



LOWER TERRACE

Along the walled garden lies a series of spaces, each geometrically planted in yew or box. The Initials Garden is one such space, a small parterre planted with the initials of family members surrounded by dry stone boundary walls. The contrast between the formal structure of the garden and the Windrush Valley beyond is particularly striking.



ROSE GARDEN

This forms the last space in the sequence on the lower terrace, providing a raised platform to take advantage of the views into the landscape. Here the flower colour breaks from the cool palette used through the main garden with the deep cerises and clarets of *Astrantia* 'Roma', *Aquilegia vulgaris* var. *stellata* 'Ruby Port' and *Rosa* 'Reine des Violettes'.



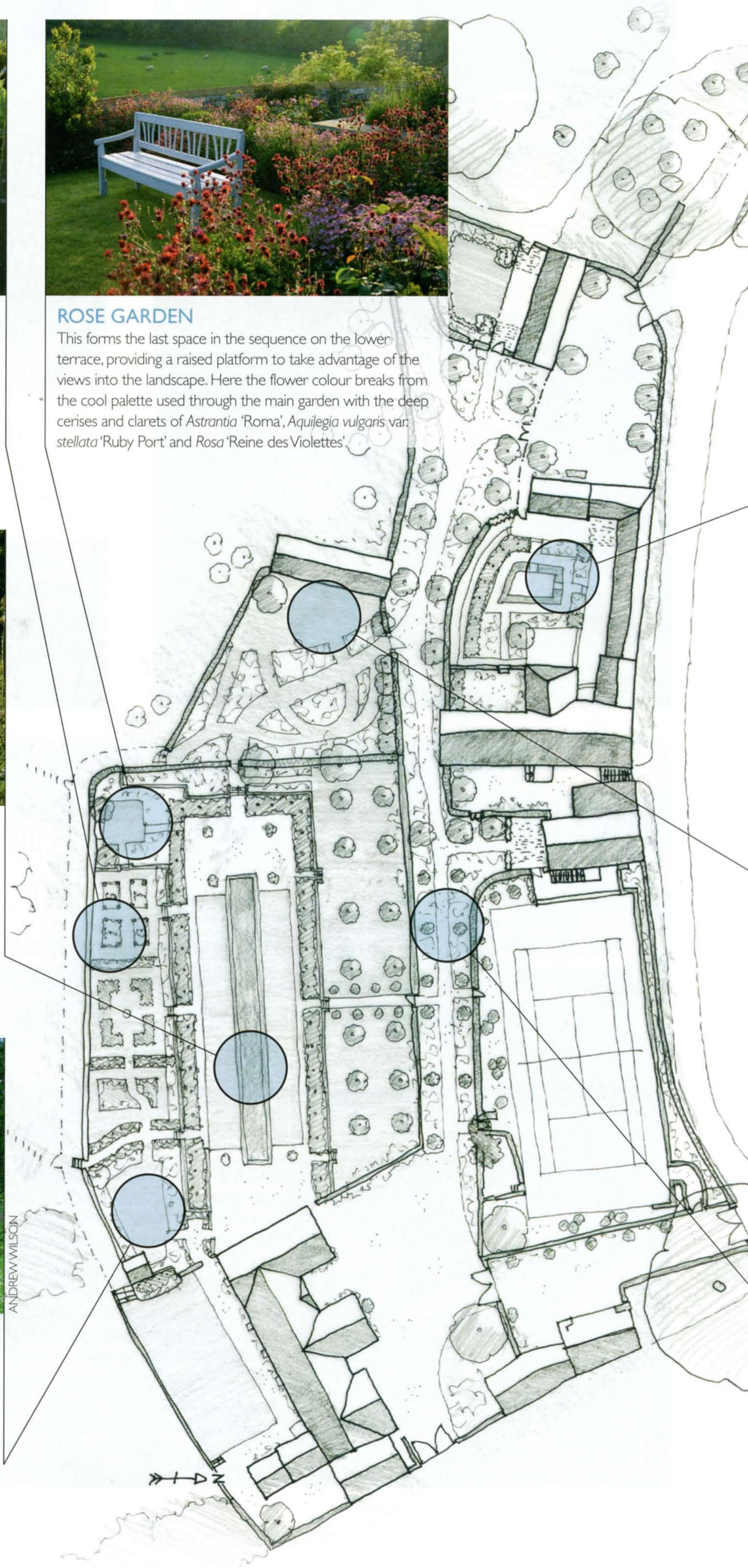
CANAL AND VIEWING SEAT

The long border plateau and canal creates a sense of space and sparkling light. Pleached hornbeams provide enclosure but allow views beyond. The underplanting is a mixture of cool blues and creamy whites of *Campanula persicifolia* var. *alba*, *Lavandula angustifolia* 'Munstead Dwarf', *Eryngium giganteum* 'Miss Willmott's Ghost' and *Paeonia lactiflora* 'Duchesse de Nemours'.



BRIGHT BORDERS

The restrained palette of the long borders cascades down into the warmer tones of the Privy Garden, softening the architecture of the adjacent Manor House. Structural planting of *Rosa* 'Madame Isaac Pereire' and *R.* 'Honorine de Brabant' is supported by the delicate sparks of *Dianthus carthusianorum* and over-sailed by thrusting white *Digitalis*.



ANDREW WILSON



COURTYARD AREA

The most recent garden is the courtyard to the new barn, a sleek and elegant space designed for entertaining and outdoor activities. A curved dry-stone wall forms the south boundary, echoed in the pleached crescent and the paved rill. Lower planting is a mixture of herbs, *Sarcococca* and *Luzula nivea*, scattered through with seasonal bulbs.



PEACOCK GARDEN

Once the home of these stately birds, this small, walled space is an explosion of colour in a series of island beds. Tall feathers of *Calamagrostis x acutiflora* 'Karl Foerster' are echoed by the rockets of *Eremurus* but peppered through this structure are the sizzling colours of *Rosa x odorata* 'Mutabilis', *Achillea millefolium* 'Cerise Queen' and *Hedysarum coronarium*.



GRANARY WALK

