

INSIDE TODAY

FOOD & DRINK

Upper crust

Take your sandwiches to the next level with Xanthe Clay page 9



OPEN ROAD

How Volvo went from boxy and boring to brilliant page 20



AGONY UNCLE

Richard Madeley answers your questions page 29



GARDENING



The Newt: a tour of Somerset's new gem page 49

Saturday

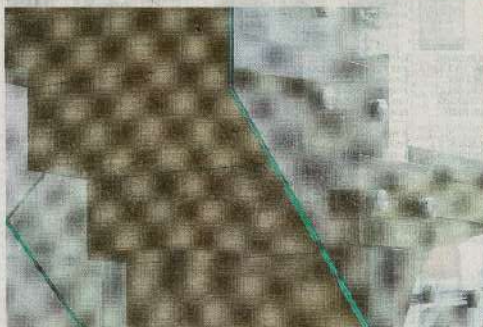
The great British weekend starts here

Victoria Moore's best wines for summer

The fruity 50

Zesty, refreshing whites, berry-scented reds, and the perfect fizz for a picnic. Our expert shares her tasting notes on this season's must-buys

STYLING: PHILIPPA ASHLEY FOR FINEARTS PHOTOGRAPHY

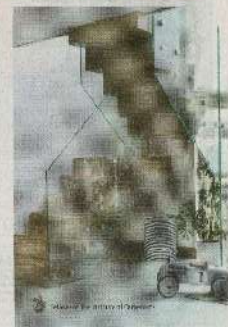


Perfection by Design

Specialists in staircase design, creation and renovation

Jarrolds
THE STAIRCASE
COMPANY

jarroldstaircases.co.uk • 02920 529797



GARDENING

'We've worked on it day and night... it feels slightly mad'

The Newt in Somerset is an epic garden – and it has an exceptional pedigree to live up to.

By **Lisa Grainger**

Driving along the A371 in Somerset, the first sign that something unusual is afoot is a new tunnel beneath the road flanked by fields of newly planted apple trees.

"If you think that's impressive, wait till you see the rest of The Newt," says my grinning taxi driver. "We went two weeks ago, and it is not like anything you will have ever seen."

He's right. The Newt in Somerset is unlike anything any of us has ever seen.

But then, when the South African billionaire telecoms magnate Koos Bekker and his wife Karen Roos take on a project, they don't do things by halves. In the Cape Winelands, their much-lauded vineyard, hotel and formal garden, Babylonstoren, has become a byword for horticultural style: it is Africa's only RHS-partnered garden, with eight acres of gardens planted primarily with fruit and vegetables.

If the couple were going to invest in another property, it was going to be one that was equally special – which the Emily Estate, just outside Castle Cary, is. Created in the 1680s, with hundreds of acres of woodlands, formal gardens and arable land, this tranche of Somerset was home from 1785 to seven generations of the Liberal Hobhouse family, including Arthur Hobhouse, a founder of the national parks system in England and Wales.

While the Palladian-fronted, Grade II listed stone mansion he restored beside the gardens is undoubtedly handsome – and, under Roos's creative eye, will undoubtedly be a masterpiece –



I've worked on some incredible projects but I've never seen anything like this'

CIRCLES OF LIFE

Aerial view of the parabola walled garden, top; Lisa Grainger, left

been the property's biggest draw. The work of generations of serious gardeners, the 30-something acres of formal planting, surrounded by landscaped parklands and woodlands, were for 12 years the creative playground of Penelope Hobhouse, and the subject of her first book, *The Country Gardener*. The estate was also the place where Canadian couple Nori and Sandra Pope developed their "colourist" monochrome borders, which became the inspiration for their popular *Colour by Design* garden-design tome of 1998.

When Bekker and Roos chanced upon the property, it was for sale in the pages of *Country Life*. Having looked for a while for an English farm to live on, purchasing the estate in 2013, Roos says, "seemed obvious, although having worked on it day and night ever since, it feels slightly mad."

