

SEPTEMBER 2000

£3.50 • FF49 • DM17 • hfl17.95

GARDENS

ILLUSTRATED

THE CHELSEA WINNER



WILDERNESS PLANTS:
TRAVELS IN NEW ZEALAND



AUTUMN BERRIES • PEONIES • THE CUTTING GARDEN



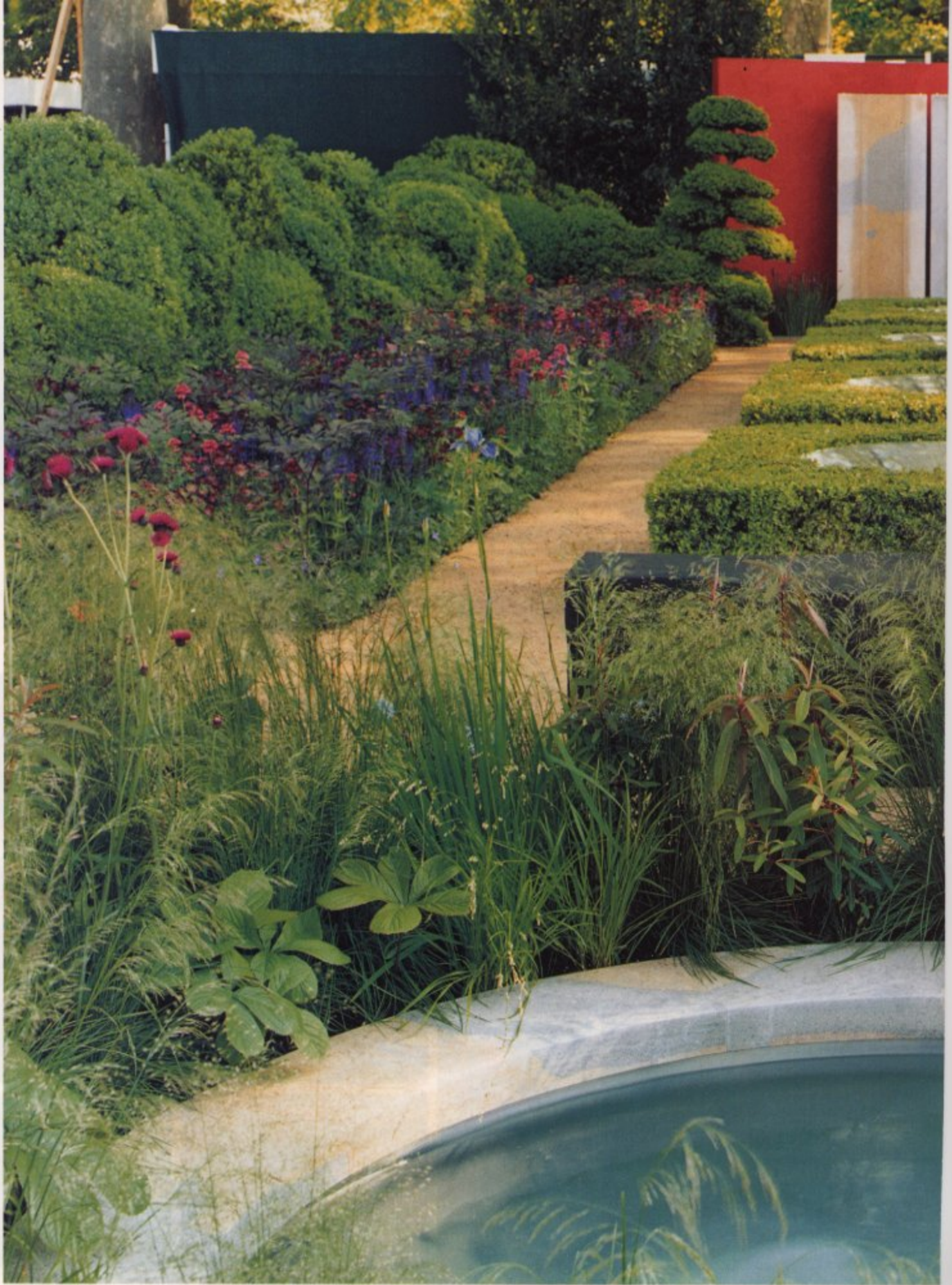
BEST IN SHOW

Rosie Atkins reflects on the hectic build up to Chelsea 2000 and the euphoria when our garden won the coveted Best in Show and a gold medal. *Photographs by Howard Sooley*

