and in Tatyana Shynkarenko's vision of how her war-torn country can be healed in 'The Peace in Ukraine Garden'. Meanwhile, Adam Frost's 'Homebase Garden' and 'The Morgan Stanley Healthy Cities Garden' by Chris Beardshaw are both community gardens designed to connect people from diverse cultures and backgrounds.

Commemoration of those who fought in World War I was a major theme in 2014, and designers this year are continuing to remind us of past conflicts, with Wilson McWilliam's 'The Living Legacy Garden' referencing the 200th anniversary of the Battle of Waterloo; John Tan and Raymond Toh commemorating the Commonwealth personnel who died in the Far East during World War II; and John Everiss' artisan garden depicting his father's experiences as an RAF evader after being shot down in France in 1943.

Designers have also been inspired by environmental issues, showing how gardens can help to protect our fragile ecosystems. 'The Royal Bank of Canada Garden', designed by Matthew Wilson, includes eco-friendly water management systems, while Darren Hawkes' 'Brewin Dolphin Garden' and Sarah Eberle's Fresh Garden, 'Beyond our Borders', both highlight the potential threat posed by plant pests and diseases.

09 L'OCCITANE: A PERFUMER'S GARDEN IN GRASSE

James Basson



James Basson is renowned for his edgy show gardens – he won the Fresh category in 2012 for 'After the Fire' – but he has put aside more radical design ideas this year to create a flower-filled slice of Provence for L'Occitane. The garden celebrates the perfume industry in the Grasse region, which has been in decline for several years, but now with the support of ecologically sensitive companies such as L'Occitane, it is experiencing a significant renaissance. James says: "I live in Grasse in Provence and love the landscape and scented plants that grow there – they are at the heart of my work outside the show garden world. We also share the same values as L'Occitane, with a love for the environment and nature."

Inspired by the flora in Grasse, James' design evokes the historical

garden of a perfume grower, filled with scented flowers and aromatic plants that thrive in the dry Mediterranean environment. He is also including some plants that grow in shadier, damp areas close to streams and rivers. Key species include osmanthus, bergamot, lavender, thyme and rosemary, which are all used in the perfume industry. The garden also features a *lavoir*, a historical bathhouse seen throughout Europe, which James has reimagined as a spa. scapedesign.com

MAIN THEME: Traditional French flower garden

KEY FEATURES: Drought-tolerant planting; colourful scented flowers; rill; natural materials; French bathhouse reimagined as a spa



"The landscape and scented plants of Provence are at the heart of my work"

James Basson