



English gardens...then & now

A tour for the Education of the Gardener and Garden Lover.

With Julia Guest

May / June 2019

Visiting gardens is a great pleasure. Planning and escorting tours of her own design, Julia Guest invites garden lovers to England for this, her 21st garden tour to England. Since 1988, she has organised the very successful English Garden Tours for renowned landscape designer and English Garden History expert Ron Rule, and later for Des Kennedy; and since 2013 tours have been available only to private groups. Travel Concepts invites you to travel with Julia in 2019 on this exclusive and extraordinary tour.

Imagine a tour with an agenda with appointments to see at a comfortable pace some of the most cutting-edge gardens in England, in your own chartered bus with a professional driver, staying in great hotels with like-minded travellers. The tour is about experiences and opportunities to learn about how English gardens have evolved; how to look and see, listening to our garden hosts and guides, exploring and refining your own artistic likes and dislikes. At the end of the day, settle down in a small, friendly, cozy inn where an evening walk after dinner is likely. This tour, which includes visits to a diverse collection of British gardens, both public and private, is designed to appeal to both garden aficionados as well as those who simply appreciate the art of a lovely garden. Going beyond the garden gate, connections have been forged over the years to spend time with leading-edge head gardeners, garden owners – collectively “garden makers” - otherwise not available to the garden visiting public. If the gardens are not familiar – do not be discouraged! Insight into the how and why and when of the garden is explained thoroughly; a reading list will be provided.

Lovely locations, engaging companions, a truly in-depth excursion to some of the most beautiful countryside in the world – this exploration of English gardens has wide appeal.

The English Garden Tour is a 12 day/11-night tour with accommodation for 3 nights in London, 5 nights in Cirencester in the Cotswolds, and 3 nights in Bath.

The Itinerary

Day 1: May 22nd / Arrival

A transfer from London’s Heathrow Airport will be provided to coincide with the arrival from Vancouver of a designated flight (Air Canada or British Airways dependent of scheduling and fares).

Day 1 through 3: May 22nd – 25th / The Baileys Hotel, South Kensington, London

Baileys Hotel has a townhouse feel and old-world charm with the flair of fashionable South Kensington. The newly refurbished bedrooms and bathrooms have been completed to a high standard. All rooms are well equipped, the public areas include a stylish and contemporary and award-winning restaurant. The location is excellent and has been favoured for all London-based garden tours for several years.

Day 4 through 9: May 25th to 30th / The Fleece Hotel, Cirencester in The Cotswolds

Situated in Cirencester town centre, The Fleece is a 300

year old Grade II listed building boasting original beams and log fires. All 28 rooms are well equipped with a bath, shower, toiletries, tea & coffee making facilities. The 1651 Bar and Restaurant serves international dishes with locally sourced ingredients and the lounge bar offers sandwiches and snacks throughout the day.

Cirencester is a lovely town, just a little off the tourist route (for no good reason other than the road system) making it a delightful destination for our tour, there is lots of public garden space to walk in the morning and evenings, easy to make a picnic for dinner.

Day 9 through 12: May 30th to June 2nd / The Abbey Hotel, Bath

The Abbey Hotel enjoys an enviable position in the heart of Bath, 2 minutes walk from the Roman Baths and Bath Abbey. All 62 rooms are tastefully decorated with a contemporary feel that compliments this historic building. The ArtBar and Lounge offers morning coffee, light lunches and afternoon tea, the Allium Brasserie offers a lively internationally influenced menu that has earned 3 AA Rosettes.

Day 12: June 2nd / Departure

A departure transfer at mid-day to London Heathrow Airport.

A word about the hotels ... the emphasis of the tour are the unique gardens we will visit. The hotels are chosen primarily for the convenience of access to the gardens on our journey. We do not book purpose built 'tourist' hotels but use three- and four-star hotels with character and atmosphere. The hotels are not "ultra-modern" but they will be in interesting locations and will be inspected by our representative in England to ensure their suitability.

The Gardens

First, a reminder – do not be alarmed...

1. If you do not recognize the names and significance of these gardens...wonderful! We hope to satisfy your curiosity, broaden your knowledge and enjoyment of garden history and design. You will be supplied with a map, garden notes and a suggested reading list. Bus talks and chats will give everyone a chance to share their thoughts and impressions and learn from one another.
2. The distance between gardens is minimal for the most part and so visiting 2 gardens in one day will not be onerous.

Bryan's Ground is in Hertfordshire, a contemporary private garden of 3 acres intimate garden rooms of exceptional planting. Follies, excellent gardening practices and artistic touches where there is little evidence of 21st Century garden trends. This has been a favourite of tours in the past years.

Chelsea Flower Show is the gardening equivalent of the Paris catwalk of fashion – see the dramatic, artistic, imaginative interpretations of the latest trends with great ideas to take away and ... interesting shopping. There is much to see, and entry is for a full day: 8:00am to 8:00pm.

Gothic House is the private home and garden of garden photographer Andrew Lawson and his artist wife, designed for sculpture display and rich with colour associations. Lots of good ideas to bring home from this garden.

Hidcote Manor is one of the most famous and iconic gardens in Britain where the first garden rooms were introduced over 100 years ago. Now owned and well maintained by the National Trust it is included as a necessary garden to visit for the education of English Garden History.