This is the spine that holds the garden together, rising from the house along the route of the old road. Now gravelled and planted, a series of yew sentinels creates rhythm and a sense of scale to the walls. Softer colours and textures embroider the corridor verges, with spires of *Perovskia*, *Aconitum* and *Digitalis* perfumed with *Phlox* and *Philadelphus*.

Formal glory

An iconic Cotswold manor house garden is an ongoing project celebrating sensational design and sublime planting. Words Andrew Wilson, photographs Andrew Lawson



Andrew Wilson is a garden designer and lecturer, and is the Royal Horticultural Society's chair of assessors for show gardens.

What most clients want from a garden designer is a safe pair of hands, a confident swagger and a sense of humour. Jinny Blom has all three and, since changing career in 2000, she has taken the garden design world by storm.

For many, she represents romantic planting and English meadows but she enjoys taking gardens apart and reconstructing them, walls, pools, paving and all. She remains as fascinated by dry-stone walling as by

the ratio of yellow rattle to ragged robin, which is just as well for her project at The Manor in Temple Guiting, Gloucestershire.

A builder at heart

The property is Grade I listed, but was in an unfortunate state when the client took over. Both house and garden perch on a steep slope overlooking the Windrush Valley in the Cotswolds; the level changes, requiring serious retaining walls and steps. Although garden lovers dwell on the beauty of planting, this is often the last element to be introduced and so it proved in this case, as the bones and structure of this ancient garden had to be researched and rebuilt before the planting could be defined. Jinny describes herself as "a builder at heart, needing to have the scope to make significant alterations." As a result, and through expert dry-stone waller Gilbert Stirling-Lee, the team won The Pinnacle Achievement Award, one of a handful ever awarded by the Dry Stone Walling Association.

The main garden, after seven years, remains work in progress – news that might startle instant-fix gardeners. However, with an area totalling 14 acres, it would be difficult to develop in one fell swoop. There are 18 garden spaces in total to date – a far cry from the original two. Jinny's masterplan sets out the general structure of the garden and forms a guiding concept. This is not set in stone and, as so often happens at this scale, the scheme evolves. For some clients this is puzzling but it is impossible to design in detail if the area is more than one or two acres.



