

## Designer whose talents were nurtured at Greenwich University going for Chelsea gardening gold



A TOP designer whose talents were nurtured in Greenwich has been picked to create a prestigious garden for the Chelsea Flower Show.

James Basson who studied garden design at the University of Greenwich in the 90s has been chosen by M&G Investments, the show's title sponsor, to create its garden this year. The designer clinched the gold award for his show stopping Provence garden at last year's Chelsea Flower Show.

Mr Basson who credits the university for helping him find his vocation is to create a design inspired by Malta. The award winning designer aims to showcase how the country's progress in dealing with its environmental challenges such as shortage of water. He is to create lots of different areas from coastal to woodland within a quarry type structure. The show is set to be the first time some of Malta's unique plants have been seen in this country as Mr Basson has secured special permission to use them from the Maltese government.

Mr Basson who graduated from the University of Greenwich in 1998 has praised the course he studied. He said: "Coming from a background in painting I had no real design experience, but the BA Garden Design course was so open minded, conceptual and creative that it fulfilled the artistic side whilst adding to my love of the outdoors. As a child I was often to be found up a tree or on the open seas. The course art director – Ivan Tatum was particularly encouraging from the creative point of view. The course was a perfect fit and I found my vocation. To study the evolution from creative thought to the design process was incredibly exciting."

After leaving Greenwich Mr Basson moved to the South of France with his wife Helen and the couple set up their own practice called "Scape Design. He said they began doing everything from "kit pools, to fencing, planting and maintenance" but eventually the design side began to take over. Due to the couple's location they began to establish a reputation for ecologically sustainable dry landscapes and won success for show gardens around the world.

He said the key message behind his garden is to showcase the work done in Malta to face sustainability issues by using desalination for water, waste disposal, composting and water run-off. The design also aims to show how man made environments such as quarries can be reintegrated in to the landscape in a sustainable way.

He said: "We fell in love with Malta. It has such an incredibly diverse landscape, and an amazing natural flora considering the harsh climate and soil conditions the plants have to endure. The quarry's in Malta are majestic, with a cathedral-like quality that is breath-taking and dramatic all at once."

"M& G were brave enough to take on what is a bold design with no questions asked, for which we are unbelievably grateful. Added to this is the professionalism and support of Crocus who have such a successful track record at Chelsea who are building it. We consider ourselves very fortunate."

**Link:** <https://www.londonnewsonline.co.uk/24209/designer-whose-talents-nurtured-greenwich-going-chelsea-gardening-gold/>