



Friends of the Gardens Newsletter

Fall 2009

Jardins de Métis

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Aussi disponible en français



Partenaire depuis 10 ans

December 2009

Wrap-Up of the 2009 Season

The gardens opened for the season on Saturday, June 6th and closed for the season on October 4th. Over the course of 121 days, the gardens welcomed almost 60,000 visitors. Highlights of the summer program included the 10th anniversary of the International Garden Festival and its record number of 20 gardens, 8 musical brunches, 2 outdoor concerts, literary teas from July through September, culinary events throughout the summer, a new art work by Fernande Forest, an exhibition by artist Louise Belcourt and the avant-première of the documentary by Philippe Baylaucq on the gardens *Il était deux fois un jardin* shown at the gardens in the middle of August. Read further for more information on the summer's activities.

Gardens Celebrate Being Ranked one of the “Great Gardens of America”

The gardens ended the season on a high note with the publication at the beginning in October of a new book by Tim Richardson proclaiming the gardens and the International Garden Festival as one of the “great gardens of America”. *Great Gardens of America* features twenty-five gardens in the United States and Canada. Les Jardins de Métis/Reford Gardens are one of just two gardens in Canada included in this new book published by Frances Lincoln in the United Kingdom, the other being Les Quatre Vents, the garden created by Francis H. Cabot in La Malbaie.



The chapter dedicated to the International Garden Festival has twelve pages that are beautifully illustrated with photographs by Andrea Jones. In his text describing the event Tim Richardson writes: “...It must be admitted that the venue, the Jardins de Métis on the St Lawrence River in Quebec, feels a long way from anywhere – though that is also part of its attraction... But what treats await on arrival: the garden festival at Métis... is one of the very best conceptual garden shows worldwide, with a unique selling point in that participants are encouraged to make garden installations which respond to the qualities of the existing historic garden and grand natural landscape... Métis’s particular atmosphere is tied up with its position in woodland overlooking the St. Lawrence River.

Of all the garden shows, then, this is the one which seems to grapple most closely with a sense of place, actively encouraging designers to work within the geographical context...Rather than simply strolling and admiring, visitors are encouraged, even compelled, to interact, participate, exchange and reflect..." Tim Richardson has been a frequent visitor to the Festival over the last ten years, covering the inaugural edition of the Festival for *Country Life* magazine and returning on several occasions to view the Festival and meet the designers. Journalist, writer and critic, Tim Richardson is an independent garden historian and critic of contemporary landscape architecture. Les Jardins de Métis and the International Garden Festival have been featured in many magazines and books in recent years, including *1001 Gardens You Must See Before You Die*.

Awards Showered on the Gardens

Alexander Reford was awarded the Frederick Todd prize from the Quebec Association, of Landscape Architects in March. The prize honours Quebec's (and Canada's) first professional landscape architect, Frederick Todd, whose work includes the design of the National Battlefields Park in Quebec City as well as St. Helen's Island and Beaver Lake in Montréal. The prize is awarded each year to recognize outstanding contributions to the field of landscape architecture in Quebec.



Henry-Teuscher Prize at the Montréal Botanical Garden. Left to right : Gilles Vincent, Louise Tanguay, Aurora Reford and Alexander Reford.

The Montréal Botanical Garden bestowed the Henry Teuscher Prize on Elsie and Alexander Reford for their contributions to Quebec horticulture. Henry Teuscher was the designer and first conservator of the botanical gardens. Teuscher enriched the collections of Elsie Reford's gardens with the gift of several plants that were to become her favourites like gentians and double bloodroot. The prize was bestowed by Gilles Vincent, director of the Montréal Botanical Garden, citing the many ways in which Alexander Reford and his great grandmother have enriched Quebec horticulture. In October the Gardens were awarded the prestigious five blooms award from Communities in Bloom, with a special mention of the particular contribution of the Gardens to promoting innovation in horticulture.