“ The detail of the rhythmic trunks frames the bucolic view beyond, creating a panorama in cinemascope ”

▷ Design dénouement

The garden is a series of terraces and walled enclosures that spill down the hillside, often organised with simple symmetry and order, exemplified by the lawn and ha-ha in the manor house terrace. The house is otherwise at variance to the garden structure, sitting at an angle to the main ground plan. Within the various spaces, Jinny explores the detail of the gardens, paying particular attention to construction. She finds it difficult to tolerate poor or shoddy workmanship. Although expletives are common if work is below par, she builds up strong and lasting relationships with many of the craftsmen with whom she works, knowing that she will be able to rely on them in future schemes.

Jinny describes her approach to planting as “thorough and joyful”, suggesting that this is an aspect of garden design that she loves. She applies her knowledge and experience to the planting palette but is mindful of clients’ needs and of the needs of those who will be maintaining the garden. In respect of country gardens, Jinny has a more controlled and restrained approach, dictated mainly by context. She tends to let her hair down more in urban situations where gardens are separate entities.

The focus of the manor garden is the elegant formal terrace centred upon a long, stone-edged canal and framed by pleached hornbeams. The detail of the rhythmic trunks frames the bucolic view beyond, creating a panorama in cinemascope as the landscape drops away below. Beneath the pleaching, soft blue iris, purple salvias, white valerians, peonies and lavenders create a gentle texture that playfully contrasts with the honeyed stone, while climbing roses drench the enclosing walls with perfume. Purple-blue and creamy-white palettes percolate through the entire garden, a master stroke of understatement suffused only by the warmer peach and carmine pinks of roses, *Cirsium* and *Eremurus x isabellinus* ‘Cleopatra’ in certain corners or in the colourful Peacock Garden.

Secret spaces

A central spine, the granary walk, dissects the garden between the limestone walls, tracing the route of an ancient road. Rising from the manor house, the garden opens to the elegant terrace and paved stream bed of the new Barn Garden, and to more informal gravel beds, a timeline that brings this place up to date. Smaller vignettes and a walled tennis court afford secret places and hidden gardens to visit as the light and shade changes. This sequence of spaces or ‘destinations’ is the stuff that masterplans are made of.

The view back across the valley to the garden is worth the walk, revealing a property clinging to the valley side like an Italian fortress. What lucky sheep who gaze on this each day! □

NEXT MONTH Philip Nixon



DESIGNER PROFILE

Jinny Blom trained and practiced originally as a transpersonal psychologist and psychotherapist, working for many years for a therapeutic charitable trust in South London. In 1996 she chose to devote herself to her lifelong

interest in natural landscapes and gardens and launched her landscape design practice in 2000. Jinny works on a wide range of projects taking her from the UK across Europe as well as to the USA. She has written for, and appeared in, a wide range of publications, and contributes regularly to radio and television. Jinny has won BBC Broadcaster of the Year and was twice nominated Woman of the Year. She has designed several gardens for the RHS Chelsea Flower Show, winning a gold medal for her garden for Laurent-Perrier in 2007.

useful websites

- **Dynamic 3 Ltd** is a specialist design and construction company based in Forest Hill, London. www.dynamic3.co.uk
- At The Manor, Jinny used the skills of dry stone waller **Gilbert Stirling-Lee of Temple Guiting**. 01451 850820 or www.cotswoldwalls.co.uk
- Based in Sheffield, **Andrew Renwick of Ridgeway Forge** makes gates and railings of exceptional quality using traditional methods. 01246 432836
- Jinny uses **Rand & Asquith of Brighouse**, West Yorkshire, as suppliers for York stone. 01484 719263 or www.randandasquith.co.uk
- For planting, Jinny uses **Crocus**, plant suppliers to many of the top garden designers. 0844 557 2233 or www.crocus.co.uk
- Graham Gough of **Marchants Hardy Plants** offers some more unusual perennials. 01323 811737 or www.marchantshardyplants.co.uk