

WORK

Best project

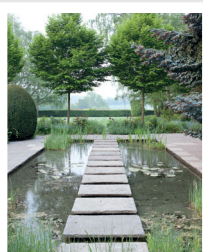
It's impossible to choose one single project! I'm a huge believer in the transformative power of nature on our lives and knowing that the work we do makes such a positive difference is humbling. I'll never tire of seeing a client's joy at the end of a project and knowing that it will last for years to come.

Colleagues

Running a business has taught me to appreciate the value of being surrounded by talented people. There's been days when I've not been quite sure how I'll get everything done. These times are only made 'do-able' by having a great team working with me, along with a network of wonderful people throughout the industry.

Mentors

As a garden builder as well as designer, I've been fortunate throughout my career to work closely with leading designers at the top of their game. Interpreting their design intentions as



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sensitively as possible has been a great source of insight into their creative thinking.

Issues to address

We are of course highly committed to managing the environmental impact of our work. For example, by balancing hard and soft landscaping, designing with vernacular materials in mind, encouraging biodiversity and recycling/reusing/repurposing where possible. However, there is always more that we can do to improve our practices regarding sustainability.

Best learning curve

Definitely delegation. Delegation saves time, makes great use of the talent available and enables us today to manage a busy pipeline of design work, deliver several landscape projects at a time, and service 60+ gardening clients.

The high and low points of your career?



Generally, I am very proud to see a great team delivering amazing projects. The 'icing on the

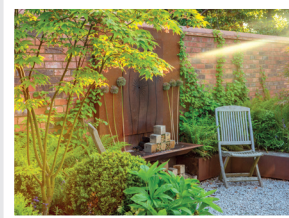
cake' really is our track record of winning multiple national awards. In terms of a low point, the financial crisis of 2008 – we weathered the storm, and no doubt learnt a few things from the experience.

Leadership style

I started out when 'do as I say' was a typical style for bosses to adopt. As something of an introvert, my preference is not to be the centre of attention, but to work alongside people, listening to ideas and reaching decisions after reflection. I think and hope this approach builds other peoples' confidence and trust in me.

What you hope to achieve in your work during the next 12 months?

This year, we are celebrating our 30th business anniversary. We decided to mark this milestone by giving ourselves a new look – a new brand identity and a highly visual website to showcase our work. Our aim is quite simply to celebrate our heritage while illustrating that we are a forward-looking business that continues to evolve.



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LIFE/STYLE

JAMES SCOTT

JAMES SCOTT, MD OF THE GARDEN COMPANY, SHARES WHAT HE'S LEARNED AND EXPERIENCED ON HIS JOURNEY AS A SUCCESSFUL BUSINESS OWNER AS IT REACHES ITS 30TH ANNIVERSARY

INSPIRATION

People

As a student and in the early years of my career, the designers that most influenced me were those such as John Brookes, Geoffrey Jellicoe, Christopher Bradley-Hole and Tom Stuart-Smith. My grandparents gave me Geoffrey Jellicoe's 'Private Modern Gardens' and I still dip into it now for inspiration. More recently, leading garden designers including Cleve West, James Basson, Debbie Roberts and Ian Smith of Acres Wild, and Julie Toll have been a big personal influence. Their gardens have left a lasting

impact on me and added to my mental 'filing cabinet' of ideas. I have been lucky to work closely with several of them.

Gardens

My grandparent's rambling Cotswold garden and orchard held an intoxicating promise of adventure that inspired my love of nature and my appreciation of gardens as places to engage with. I also love the Alhambra in Andalusia for its grandeur and strikingly contemporary geometry and Sheffield Park Gardens in Sussex for its ambitious sense of scale and for the way in which Capability Brown so intuitively understood how the



gardens would mature long after his lifetime. I have to also mention Hidcote Gardens in Gloucestershire

for its intricately designed compartments, sending the visitor on a journey of discovery.

We are so lucky in the UK to be able to visit some truly outstanding gardens and flower shows. I have visited RHS Chelsea Flower Show every year for more than 30 years (bar last year), immersing myself in as many ideas as I can.

PERSONAL

Hobbies Cooking is similar to gardening for me – a creative way of bringing joy. I get a similar sense of satisfaction making a delicious family meal as I do creating a space that will be a source of happy memories for a client. I'm also a keen guitar player.



Design tastes Abstract art can be a great demonstration of the relationship between certain geometries and colours. A simple image can be a reminder that certain proportions and balances are pleasing to the eye – for example, I like Piet Mondrian's pieces based on squares and rectangles and Wassily Kandinsky's work on the 'harmony of colours'. In terms of architecture, I value Frank Lloyd Wright's legacy, especially for his sense of balance and proportion and the blending of buildings into the landscape.



Food

I love seafood. We have a small holiday home in a shell fishing port in France and I love the local restaurants as well as ingredients available for cooking.

Drink

I'd have to pick a top-quality Bordeaux. I started buying wine en primeur around 15 years ago and I am just starting to reap the benefits!

Most fun you've ever had

I would have to cite being part of a rock covers band which was formed for my 50th birthday party and was so enjoyable (for the band) that we kept it going. We have since played gigs including a paid pub gig just before the first national lockdown. We are family members and friends sharing a passion for playing great songs that people love – Rolling Stones, Beatles, Pink Floyd – all the recent stuff!

TRAVEL

Places you've been

In my youth I enjoyed travelling; some favourite places were Thailand, St Lucia, Mauritius, Botswana. Since we had our children, our summer holidays have been mainly spent in France and Spain.



Places you'd like to go

A longstanding ambition has been to follow the England cricket team on tour overseas – enjoying the cricket obviously and also benefiting from some very special locations. To date, I have seen them play abroad in Pakistan and South Africa.



How you like to travel

I like to travel lightly, but with two teenage daughters this is but a faint memory. More seriously, I do worry about climate change when we are planning a holiday.

We don't fly very often (trips to France are by ferry) and we try to shop and eat like locals wherever we are, but there is always more that we could do to reduce our carbon footprint. Of course, one appealing option is to stay there for longer!

