



Temporary Exhibitions

Two exhibitions presented the talents of local artists in temporary exhibitions in Estevan Lodge that charmed and inspired visitors. Mont-Joli artist Andrée Lévesque presented her exhibition *D'émotions en paysage*. Janis Gillan and Rasa Pavilanis exhibition *Elsie* featured paintings that were inspired by Elsie Reford and her life and pastimes.



On the Shore, Rasa Pavilanis

Financial Support from Hydro-Québec

Hydro-Québec has been the lead partner of Les Amis des Jardins de Métis since 1999 and presenter of the garden *Le bon arbre au bon endroit* (*The right tree in the right place*) for the past three years. In 2009-2010 Hydro-Québec contributed \$50,000 to Les Amis des Jardins de Métis, their single most important contribution in the region.

The designers from NIPpaysage of Montréal designed variations of their garden *Le bon arbre au bon endroit* to the delight of visitors to the Festival. This year's garden featured a giant picnic table and a plantation of trees. As part of our ongoing collaboration, Hydro-Québec held a contest offering as the first prize a weekend for two and visit of the Hydro-Québec installations on James Bay. The winner, Carole Morin of Pierrefonds, will have an opportunity to explore the facilities of the Robert-Bourassa hydroelectric station at La Grande-1.

Robert Wilson Reford Photographic Collection

In 2010, Les Amis des Jardins de Métis digitized 1,425 images from the Robert Wilson Reford photographic collection. This collection of photographs is an important source of images of local history and information on the gardens and the Reford family. A team from the Musée régional de Rimouski produced an inventory and did the digitization of the photographs and documents, bringing to 3,295 the number of electronic images available to researchers on the Info-Muse and Artefacts Canada data base. This project was undertaken with the assistance of a grant from Canadian Heritage. Museum consultant Carl Johnson also completed an inventory of the garden's holdings of works of art, decorative arts and objects on display in Estevan Lodge.

Gardens Seek Protection of Les Jardins de Métis

Les Amis des Jardins de Métis submitted an application for designation or « classement » to Quebec's ministère de la Culture, des Communications et de la Condition féminine in August. *Classement* is a legal tool that protects historic sites and landscapes and governs their development and restoration. The application made by Les Amis des Jardins de Métis is strengthened by the rich history of the site, its association with several figures of national importance, its historic gardens, heritage buildings, and important collections of plants, art works and museum objects. The application was supported by the MRC de La Mitis and the Conseil des sites et des monuments du Québec.

It is hoped that the *classement* will be bestowed in time to be formally announced on June 24th, 2012 on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the opening of the gardens and the 125th anniversary of the completion of Estevan lodge as part of special anniversary celebrations scheduled for 2012.

Protection of the mouth of the Metis River

As part of our long-term commitment to protect the local environment, the Amis des Jardins de Métis and the Mitis River Park organized two community events to collect refuse along the Mitis River and the St. Lawrence. Forty local citizens and garden staff participated in these events held in June and September.

Les Amis des Jardins de Métis is partnering with the Comité ZIP du Sud-de-l'Estuaire to preserve the mouth of the Mitis River and protect the site against coastal erosion. The ZIP held 5 public meetings for residents to present recent research on the phenomenon of coastal erosion and to consult them regarding future use of this beautiful site. At the final meeting, plans were presented by Vincent Lemay of Vlan Paysages and Georges-Étienne Parent of NIPpaysage showing proposed landscaping of the site and the next phases of its development.

Events alas confirmed the urgency to prepare for the future when on December 6 the waves and high seas caused important damage. The storm buffeted the seashore, dumped tons of detritus and toppled the monumental sculpture *Mirages (Delta de Métis)* by artist Bill Vazan. Erected in 2002 in collaboration with the Musée régional de Rimouski, the sculpture will be re-located to a new site this spring. A committee of interested citizens has been created by the Comité ZIP that will meet in the coming months to develop programs and activities for the site for 2011, to include the planting of more sea grass in June. Contact Jonathan Pothier of the Comité ZIP at (418) 722-8833 for further information or to participate in this collective effort.

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 the Fondation des Jardins de Métis, whose board is composed of Lesley Johnstone, Lisa Rapoport, Alexander Reford, Lewis Reford and Stuart Webster.



Friends of the Gardens
Newsletter

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Partenaire principal

February 2011

The 2010 season was a memorable one for the gardens. We enjoyed exceptional weather, unusually dry and hot conditions in July and August, repeated storms and torrential rains in September and high waves and tides that battered and damaged our shores in December.

