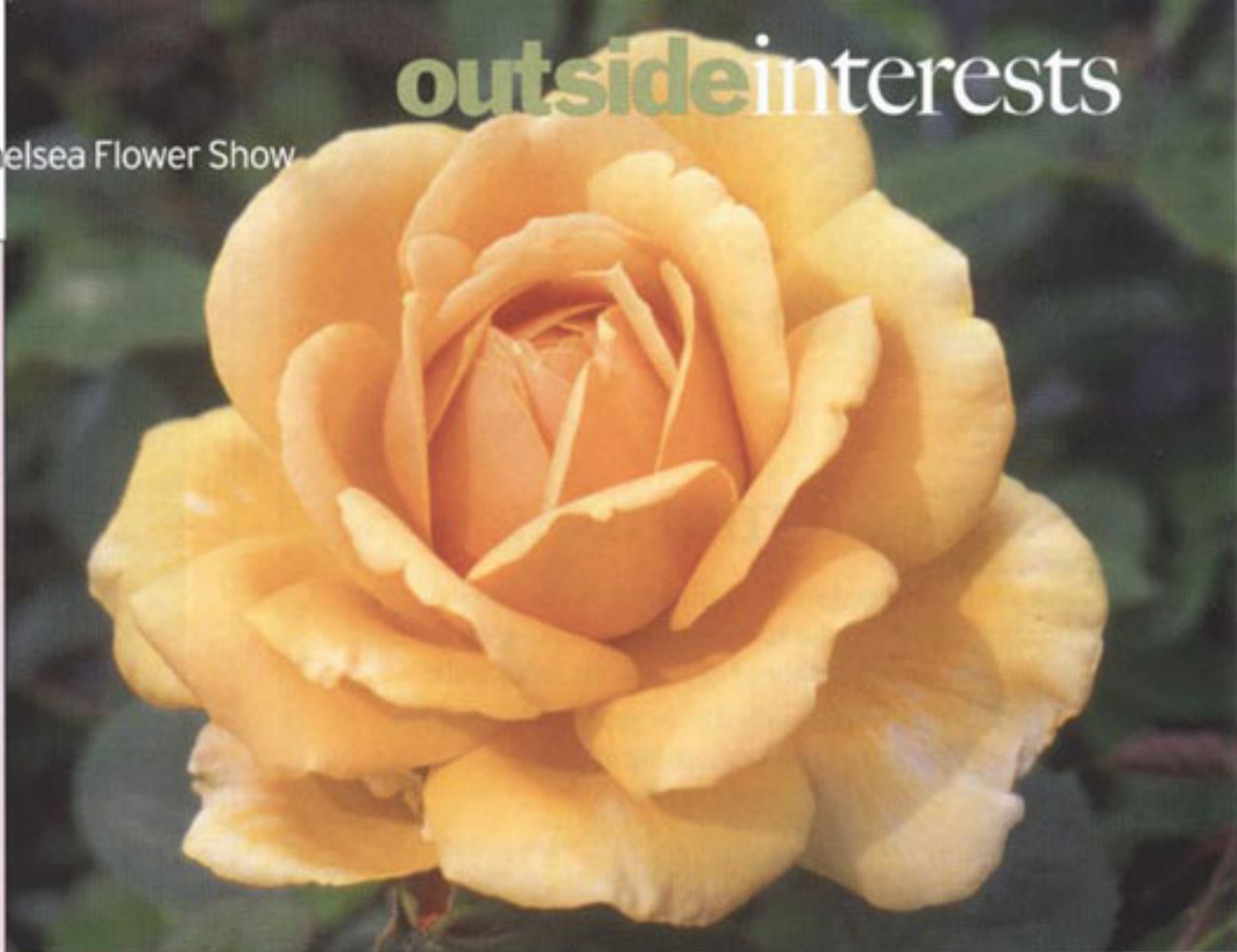


NICOLA SHIPWAY looks forward to Chelsea Flower Show

Over 100 nurseries and specialist growers, 27 small gardens and 20 show gardens - two of which are identified here - will be at **Chelsea Flower Show**, which runs from May 23 to 27 in the grounds of the Royal Hospital, Chelsea, SW3. For tickets, which vary in price and must be bought in advance, call 0870-906 3781, or visit www.rhs.org.uk.



Aspects of **Jinny Blom**'s design for a garden in Scotland (featured in 'Land league' in this issue) are resolutely Scottish - the use of dykes and indigenous trees, for example. The steeply pitched, finial-bedecked roof of the metalwork arbour that forms a focal point in her Laurent-Perrier garden at Chelsea, however, is reminiscent of the roofs of chateaux in the Loire. This garden is Gallic in style and inspiration, bounded on two sides by clipped lime trees that provide a backdrop to the arbour and an L-shaped pool. Softening these elements are 'delicate things in peach colours and cream', including peonies and irises. 'Spring in France is so fleeting,' says Jinny. 'I wanted to capture the moment in the year before it becomes very hot.' At the other end of the garden, the meadow has a wilder, less formal character, with plants in a deeper palette of mulberry and mauve. All the plants in this garden are lime loving - another reference to the Loire, renowned for its chalky soil; and the walls are constructed from clunch.



The Laurent Perrier Garden
Chelsea Flower Show 2006
Jinny Blom

▲ Among the clutch of new roses to be launched at Chelsea by Harkness Roses (tel: 01462-420402, website: www.roses.co.uk) is **Rosa 'St Richard of Chichester'**, named after Richard de Wych, Bishop of Chichester from 1245 until his death in 1253. A handsome, vigorous shrub rose that grows up to 1 metre tall, it produces fresh-scented, amber-golden flowers that are large yet delicately formed, with glossy, mid-green foliage. Proceeds from the sale of R. 'St Richard of Chichester' will go towards the restoration of the Lady Chapel - as will funds raised by **Chichester Cathedral's Festival of Flowers**, during which the cathedral will be transformed magnificently with over 50,000 flowers. The festival runs from June 1 to 3; for details, call 01243-812480.

Until the mid-Nineties, the champion among the winning show gardens at Chelsea Flower Show was awarded a sword of honour. Over a decade before, at the 1980 show, the Queen Mother was presented by the National Farmers' Union with a crown made up of a Bramley apple, cauliflowers and strawberries. Such diverting titbits animate Leslie Geddes-Brown's updated **Chelsea: The Greatest Flower Show on Earth** (Dorling Kindersley, £20), an account of all aspects of Chelsea Flower Show - its history and organization, designers and exhibitors, and even the hats that have been worn since it began, in May 1913. ▷

