

INDUSTRY ZONE

Compiled by Veronica Peerless

Education & career advice plus the latest on SGD members and projects



Debbie Roberts and Ian Smith

A residential project by Acres Wild

PRACTICE PROFILE ACRES WILD

Acres Wild recently became an SGD Registered Practice. Partners **Debbie Roberts MSGD** and **Ian Smith MSGD** explain how they work

How many people do you employ?

There's always been just the two of us, although we employ CAD technicians/garden designers Pre-Registered Member Bo Cook (for masterplans and layout plans) and Ness Simon (for planting plans) on a freelance basis as needed.

Is there a practice style?

We try not to impose a style on any garden or client but we have a tried-and-tested approach to any design, which may look like a 'practice style'.

What kind of projects do you work on?

Predominantly large-scale, rural residential projects in Sussex, Surrey, Hampshire and Kent.

Which completed projects are you most proud of?

They're all so different, but if we absolutely had to choose, Brightling

Down (East Sussex), Blue Doors (West Sussex), Millwater and Norneywood (Surrey), Nursted Barns (Hampshire) and Le Haut (Guernsey).

What are some of the challenges in running a practice as a partnership as opposed to working solo?

We have to focus more on organising the workflow to make sure that our freelancers have the right amount of work for complete days and that deadlines can be met according to the days they are in.

What are you working on?

We usually work on around seven to eight projects each at any one time – they're all at various stages in the design process including two to three projects each on site.

What do you look for in freelancers?

We do all the design work ourselves and take on people for their computer

skills, temperament and affability, although it helps if they have a background in garden design or at least are very interested in the subject.

What software do you use?

Vectorworks 2017 and SketchUp Pro.

How do you envisage the practice growing in the next five years?

We like it just the way it is – it's manageable and fun when we're all in the studio, and we're both still very hands on.

What's the best part of working at Acres Wild?

It can get pretty high-pressured at times, as we have a lot of projects on the go and quite demanding clients, but we pull together and keep it light and good humoured, which is great. The coffee's pretty good too.

www.acreswild.co.uk

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