

Fine Pruning

We catch up with a few Cornish-inspired exhibitors as they make final preparations for this year's Chelsea Flower Show

Exhibitor: Tom Hoblyn/Homebase Memories of Cornwall Show Garden

Describe your exhibition in 30 words or less

The garden has been inspired by my childhood memories of Cornwall. I've taken inspiration from the majestic Cheesewrings on Bodmin Moor, the rock pools and beach streams of the Cornish coast and the gardens at Trebah and Trewithen. It will incorporate a granite-edged natural swimming pool and a striking circular pavilion with 'shadow' pool set amongst naturalistic planting.

How long have you been preparing for the event?

It takes about 100 days from initial concept to final build to create a Chelsea garden. I've been sourcing plants since July 2010 and will be visiting the nurseries on a regular basis to check on progress.

Why should visitors head for your exhibit?

I'm hoping the garden will be a pleasing contrast to the now familiar linear-style

Chelsea gardens – easy on the eye, organic and natural. Visitors might feel nostalgic yearnings for the 1980s as I've chosen a retro planting palette using plants that were once commonplace at Chelsea, such as bamboo, rhododendron and magnolia. We will also include the first natural swimming pool seen at Chelsea.

What aspect of your exhibit are you most concerned about?

I've sourced the granite, which will edge the two pools and form the basis of the water rill that connects them, from the De Lank Quarry – the last remaining commercial quarry in Cornwall. It will arrive at Chelsea as individual jigsaw pieces weighing in at 1 tonne a piece. The intricate arrangement of each piece needs to be millimetre perfect in order to achieve the desired water flow. I'll be visiting the quarry to check everything fits together, so there are no dramas on the day.

Why is it important to you to be at the Chelsea Flower Show?

Chelsea is probably the biggest flower



show in the world. There's a great atmosphere and it's great to work with friends and colleagues in the industry.

What is it about Cornwall that inspires you in your gardening?

I have a strong affinity to Cornwall as my family farmed there for many generations. I love its wild, somewhat random landscape. I've tried to recreate this in the Chelsea garden using traditional Cornish plants that I remember seeing as a child, and planting them in a naturalistic kind of way. I want to use a planting style to reflect the more informal expanses of Cornish gardens, so expect to see tall Scots pine trees poking through boulder-like rhododendrons surrounded by grasses and perennials.

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