Kiftsgate Court is a neighbour to Hidcote but so different. Three generations of women shaped these gardens; Anne Chambers has introduced contemporary styles into this quintessentially English Country Garden, and home of the Kiftsgate Rose.

Oxford and the Worcester College Garden considered the most important of all College Gardens of Oxford. Time will be allowed to visit the Botanical Garden – the oldest in Britain - to take a walk or browse the shops.

Pettifers is a private garden and called a “horticultural feast” of harmonizing colour by Des Kennedy; we will be met by the owner on this visit followed by tea and biscuits for further conversation.

Rodmarton Manor is open especially for us and here we will visit both house and garden for a study of a truly authentic Arts & Crafts style and it remains so today.

Rousham is an 18thC landscape garden made in the Tudor and Stuart style, has remained one of the most influential English gardens since its creation. This garden never fails to be a favourite for garden tour guests.

Shute House is a magical 20thC garden of water, turf and trees. It is considered to be Geoffrey Jellicoe's masterpiece.

Sissinghurst is the garden of Vita Sackville-West and Harold Nicholson. It is a fascinating and magic place consisting of garden rooms linked by vistas or walks of hedged plants; the passion of its creators is evident in the abundant and exuberant planting. Time for lunch in the café and to browse the giftshop before returning to London in the afternoon.

Spilsbury Farm is a private garden created by garden designer Tania Compton. This idyllic Wiltshire farmhouse's original rolling lawns and clipped hedges have been replaced with a wildflower meadow and a flourishing orchard where nature has been given the upper hand.

Stourhead is an icon of garden taste – a mid 18th century landscape garden enriched with superb ornamental buildings and woodland planting around a lake.

Here is how it works

The tour is offered to just 14 participants

Per person, based on shared accommodation is CA\$5880

A supplement for sole occupancy is charged by the hotels, is CA\$1700

The minimum participation required is 10 passengers, and the cost is based on current British Pound exchange rates which is subject to change. All due diligence is practiced by Travel Concepts to secure exchange rates at the best possible cost.

Included in the tour cost

- Transportation throughout by 17-seat Mercedes motorcoach (the size specifically requested for access to some of the private gardens to be visited) with a professional driver including all fuel charges, parking fees, road taxes and driver expenses; equipped with a small refrigerator, air conditioning and USB ports.
- Accommodation as detailed with private facilities.
- Full English breakfast daily, Continental or English Breakfast – or both.
- All garden entry fees; many are by special arrangements for private visits and with an introduction by the owner or Head Gardener. Guiding is included where considered advantageous and offered by the property. On some occasions refreshments will be provided and are included.
- Full day entry for May 23rd to the Chelsea Flower Show. (There is some urgency for booking tickets!)
- Three dinners during the tour including a Welcome dinner in Cirencester and Farewell dinner in Bath.
- Value Added Tax (VAT) is 20% and included.
- Transfer of luggage from the motorcoach to hotel on each arrival and departure. Guests are asked to keep their luggage to one medium size suitcase and are not required to handle their own bags to and from hotel rooms.
- Gratuities for the driver and garden guides.
- The tour is researched, developed and planned specifically for this group by Julia Guest of Travel Concepts, who will accompany the tour as Tour Leader and Garden Guide.

- A reading list.
- A tour booklet will be available 3-4 weeks before the tour commencement date, containing a detailed agenda, hotel contact list and passenger list, notes on the gardens to be visited, ideas of what to pack and how much money to budget. Flight tickets, itinerary and all other arrangements made personally for you by Travel Concepts will be included. There will be a pre-tour meeting for distribution of these booklets.

Payment:

A deposit to secure space is \$1500 per person and the balance is due by March 5th, 2019. Tickets to the Chelsea Flower Show will be available to those who book earliest as availability is limited. A completed tour booking form and waiver must be returned to Travel Concepts.

The tour cost does not include transportation to/from home cities to London, please speak to Julia for assistance in booking flights and any additional accommodation as may be needed.

Cancellation:

All payments are non-refundable and non-transferrable as they are made. Cancellation insurance is strongly recommended, and Travel Concepts will assist with this on an individual basis.

The gardens chosen may be altered and further inclusions made if considered an enhancement to the tour, and hotels of equal quality may be substituted. Furthermore, changes to the gardens included may be necessitated by the garden owners as many are private and non-commercial, therefore beyond the control of Travel Concepts. The tour cost is subject to change due to currency fluctuations and other conditions beyond the control of Travel Concepts.

Contact Julia Guest at Travel Concepts, 103 – 3151 Woodbine Drv., Edgemont Village, North Vancouver V7R 2S4 Tel: (604) 926-8511 or direct (778) 945-9014 Email: juliag@trvlconcepts.com



Recent tour members to England have said.....

“The personal camaraderie, lodging, transportation, advance preparation, bus commentary & open discussions were wonderful”

“The variety of exceptional gardens gave a course in garden design that I will use to study further and use in my own garden”.

“Expanded my consciousness of ‘what is a garden?’ and loved meeting the owners/gardeners. It has allowed me to see gardens differently.”

“It was all the best and beautifully balanced – great timing and superb organization”.