Looking out from the top of the hillside property with the oldest farm-



will undoubtedly become a glorious hotel when it opens in autumn – it is the estate's gardens that have always

Iain Davies, left; seasonal colour, display, below

OWN A BESPOKE NATIONWIDE VERANDA TODAY

LUXURY OUTDOOR LIVING ALL YEAR ROUND FROM THE NUMBER ONE HOME IMPROVEMENT COMPANY



Classic Verandas

OWN A NATIONWIDE PRODUCT WITH JUST A **£99* DEPOSIT**

- ✓ Custom made to suit your property
- ✓ Built to the highest quality
- ✓ Wide range of styles and finishes
- ✓ Huge choice of colours
- ✓ FREE design consultation
- ✓ OVER 50,000 satisfied customers in the UK
- ✓ Full installation service with our own teams
- ✓ 5 Year Guarantee on all products
- ✓ Range of finance options available
- ✓ Financial conduct authority (FCA) approved

For a FREE brochure or no obligation design consultation
Call us today on 0800 179 9302
 or visit us online at www.nationwidelttd.co.uk

SEE OUR
 EXTENSIVE
 RANGE
 ONLINE

NATIONWIDE
 HOME INNOVATIONS

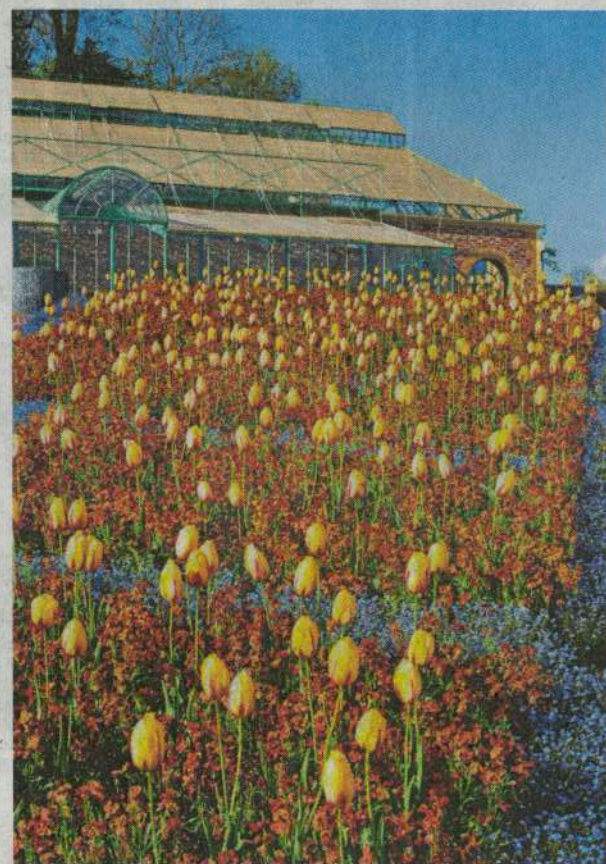
*Only available with the monthly repayment finance option. 9.9% APR Representative. Finance is subject to application and status. Example: cash price £3,000, deposit £99, total amount of credit £2,901 followed by 60 monthly payments of £60.90. Annual rate of interest 5.2% p.a., 9.9% APR Representative. Total amount repayable is £3,753 (including deposit). Valid until 28th June 2019. Nationwide Home Innovations is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority FRN728762.

side property with the elegant former editor of South African *Elle Decoration* – her trademark slash of red lipstick glowing beneath a Provençal-style straw hat – it's hard to believe how much the couple have achieved in just five years. The Newt, as they have renamed the property after the rare great crested newts found here, has been transformed, bringing together, Roos says, "the most beautiful parts of what we found – ancient woodlands, a walled garden, the pretty gardener's cottage – with new designs that will hopefully allow visitors to explore different eras of gardening history. And, of course, celebrate the apple, which is what Somerset is all about."

With the help of the French architect Patrice Taravella, who landscaped Babylonstoren and the glorious gardens at the Prieuré d'Orsan in the Loire, the couple have created a property that is not just breathtaking in its scale, but in its design and attention to detail. Looking out through a central glass wall in the triple-height threshing barn that operates as a reception, a series of pretty, new Hadspen limestone farm buildings stretch out, as if they've been there for centuries, offering places for visitors not only to eat but also to shop.