Fortunately, the perfect weather coincided with our high season and encouraged almost 60,000 tourists and local residents to visit and facilitated a record 12 weddings under perfect conditions. Our program of cultural events included two exhibitions, seven literary teas, multiple musical brunches and an edition of the International Garden Festival that attracted interest and articles from around the world.

It was also a summer where we completed several major infrastructure projects to green the gardens by renovating ageing buildings, acquiring new high-performance equipment and beginning efforts to combat coastal erosion and the effects of climate change.

Greening the Gardens

The first phase of our project "Greening the Gardens" was completed in December. Gardens are already green destinations, but we undertook a series of projects to improve our buildings and reduce the gardens' environmental footprint.

Greening the gardens means first and foremost reducing energy consumption. Our bill for electricity and heating fuel is more than \$50,000 annually so from both an environmental and a financial point of view, reducing energy consumption is good for the gardens. With 18 buildings, many of them dating from the 1960s and the 1970s, we have many leaky doors and windows and poorly insulated structures in need of improvement. We also erected two new greenhouses that were acquired in 2006 when the government of Québec closed the Quebec City zoo. These state of the art greenhouses will help the gardens improve and augment its production of perennials and annuals and facilitate the propagation of plants to be made available to assist local environmental groups and residents combat coastal erosion.

Our objective to become the greenest garden in North America also includes using renewable energy sources for our heating. A group of experts has been evaluating the cost and benefits of using biomass (residue from local forests and sawmills) as a fuel source rather than heating fuel to heat our greenhouses.



Greenhouses

Rather than demolish several buildings that have been unused for several years, we recycled them, transforming them for use new uses. One of them has become a new storage facility for tools and another a new “maison des jardiniers” to house the gardeners and their equipment.

We also began to rejuvenate our aging fleet of vehicles and tractors. Visitors to the gardens this fall may have admired two new experimental electric vehicles developed by Red Dynamix on loan from the Centre National de Transport Avancé in St. Jérôme. The vehicles use a high performance electric drive train as their power source. They combine high speed with excellent carrying capacity and have already proved their effectiveness after a few months of use. A new 65 HP John Deere tractor joined the fleet and will be our winter workhorse to clear snow and put to work to move the tons of material composted every year and used for the International Garden Festival.

These projects were undertaken with the assistance of grants from Economic Development Canada and the Conférence régionale des élus du Bas-Saint-Laurent.

Restoring the Gardens and Grounds

Gardeners, interns and summer students worked throughout the summer to restore the vegetable garden. All 11 bridges were rebuilt from the foundations up. Their form is inspired by the original bridges designed by Robert W. Reford and his photographs of them from the 1930s. Their new and more robust successors boast a steel beam structure and are topped by anti-slip planking and handrails of eastern white cedar by Gervais Pineau of Charpenterie Menuiserie Petchedetz in his workshop in St. Léandre.

Other restoration projects include moving and re-building the stone wall at the lookout over the St. Lawrence, made necessary by the gradual subsidence of the terrain in front of the Villa. The rotting foundations of the flagpole were also replaced. One of our gardeners got a new elegant tool shed and another will be able to use the original pumphouse that was restored and returned to its original location near Page's Brook. New interpretive panels and botanical labels were added to permit avid gardeners to learn more about the gardens and the special Gilbert collection of peonies and Rocheleau collection of daylilies. New composting units were added, just in time to receive truckloads of leaves from the Ville de Mont-Joli. The restoration of the historic gardens was made possible with the assistance of Québec's Ministère de la Culture, des Communications et de la Condition féminine.

Gardens bid Farewell to Long-time Workers and Celebrate the Arrival of Others

The Gardens bade farewell to long-time employee, Donald Ouellet, who died on June 1 after a long battle with cancer. Gardener, head gardener and latterly responsible for equipment and purchasing, Donald Ouellet had given much of his working life to the Gardens over 32 years. In September the gardens recognized two gardeners for their 25 years of service, Anne Lévesque and Marcel Gagné, who maintain the High Bank and the Blue Poppy Glade respectively.