Festival's 10th Edition Features 20 Gardens

The 10th edition of the International Garden Festival displayed 20 gardens on the festival site, enchanting visitors with stunning colours, fragrant plants, elegant structures and multiple experiences. For its 10th edition, the Festival featured designers from Canada, the United States, United Kingdom, France, England and Switzerland. Their gardens were on view from June 27th. Artistic director Emmanuelle Vieira orchestrated an edition that illustrated the special role of the Festival in creating and exhibiting conceptual gardens. A team of workers under coordinator François Leblanc helped construct a record number of gardens. An exhibition under the Festival tent, created in collaboration with the Centre de Design UQAM, and curated by Angela Grauerholz and Emmanuelle Vieira with Georges Labrecque, displayed elements of the more than 60 gardens created over the festival's first decade. More than 35 designers were on hand for the Festival opening. The 2009 edition of the Festival was featured in the November issue of *Landscape Architecture* and will be published in design, architecture and landscape architecture magazines from around the world in the coming months. The competition for the 2010 edition of the Festival attracted a record 276 participants from 34 countries. Consult the Festival section of the web site to see the winning teams and follow the design and construction of their gardens in the coming months.

Avant-première of *Il était deux fois un jardin*

The gardens of Elsie Reford were transformed into an outdoor cinema on August 14th for the avant-première of the new documentary film by Philippe Baylaucq *Il était deux fois un jardin*. The film captured the beauty of the gardens in all seasons and the frenetic activity surrounding the building of the International Garden Festival as well as the peaceful solitude of the domain at different times of the year. *Il était deux fois un jardin* takes us inside the inner workings of the gardens. Filming started in June 2007 and was completed in April 2009, and the filmmakers distilled over 100 hours of images into a 53 minute documentary. The film provides an intimate portrait of the gardens and its artisans, beginning with Elsie Reford in the 1920s and including the many designers who took part in the festival and the artisans who have contributed to making the gardens one of the leading venues for contemporary design in the world. The documentary is produced by Garry Beitel and Barry Lazar of Beitel/Lazar Productions and distributed by reFrame Films Distribution. The documentary film will be premiered at the Festival international du film sur l'art (FIFA) in Montréal in March and then broadcast on Télé-Québec and ArtTV. An English-language version of the film, *Twice Upon a Garden*, will be released at the same time. The documentary will be shown at the gardens in Estevan Lodge and will be available for purchase at the garden shop.

Cooking Up Some New Delights

Chef Pierre-Olivier Ferry and his team were busy this summer, serving over 16 000 customers, including nearly 1,000 guests at wedding receptions and 3,000 meals in the Villa. The gardens partnered with several local producers to

offer tasting events featuring the produce of the Ferme Petite Campagne, a Rimouski farm that produces the poultry used in our dining rooms, and a mushroom workshop and meal with Gérard Mathar of Gaspésie Sauvage where participants took part in producing a meal made entirely from mushrooms. Chef Pierre-Olivier Ferry made a number of guest appearances at various culinary events this summer, including acting as the guest chef for a reality television program featuring Italian beauties trying some of the more exotic seafood from the St. Lawrence River. Ferry has been responsible for the dining rooms and food services at Les Jardins de Métis since 2005 and is a third generation chef. His grandfather Raymond Ferry and great grandfather (also Raymond Ferry) were chefs in some of Quebec's best restaurants and dining rooms. His grandfather represented Canada at the Olympiades culinaires in 1972.



Gardens' Culinary Products Prove Popular

The Gardens have created a range of seven new products featuring flavours from the plant collections. Aromatic plants and herbs have been selected, picked and prepared by chef Pierre-Olivier Ferry and his team in the kitchens of Estevan Lodge to make jams, jellies, spreads and pickles. The first products in this line of specialty gourmet products are: Blueberry and Lavender Spread, Wild Strawberry and Lemon Basil Spread, Wild Mint Jelly, Labrador Tea Jelly, Daisy buds in Maple Vinegar, Fiddleheads Pickled in Maple Vinegar and Pickled Daylily Buds. Sold in containers of 110 ml, 212 ml or 370 ml, at prices ranging \$5 to \$11, these gourmet delights provide extraordinary flavours as well as a souvenir of a visit to the Gardens. The products were featured at a special tasting event held by on Thanksgiving weekend. They are available at the IGA in Mont-Joli, Pain & Passion in Quebec City or can be purchased on-line from the gardens' web site.