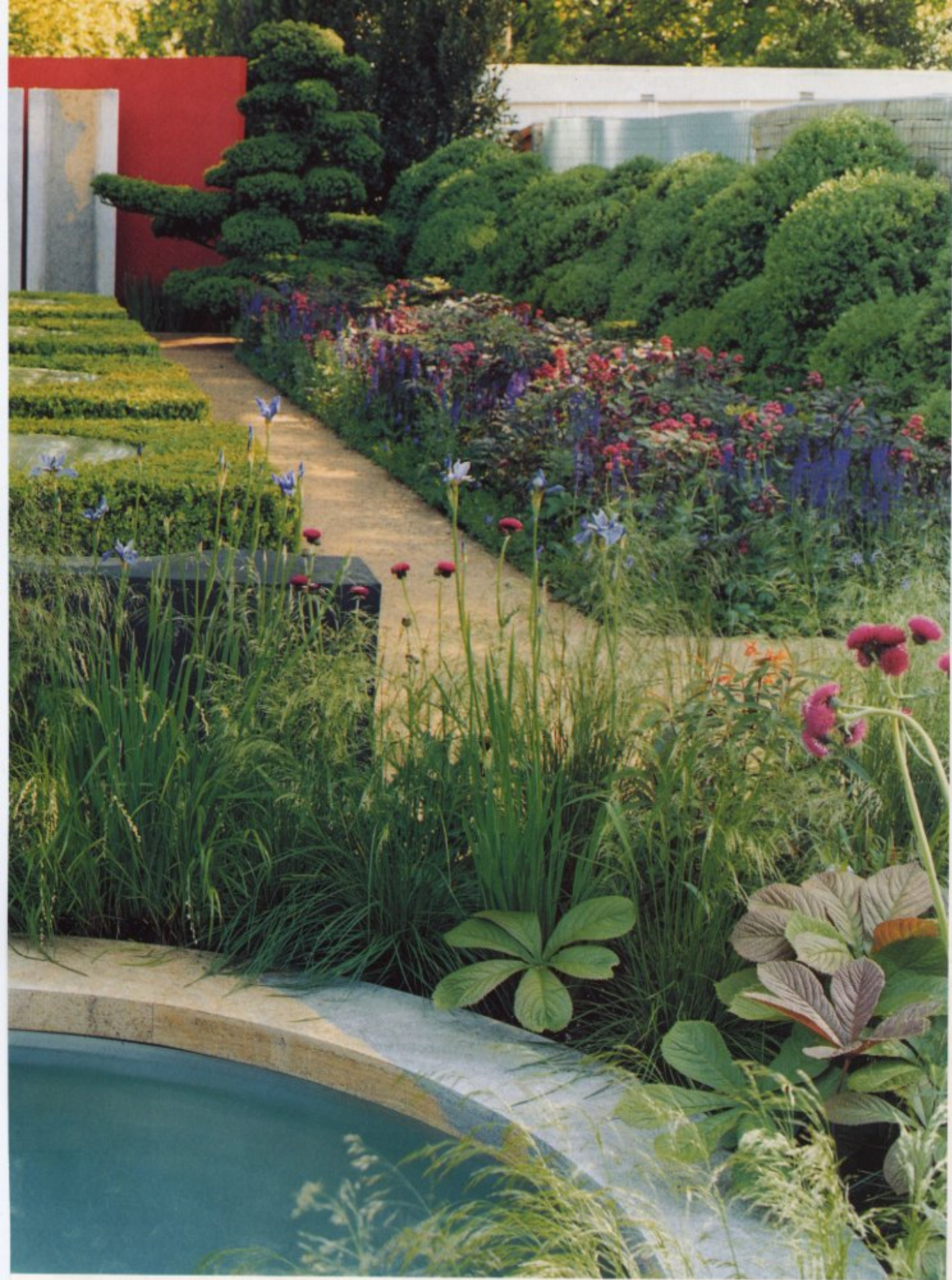
Additional photographs on this page: Rebecca Lloyd, Rosie Atkins, David Luffus, Cary Rogers, Andrew Lawson, Fyrian Russell



TOP: A SECTION OF THE 30-YEAR-OLD BOX 'CLOUD' HEDGE. ABOVE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: MONTY DON. THE GARDEN'S DESIGNERS ARNE MAYNARD AND PIET OUDOLF. A BOX SQUARE BEING INSTALLED. MOVING IN THE SCULPTED *TAXUS BACCATA*. HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN MEETING THE DESIGNERS AND EDITOR ROSIE ATKINS. TOBY AND CHRIS MARCHANT OF ORCHARD DENE DISMANTLING THE GARDEN – IT WAS COMPLETED ON THE SUNDAY BEFORE THE SHOW AND TAKEN DOWN THE NEXT SATURDAY. THE RAIN COULDN'T DAMPEN THE WINNERS' SPIRITS. CHARLIE DIMMOCK. PIET OUDOLF, ROSIE ATKINS, ARNE MAYNARD AND, FAR LEFT, SIR SIMON HORNBY. CENTRE, FROM LEFT: THE EARLY STAGES. TERENCE STAMP VISITS THE GARDEN.



THE LONG VIEW OF THE GARDEN WITH JAMES ELLIOTT'S RIPPLE POOL IN THE FOREGROUND AND HIS ANCASTER STONE WALL FOUNTAIN



AT THE FAR END, A HAZE OF PURPLES, REDS AND BLUES CREATED A 'PERSIAN CARPET' EFFECT IN THE TWO LONG BORDERS.