To the right, a barn-sized, hi-tech cider cellar leads to a giant, open-sided bar, stocked with organic, sugar-free cider, fresh apple juice and baked goods. Behind it, there's a cool, airy deli, with a glass cheese room, a butchers walled in Himalayan rock salt and shelves stacked with jugs of flowers and local goods. To the left of us lies a boutique stocked with tasteful country wares, from rustic local pottery to Japanese secateurs. And rolling out below all this – with glorious views from a contemporary, glass-walled restaurant overseen by Ben Bulger, formerly of River Cottage – are the newly landscaped gardens, which opened to the public last month.

On a tour with Iain Davies, The Newt's new director of horticulture, formerly of the Lost Gardens of Heligan, the scale of the project becomes apparent as he reels off the facts and figures (see box) that demonstrate just how much they've achieved. As he puts it: "I've been gardening all my life, and have worked on incredible projects, from Heligan and the Eden Project to Tom Stuart-Smith's gardens, and I've never seen anything like this. Not just because of its ambition, which is to



have the best national apple collection in the country [so far, they have planted more than 500 malus varieties, if you include the crab-apple orchard in the car park], but because it is a garden with horticulture at its core."

While previously there were just two main focal points – Hadspen House and the great egg-shaped walled parabola garden – Taravella has redesigned the grounds with several new hubs of interest designed to take visitors on a historic journey through British gardening.

At the top of the hill, a specially designed greenhouse to house tropical plants and ferns leads to an arts-and-crafts, Gertrude Jekyll-inspired cottage garden centred around a tiny, and original, 17th-century thatched gardener's cottage. Following after that, a Cascades Garden, full of richly coloured and textured beds created by head flowering plantsman and former Wisley gardener Russell Rigler, flows down the hill: a mass of red, blue and purple irises, primulas and pelargoni-

THE NEXT PHASE

□ The glasshouse will be filled with tropical and exotic plants that celebrate British plant-hunters, and the Victorian passion for ferns that gave rise to the term "pteridomania" (fern madness).

□ Succulent gardens will be developed to showcase xerophytes.

□ A marl pit will be dug from the limestone soil to create a lake inspired by King Arthur.

□ A woodland walk will be developed, ending in a mound featuring binoculars crafted from pieces of Second World War British and Japanese ships.

Visitors will be able to look through them and see King Alfred's Tower and Cadbury Castle.

□ The Gardening Museum will be opened in the Deer Park.

□ A gardening college will be launched. Workshops will be held and staff will develop a

master-gardener programme.

□ A mushroom house will open, to grow local and tropical varieties for the restaurant.

□ The wild flower fields will be expanded to attract bees and butterflies.

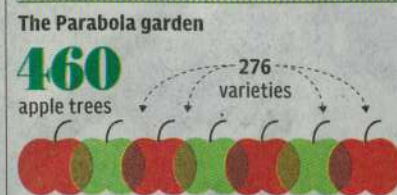
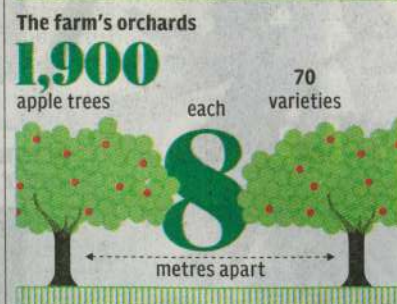
□ A hotel and spa will open in September.

FRUITS OF LABOUR

The apple is at the heart of the project, main. Right, searching for those great crested newts



THE NEWT IN NUMBERS



Arranged according to the counties of England they are from, as well as Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland

Home to thousands of newts



GARDEN SHOP THREE CLUMP-FORMING AMSONIAS

Chosen by plant hunter *Lark Hanham*

Named in honour of the 18th-century physician and botanist John Amson, the reliable woody-based amsonia (also known as blue star) derives from a desirable group of low-maintenance, clump-forming perennials originally found on moist grasslands in America.

Their impressive adaptability makes them a winning choice for planting in any location, so they are a worthy choice (and make the most impact) when repeat-planted through borders. Use them in irregular drifts to showcase the soft muted-blue flowers and create a cohesive design (although the sunnier the site, the duller the flower colour).