Gardens Partner to Promote Authors and Literature

The gardens celebrated a decade of hosting authors and poets in collaboration with the Carrefour de la littérature, des arts et de la culture (CLAC) as part of the literary teas. The gardens hosted authors Jennifer Tremblay, Francine Allard, Claude La Charité, Guillaume Vigneault and Louis Hamelin in five events over the summer. The CLAC promotes literature and reading among youth in the Mitis region. The literary

tea program has hosted more than 50 Quebec authors over the past ten years who have been charmed by the venue, by the occasion to meet their readers and an opportunity to spend several days in the region. In September the gardens partnered with the CLAC in the second edition of a wine and cheese event that raised more than \$4,000 for the organization.

New Work by Fernande Forest Unveiled

In a moving ceremony held in August, Fernande Forest officially inaugurated her new work of art, *Pour mémoire*, in Estevan Lodge before present and past staff of the gardens and members of her family. Originally from Bonaventure, Fernande Forest has lived and worked in Rimouski for many years where she has been active as an artist, photographer and graphic designer. As part of the second phase of the restoration of Estevan Lodge, she created a work that pays homage to the many men and women who contributed to creating and maintaining Estevan Lodge and its gardens over the past 125 years. The work is composed of four large panes of glass with the names of the many workers inscribed on it.

Elsie Reford memorialized on a mural in Mont-Joli

Elsie Reford and her gardens have been immortalized with a new mural painting in Mont-Joli on the façade of the Fleuriste Desjardins. Inaugurated in September in the presence of the artists, Mont-Joli mayor Jean Bélanger, invited guests from Lyon and members of the community, the mural is the 19th mural to be created in Mont-Joli as part of *Les Murmures de la ville*, an ambitious program to celebrate the history of the city and its occupants and to beautify the community. The mural depicts a youthful Elsie Reford in front of Estevan Lodge with her son Eric amid the splendor of the gardens and a glorious sunset over the St. Lawrence. The mural was created by the Cité de la Création de Lyon in collaboration with Murale Création of Quebec City. The gardens have donated a teak bench to accompany the mural and illustrate the long-standing links between the gardens and Mont-Joli, where almost half of the garden's staff live.

Metis River Park Builds for the Future

The community rallied to help prepare the Park for the season. The staff of the CLD de La Mitis took a day off to do community work and dedicated their volunteer time to the Mitis River Park, clearing the pathways, helping mount the exhibitions, cleaning the 10 campsites and beautifying the terrain for the Park's opening. The Metis River Park completed several exciting projects underway this summer, including the construction of a 25-foot observation tower overlooking the Mitis River and the St. Lawrence. Guest curator Dr. Michel Fournier presented 5 exhibitions on different aspects of the history and marine biology of the St. Lawrence. These exhibitions will make way for the exhibition *Moving Giant: The Great Lakes – St. Lawrence Ecosystem* recently donated to the Park by the Montreal Biosphere Environment Museum. A community clean-up of the beach along the St. Lawrence was held on Saturday June 6th and again on September 19th as part of the TD Great Canadian Shoreline Cleanup.

International Garden Festival Partners with Hydro-Québec for the Tenth Year



One of the popular and photogenic gardens of this year's edition of the Festival was *Le bon arbre au bon endroit*, a garden that presented Hydro-Québec's efforts to educate Quebecers about the importance of planting the right tree in the right place to protect the electricity grid from damage and to assure that ornamental trees not be pruned or cut if they are too close to hydro lines. Presented for a second time this summer, the garden again illustrated the dynamic partnership between the gardens and Hydro-Québec. Hydro-Québec was the first sponsor to show an interest in the Festival when it was still just an idea in 1999, and has since supported every edition of the Festival as well as partnering in the creation of the Mitis River Park, promoting energy efficiency initiatives, burying the electric wires that traverse the site and assisting in the garden's environmental and conservation projects.

