

Philadelphia Flower Show Celebrates Art Of Gardening

PHILADELPHIA — The Pennsylvania Horticultural Society's 1999 Philadelphia Flower Show, "Design On Nature . . . The Art Of Gardening," utilizes great gardens of the past to provide a wellspring of ideas for today's garden designs.

In 1999, the internationally acclaimed Philadelphia Flower Show, a tradition since 1829, recognizes the natural visions of 19th century American Romantics, who began a true American style of craftsmanship in harmony with nature. Honoring gardens as beautiful and distinguished works of art, the Show presents a captivating look at the use of sculpture, architecture, and other works of art as it enhances the allure of garden landscapes.

The show, sponsored by PNC Bank, features 10 acres of traditional formal designs, with elegant fountains and statuary as the glittering inspiration behind this year's theme. The central feature, "Art and the American Garden," by Stoney Bank Nursery, Glen Mills, presents an exquisite, tranquil garden of American Garden Statuary from the 1920s and 1930s in a classic ornamental set-

ting (Jack Blandy, owner, Stoney Bank, and 1998 "Best-in-Show" winner, celebrates his 20th year with the Show). Working with the prestigious Conner-Rosenkranz Gallery in Manhattan, this display pays homage to the art of gardening and floral design with an interconnected series of 12 "micro" gardens with exquisitely decorative landscape sculpture.

Continuing the compelling centerpiece exhibits is the insightful display, "Sugar Run School House — Perry County, PA circa 1840," by Romano's Landscaping, Pitman, N.J. Here, an authentic rural schoolhouse sits nestled amid an outdoor classroom setting where young artists are depicted painting wildflowers native to the area. This original wooden schoolhouse structure is emblematic of functional mid-century American architecture. The structure, donated to the Show by Homer and Loretta Gelbaugh of Millerstown, will be reconstructed for this inspired study of a rural "Design on Nature."

The 50th anniversary of the National Trust For Historic Preservation, headquartered in Washington, D.C., will be celebrated with

an exhibit that recognizes the American design elegance of the turn of the century period. This culturally sophisticated time is captured in "Irreplaceable Places," an exhibit featuring four of the many formal gardens maintained by the National Trust.

The elaborate magnificence of the Kykuit gardens at the Rockefeller Mansion, located on the lush banks of the Hudson River, is captured in a distinctive exhibit featuring reproductions of classical and contemporary sculpture from the Rockefeller family's personal collection. The Lyndhurst Estate, built when steamboats were the mode of travel along the Hudson River, is the subject of a garden inspired by the Gothic and Grecian "fantastics" of American Romantic architect, A.J. Davis. The artwork of sculptor Daniel Chester French, known for his "Minute-man" statue in Concord, Massachusetts, and his Abraham Lincoln at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C., is showcased in a dramatic replication of his breathtaking gardens at Chestwood in the Berkshire mountains. The display salutes Daniel French and captures the appeal and es-

sence of his expressive talent as "The" sculptor of the American Renaissance. Inspired by the credo, "Fight for a just cause, Love your fellow man, Live a good life," FILOLI, in Northern California, honors the garden as a timeless masterpiece. Famous for its sweeping vistas of greenery, majestic fountains, and acres of lush landscapes, FILOLI extols an idealized rural existence where humanity has a direct intimacy with the natural world.

This glorious quadrant of historic American places, all borne from the wonders of nature, is joined by Cliveden of Philadelphia. Cliveden was the site of the pivotal Battle of Germantown in 1777. Today, this National Historic Landmark, prominently located along Germantown Avenue, the nation's first National Historic Road, is the keystone of a vital historic house museum community in Philadelphia's Germantown section. The Cliveden display also serves as an information booth for the National Trust For Historic Preservation.

The natural intimacy of the Central Feature exhibits is complemented with a meditative water garden by The Ponds and Gardens of Mermaid Lane. Texture, form, and color beckon one to a capti-

vating grotto where a mysterious shrouded figure stands as an icon of aesthetic sensibilities.

The Flower Show's annual showcase of the most talented landscapers, artists, and florists in the industry continues to unfold as 60 major exhibitors present their award-winning landscapes and gardens with traditional and modern motifs throughout 10 acres. These formal and idealized designs depict an integrated gardening history that incorporates artistry, creativity, and natural science.

A fantasy garden, inspired by the ancient world of dinosaurs, provides an ornamental interpretation of a primordial landscape. "Living Fossils" of horsetail, gingko, roundwood, magnolia, and ferns surround an Apatosaurus, with its head rising high above the treetops and gazing at the Show's myriad landscapes that include topiaries, rock gardens, wetlands, and brilliant flower arrangements.

Nearby, an opulent Raj tent is surrounded by vibrant holly, Japanese crabapple, lavender, delphinium, foxgloves, pink roses, and rare topiary azaleas while yellow daffodils, columbine, and witch hazel lead visitors on a serendipitous journey to "Tranquility at Garden's Edge." The

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