The Chelsea Flower Show is where the biggest names in garden design compete. Most designers at the show are based in Britain but the *Gardens Illustrated* garden, Evolution, was a glorious collaboration between British garden designer Arne Maynard and Dutch nurseryman and garden designer Piet Oudolf.

Three years ago Piet and Arne began to talk about their respective design philosophies and ways of using plants. When I suggested they work together on our garden for Chelsea 2000, their eyes lit up and the planning began.

They started by collecting a posy of flowers and foliage from Piet's garden that looked good in May and this palette set the tone for the garden. It centred on the burnished purple foliage of *Cimicifuga* var. *simplex* Atropurpurea Group, and *Euphorbia dulcis* 'Chameleon' which complemented the wine-red flowers of *Astrantia major* 'Claret'. The bright blue *Salvia x sylvestris* 'Mainacht' (AGM) and simple purple faces of *Viola cornuta* were to produce a rich 'Persian carpet' effect. For the planting around the pool they continued their maxim 'to keep it simple' with waving fronds of the grass *Deschampsia cespitosa* interspersed with *Euphorbia griffithii* 'Dixter' (AGM), *Rodgersia purdomii*, *Iris* 'Mrs Perry' and blue *Amsonia tabernaemontana* var. *salicifolia*. Planted at the front of the garden was the show-stopping *Cirsium rivulare* 'Atropurpureum'. Piet and Arne entrusted the care of these plants to Chris and Toby Marchant at Orchard Dene Nurseries (see issue 53). And there was no doubt about which contractor – Mark Fane and his team from Waterers Landscape plc, who are well known for constructing gold-medal winning gardens.

TOP LEFT: JETS OF WATER LEAPING FROM DISH TO DISH. DETAIL OF A LONG BORDER, IN WHICH THE 'PERSIAN CARPET' EFFECT WAS COMPLEMENTED BY THE SOFT CONTOURS OF THE CLOUD HEDGE.



ABOVE: *SALVIA X SYLVESTRIS* 'MAINACHT', *ASTRANTIA* 'CLARET' AND THE BRONZE LEAVED *CIMICIFUGA* VAR. *SIMPLEX* ATROPURPUREA GROUP. **TOP:** THE RIPPLE POOL, FRINGED BY *DESCHAMPSIA* *CESPITOSA*.



GARDEN DESIGNERS AND CONTRIBUTORS

Rosie Brister (hurdle fencing). Tel 01787 278932 E-mail rosie_brister@talk21.com

Dulux (Trade Weathershield 00YR08409 wall paint)

James Elliott (fountains). Tel 0378 601201; E-mail james@h2wow.co.uk

Europlants (sculpted yew). Tel 01707 649996; E-mail europlants@compuserve.com

Arne Maynard Design. Tel 020 7736 9664. E-mail info@arne-maynard.com

Website www.arne.maynard.com

Orchard Dene Nurseries (wholesale only). Tel 01491 575075

Piet Oudolf. Tel (00 31) 314 381120. Website www.oudolf.com

Jim Partridge (wood bench maker). Tel 01691 655353

Rare Stone Group (Ancaster stone supplier). Tel 01623 623092

SPONSORS

Yardley London, The Observer, Waterers Landscape Plc

For a special offer on plug plants from our garden, see page 120

Piet and Arne decided to enclose the garden with some ancient box which they found in a Dutch nursery. "It had been neglected and had grown into wonderful shapes. It was just what we were looking for," says Arne. John Brown, who publishes *Gardens Illustrated*, was willing to take the financial risk so the 'cloud' hedge was brought over to the Waterers nursery where it was planted into numbered crates and clipped and cosseted for nearly two years.

Piet and Arne were always clear about the theme of their design. "We wanted to blend the best of the past with the best of today," says Piet. This garden was about evolution not revolution – hence its name. They were also determined to use skilled craftspeople. Rosie Brister, for example, wove a willow hurdle fence around the 'cloud' hedge and Jim Partridge (see issue 48) made the oak bench.

With unflagging energy, stonemason James Elliott (see issue 53) and his team, H₂WOW, crafted the Ancaster weatherbed stone fountain which was the focal point at the far end of the garden. The same stone was used around the Ripple Pool, a deep, polished, stainless-steel bowl, fitted with a mechanism which gently disturbed the surface of the water. H₂WOW also engineered the water jets which leapt from one stainless-steel bowl set in a box square to another, a novel twist on the 17th-century obsession with fountains designed to surprise and amuse.

Winning a gold medal is unusual for designers new to Chelsea but to get Best in Show was unprecedented. Piet and Arne spent every moment possible on the garden, talking to enthusiastic visitors, unable to hide how thrilled they were, until the sad moment when the garden had to be dismantled. ■