Growing the Gardens

The Gardens began the restoration of Elsie Reford's picking garden and potager this autumn. The first garden at Estevan Lodge was the vegetable garden, created in a pasture between the stream and what was then the main road that separated the estate from the village of Grand-Métis. It was first planted for Sir George Stephen soon after he built Estevan Lodge in 1887. When Elsie Reford began using the estate in the early 1900s, she expanded the vegetable garden to include a vast selection of vegetables and berries and transformed the central part into a picking garden to provide fresh flowers for her bouquets. It was the beginning of her adventuring in gardening. When the gardens were sold in the 1960s, the vegetable garden became a plantation of red pine trees and remained largely unchanged until the pinetum was transformed into the trial beds for blue poppies. An intern landscape architect from Belgium, François Loiselet, is helping research the project and identify the plants to be grown in the garden. Stuart Webster Design is completing the plans and drawings for the gardens. Other components of the project include the replacement of the bridges in the gardens and the reconstruction of the stone walls. The first phase of the project is funded by a grant

from Québec's Ministère de la Culture, des Communications et de la Condition féminine. Premier Horticulture of Rivière-du-Loup has donated peat moss and soil for the project.

Les Amis des Jardins de Métis Launch Ambitious Fundraising Campaign

Les Amis des Jardins de Métis launched an ambitious fundraising campaign on December 1 to raise an additional \$1 million, \$400,000 for the endowment fund established in 2008 and \$600,000 for the gardens' capital projects. More \$250,000 has been pledged. The goal is to raise \$125,000 by December 1, 2010 to benefit from the special matching grant program (\$2 for every \$1 raised by the campaign) of the government of Québec's Placement Culture program. The endowment fund will help provide ongoing funds for the organization to meet its operational needs. The capital fund will help fund various capital projects including energy conservation initiatives, the installation of a sprinkler system to protect the historic Estevan Lodge and the Elsie Reford internships to encourage women in Quebec and the rest of Canada to pursue careers in horticulture.

Les Amis des Jardins de Métis is a not for profit corporation founded in February 1995 by Les Ateliers Plein Soleil and members of the Reford family. The board of directors is composed of: Guy D'Anjou, Alexander Reford, Lewis Reford, Jacqueline Roy, Jean-Yves Roy and Sally Tingley.

The International Garden Festival is administered by **La Fondation des Jardins de Métis**, whose board is composed of Renée Daoust, Lesley Johnstone, Alexander Reford, Lewis Reford and Stuart Webster.

Partners

Conseil des arts du Canada, Patrimoine canadien, Emploi d'été Canada, Conseil des arts et des lettres du Québec, Emploi-Québec, ministère de la Culture, des Communications et de la Condition féminine, ministère des Affaires municipales, des Régions et de l'Occupation du territoire, ministère du Tourisme, Conseil de la culture du Bas-Saint-Laurent, Conférence régionale des éluEs du Bas-Laurent, Hydro-Québec, Toqué!, Centre de design de l'UQAM, Fédération des chambres de commerces du Québec, Fondation canadienne de l'architecture du paysage, Association des musées canadiens, Fondation Héritage Canada, Consulat général de France à Québec.

Sponsors

Caisse populaire Desjardins de Mont-Joli, Fédération des caisses Desjardins du Bas-Saint-Laurent, Gaspésie Sauvage, IGA Alimentation de la Mitis, Landscape Ontario, Le Groupe Germain, Les Forges de Montréal, MacDougall, MacDougall & MacTier Inc., Premier Tech.

Collaborators

Carrefour de la littérature, des arts et de la culture, Centre de design de l'UQAM, Festi Jazz international de Rimouski, Musée du Château Ramezay, Musée régional de Rimouski, Parc de la rivière Mitis, Société de développement commercial Vieux-Montréal, Ville de Montréal.

We are grateful to the donors to the endowment fund of the Fondation des Jardins de Métis and to the annual campaign of Les Amis des Jardins de Métis.

Les Jardins de Métis is a member of: Association des jardins du Québec, Association touristique régionale de la Gaspésie, Association touristique régionale du Bas-Saint-Laurent, Le Québec maritime, the Société des musées Québécois and the Canadian Museums Association.