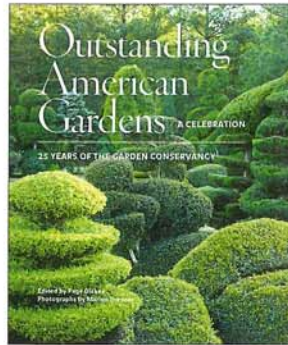


Outstanding American Gardens: A Celebration

Edited by Page Dickey with photographs by Marion Brenner. Stewart, Tabori & Chang, New York, New York, 2015. 272 pages. Publisher's price, hardcover: \$50.

MANY OF THE most culturally significant gardens in the United States would not be open to the public today without the



efforts of the Garden Conservancy. Founded by Frank and Anne Cabot, the Conservancy has “helped to preserve some one hundred private American gardens.” This book celebrates 25 years of the organization’s work by spotlighting eight of them, including the Ruth Bancroft Garden in Walnut Creek, California, with its extraordinary collection of succulents.

This garden was the impetus for the organization’s formation and its first preservation project.

Among the other featured preservation gardens are the Japanese Stroll Garden in Mill Neck, New York, which is one of the few traditional Japanese gardens in the East; and the gardens of Alcatraz in San Francisco, transformed by prisoners from barren landscape to a lush preserve.

The Garden Conservancy is also known for its annual Open Days program, when exceptional private gardens across the country are opened to the public one or two days a year. The book gives readers a glimpse of 42 of these gardens to illustrate the horticultural and artistic achievements of gardeners in all parts of the United States. For each garden, a few descriptive paragraphs provide an *amuse-bouche* to the visual feast provided by the stunning photographs by Marion Brenner.

One of these, Duck Hill in New York’s countryside, belongs to garden designer Page Dickey, who is the book’s editor. Previously a dairy farm, the property now boasts a “series of hedged-in gardens that are formal in outline, rather prim, but containing an exuberant mixture of plantings.” Another is Grey Gulls in Marblehead, Massachusetts, on a promontory overlooking the Atlantic Ocean. Despite being subjected to harsh winter winds, a weeping Camperdown elm withstands the weather just fine, along with artichokes, roses, and a variety of colorful perennials.

Out west, renowned landscape architect Steve Martino designed the Stitelers’ garden in Phoenix, Arizona, to blend in with the surrounding desert landscape. In Santa Monica, California, Wirtz International and local designer Lisa Zeder replaced an English-style garden at the Kayne property with serene green terraces for a more modernist look.

This big, beautiful book provides a wonderful overview of the Garden Conservancy’s work so far. As it showcases some of America’s most outstanding gardens, no doubt you’ll gain inspiration for your own garden.

—Jane Berger

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