

ISOLATED BLISS

— BLUE DOORS GARDEN —

ACRES WILD

THIS REMOTE HOUSE AND GARDEN ARE LOCATED ON
THE EDGE OF THE NORFOLK ESTATE IN THE HEART OF
THE SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK, NEAR ARUNDEL

1

PROJECT DETAILS

Project value

£150k

Build time

6 months

Size of project

1,700m²

Awards

SGD Awards

Finalist 2020



2



3



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Located in the heart of the South Downs, this garden is just under half an acre in size. The house is located against the flint wall of the estate on the higher, west side of the garden with the land falling away to the east, with stunning views across the Arun Valley.

Client brief

The brick and flint cottage had been recently extended and refurbished as a weekend retreat. The clients wanted a simple, relaxed and timeless garden which would enhance the house and sit comfortably within the downland setting. Planting was to form a key part of the design and had to be bold yet simple to complement the scale, colours and patterns of the countryside, as well as being relatively easy to maintain and having year-round appeal.

Design and build

The hard landscape design is strong and modern in character, enhancing the remnants of a previous garden. Wide brick steps and a neat square lawn on the east side provide a formal setting for the house, whilst the largest garden area to the north is softer and more natural, creating a visual link to the undulating countryside beyond the flint boundary walls.

A dining terrace is located outside the kitchen on the south side, connected to a seating area with a central brick fire pit. A further smaller terrace is located on the north side of the house to catch the early morning sun and enjoy views across the valley.

Plant choice for the project was limited due to the garden sitting on chalk, and early on in the process the colour palette was restricted to soft blues, mauve, lime and white, harmonising with the colours of the landscape and sky. Ornamental grasses and mound-forming evergreens were used to reflect the textures in the surrounding fields and mimic the clumps of trees seen in the distant views.

Key evergreens featured in the scheme include *Hebe rakaiensis*, used to hug the sides of the steps, *Lavandula angustifolia* 'Hidcote', which edges the formal lawn, and *Buxus sempervirens*, which contains the small vegetable garden. *Cistus x hybridus*, *Choisya ternata*, *Viburnum tinus* and white-flowered hydrangeas provide structure to the sweeping borders, with *Helleborus* ▶

- 1 The view north over the Arun Valley
- 2 The sweeping border enclosing the north lawn
- 3 Brick steps and Breedon gravel paths
- 4 The morning terrace on the house's north side



argutifolius and *Euphorbia x martini*, providing additional evergreen foliage. These lime green spring flowers complement the thousands of spring bulbs planted in bold swathes throughout the massed grasses and summer flowering perennials.

Challenges

Acres Wild worked with the house builders rather than specialist landscape contractors on this particular job and found more liaison and site visits were required than normal. However, once the builders understood that gardens require just as much precision as buildings, they proved to be excellent installers. The builders undertook the first phase of the project, which consisted of all the hard landscaping around the house and down to the carport, including landscaping elements such as the brick and flint walls, brick steps, stone paving and gravel drive surfacing.

- 5 The Posh Shed glimpsed across the garden
- 6 The arrival garden replaces the former drive
- 7 Planting softens the approach to the front door
- 8 The house nestling into its new garden setting
- 9 Roses and *Nepeta* line the paths and steps
- 10 The fire pit built into the terrace
- 11 The dining terrace outside the kitchen

ABOUT ACRES WILD

Debbie Roberts and Ian Smith started Acres Wild in 1988, specialising in the design and masterplanning of larger country gardens. The duo have worked internationally, but now prefer to take on projects closer to home in Sussex, Surrey and Kent. Debbie and Ian's gardens have won the SGD Large Residential Garden Design Award three times, including the Grand Award in 2014.

www.acreswild.co.uk





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