Their bloom period bridges the gap between spring and summer and, when teamed with grasses and echinaceas, they create a natural grassland planting scheme. Hardy to -10C.



A. TABERNAE-MONTANA VAR. SALICIFOLIA

First emerging in spring, the eastern blue star features tactile willowy foliage and purple rouged stems. It forms neat, rounded mounds of greenery, which benefit from damp soil. When located in sunnier locations this variety flowers more profusely, but do not allow it to dry out. Height 1m.



A. ORIENTALIS

This low-maintenance beauty is highly regarded for its vigorous shorter growth and large umbels of baby-blue flowers above lance-shaped, dark green foliage, which colours purple, orange and yellow before dropping. The flowers resemble small stars, and their loose formation makes them ideal for cutting. Tolerant of shadier locations, this amsonia lends itself to a woodland-focused planting scheme alongside ferns and thalictrums. Height 40cm.



A. HUBRICHTII

Named after American biologist Leslie Hubricht, this amsonia is known as Hubricht's blue star or the Arkansas blue star. A tactile plant, when not in flower, it resembles the invasive mare's tail, although that's where the similarities end. *A. hubrichtii* has a clumped habit and large panicles of steel blue, funnel-shaped blooms. The ornamental needle-shaped leaves add another dimension. Once hit by frost, foliage turns a vivid yellow before becoming dormant until spring. Height 50cm-1m.



Including the great crested, which is a protected species across Europe.

chairs by South African designer Porky Hefer and a quaint little stone chicken house.

And finally we get to the area that Roos says brings her the most pleasure: the 32,000sqft, egg-shaped parabola walled garden that has been at the heart of the property for centuries.

It is here, within its weathered 9ft-high brick walls, that Taravella has designed the ultimate homage to the apple: an enormous, mathematically inspired circular maze planted with 460 apple trees, of 267 varieties, which have been meticulously fanned, espaliered and cordoned over arches and up hundreds of elegant sweet-chestnut batons. It is both beautiful and carefully considered. Not only are the fruit trees labelled, and carpeted with plants that would have been found in the original garden in 1690, but the maze is dotted with signs inscribed with apple-related stories, ranging in subject matter from William Tell to Apple computers.

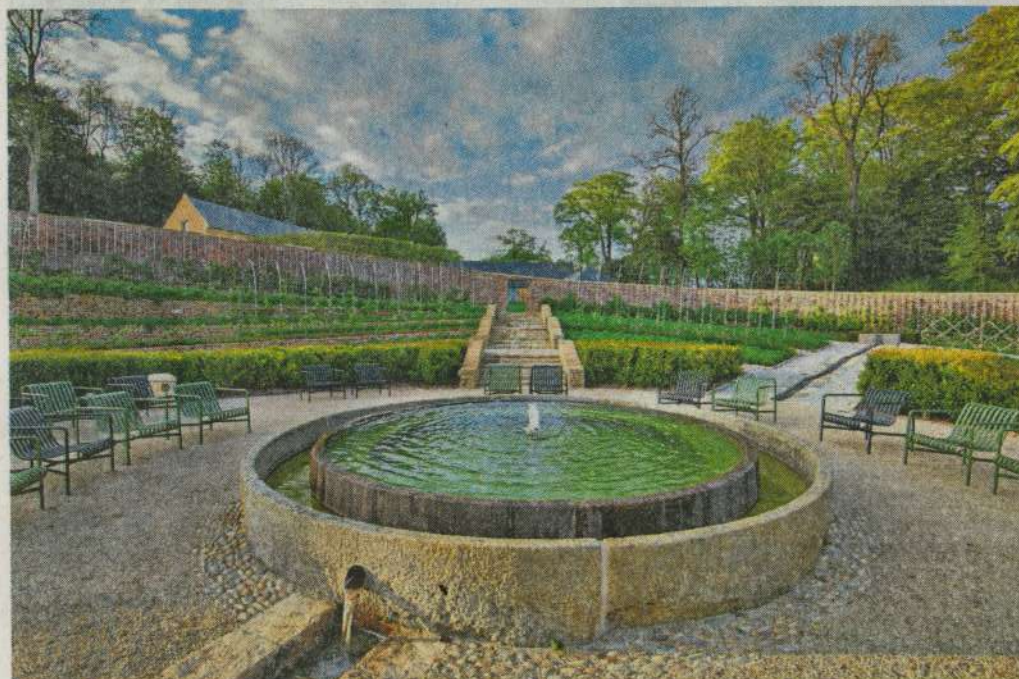
"If you want to get the next generation enthused, you need to find new ways of interesting them," says Roos - which is also the reason, she adds, that their garden museum, which opens in autumn, will be extremely hi-tech.

Before that happens, though, she says, their staff, including 18 full-time gardeners - from woodsmen to the estate architect Katie Lewis - will have their work cut out, finishing projects on the rest of the estate (see box), which range from a lake inspired by King Arthur to a hi-tech mushroom house.

To many gardeners, the scale would be overwhelming. To Roos, it's "exciting". "People in Somerset have been so positive about it. And I've already got so much pleasure from it: watching old ladies sitting beneath trees, children doing cartwheels on the lawn, groups drinking cider in the cellar."

It helps that Somerset instantly felt like home, she adds. "As children, we were immersed in England through literature: whether Enid Blyton, Jane Austen or Chaucer. As teenagers, my sister and I read English magazines like *Petticoat* to learn about fashion. And as a gardener, I've always looked up to English greats like Capability Brown and Rosemary Verey, whose Barnsley House I love. So, moving here and creating this has been a wonderful, and very natural, progression."

thenewtinsomerset.com



TREES FOR ALL

The parabola walled garden contains 460 artfully arranged apple trees, with seating and water features

ums interspersed with blocks of tangerine geums.

Walk on further down the hill and there are several new areas: a walkway of single-colour "rooms" of flowering shrubs and annuals - one red, one white, one blue - separated by woven chestnut fences pierced with oval "windows": a nod to Nori and Sandra Pope's colourist planting of the late Eighties and Nineties. Then long lawns that refer to the Landscape Movement, punctuated with a natural square bathing pond. A formal Renaissance-style kitchen garden, with no-dig, Charles Dowding-inspired beds. A lawned area, featuring three egg-shaped "Nest"



• SPECIAL OFFER • SPECIAL OFFER • SPECIAL OFFER • SPECIAL



Set of RHS Daisy Planters

• Handmade By Whichford Pottery • 10 Year Frostproof Guarantee

Commissioned by the Royal Horticultural Society as part of their Whichford Flowerpot Collection, the RHS Daisy Planters feature a repeat pattern of *Bellis perennis*. Each pot is lovingly handmade in Warwickshire by Whichford Pottery, makers of top quality, frostproof, terracotta flowerpots.



Set of Daisy Planters
£65.00
(saving a total of £36.50)

Set of RHS Daisy Planters Includes:

1 x RHS Daisy Planter Small (16cm h x 25cm w)
1 x RHS Daisy Planter Medium (24cm h x 39cm w)
Free Mainland UK Delivery*

© The Royal Horticultural Society Daisy Planters

Manufactured under licence granted by the Royal Horticultural Society. Registered Charity No. 222879/SC038262. www.rhs.org.uk

TO ORDER: Call 01608 684416 or visit www.whichfordpottery.com

For postal orders please complete the following order form:
(If the delivery address is different to the billing address please let us know)

		Qty	Total	Name:
Set of RHS Daisy Planters	£65.00			Address:
Free delivery to mainland UK			FREE	
Total				Postcode:
				Telephone:
				Email address:

*Free delivery applies to mainland UK, excluding Scottish Highlands. RHS Daisy Planters will be delivered within three weeks of placing the order unless we contact you directly. Offer subject to availability. Sets must be delivered to the same address. Offer ends 22/06/19. T&Cs apply.

Please enclose a cheque made payable to Whichford Pottery Ltd and send to:
Whichford Pottery, Whichford, Nr. Shipston-on-Stour, Warwickshire CV36 5PG