Every summer the gardens welcome students from the region and further afield. This summer the gardens welcomed Maude Bergeron Lambert, Gabrielle Doucet, Tristan Sallustro and David Cucca and Guillaume Ernst from Belgium. Other students who worked at the gardens for the summer were Jade Pelletier-Brochu, Jean-Christophe Canuel, Rose Cardinal, Thomas Cardinal, Jean-Lou Castonguay, Chris Kelly, Anne-Julie Kemp, Chris Lafleur-James, Émilie Langlais, Myriam Langlois, Sonia Larue-Bérubé, William Marien, Laurence Lebel-Paradis, Anne-Renée Mongeon, Alexandre Morrisette, Jamie Reford, Jonathan Resney, Marie-France Robert and Isabelle Sénéchal. The gardens provide employment to a dozen or more students every summer, making them one of the largest employers of students in the region.

New line of Culinary Products Launched

Chef Pierre-Olivier Ferry and his team produced more than 6,000 pots of jams, jellies and marinades this summer and successfully launched the products at events throughout the summer. Using produce collected by the pickers of Gaspésie Sauvage around the Gaspé Peninsula and flavoured with herbs, flowers and berries from the Gardens, chef Ferry produced these culinary delights in the kitchens of Estevan Lodge. They were bottled in jars with labels specially designed to present the gardens' new line of flavourful products.

They are presently available in the region at the IGA in Mont-Joli, the Fromagerie du Littoral in Baie-des-Sables, in Rimouski from Bruno Romand, the Musée régional de Rimouski, the Épicerie l'Ardoise and in selected gourmet shops throughout Québec including Pain et Passion in Québec.



Pickled, Credit: Martin Bond

The Mitis River Park Enjoys a Record Year

The Mitis River Park enjoyed a record year of attendance and opened two new attractions in 2010. The 25-foot observation tower offers spectacular views of the St. Lawrence and the bay of the Mitis River. The award-winning exhibition *Moving Giant The Great Lakes – St. Lawrence Ecosystem*, on loan from the Biosphère de Montréal, was presented in the visitor centre and helped attract more than 3,300 visitors to the Park. The Park presented 8 lectures by scientists and experts and hosted the popular annual Perseid meteor shower and story-telling event, with story-teller Pierre Dufort, in August. Over 100 campers frequented one of the Park's 10 campsites overlooking the St. Lawrence River.



Exhibition *Moving Giant The Great Lakes - St. Lawrence Ecosystem*

Facebooking the Gardens

With the assistance of an intern in tourism from the Cegep de Matane, Gabrielle Doucet, and under the tutelage of marketing manager Melanie Gauthier, the gardens entered the world of social media, creating a Facebook site for the Gardens, a link to Twitter and adding a dozen articles to Wikipedia. Those following the Facebook site (the gardens had more than 1,100 friends at the time of writing) were able to follow postings of events and activities.

Documentary finds Audiences Around the World

The documentary *Il était deux fois un jardin / Twice Upon a Garden* had its premiere presentation at the Canadian Centre for Architecture in Montreal in March as part of the International Festival of Films (FIFA). It won the Prix du Public ARTV and has embarked on a world tour along with other FIFA winners for screenings at the Louvre in Paris, the Fresnoy-Studio national des arts contemporains in France and the Tate Modern in London. The film was screened at the American Institute of Architects Center for Architecture in New York on January 29 to an audience of architects and landscape architects from New York and environs that included designer Andrea Legge and Maria Debye-Saxinger, both of whom are featured in the film. It will also be shown on Air Canada flights as part of their in-flight entertainment system on domestic and international flights.

Over the summer, the documentary was shown in the projection room in Estevan Lodge to more than 1,500 visitors. Philippe Baylaucq and Alexander Reford presented the film at *Les Percéides* film festival in Percé on August 14 and, in collaboration with Télé-Québec, at the Salle Georges-Beaulieu at the CEGEP de Rimouski on August 30. Patricia Gallant, horticulturist of Les Jardins de Métis, presented the film at the *Festival du Film de Saint-Sévérin* in Beauce. *Il était deux fois un jardin* had its inaugural broadcast on Télé-Québec on Labour Day where it was seen by more than 30,000 viewers. The film is available from the gardens and the on-line boutique for \$19.95.

A tradition of excellence

Over the years, Les Jardins de Métis and those who work on the site have received various awards in recognition of their work and efforts to preserve Elsie Reford's paradise – 2010 was no exception, with the gardens garnering several prizes, namely the Prix Coalition BOIS Québec in recognition of the commitment and projects of the organization to use wood in its various projects.

Les Jardins de Métis were awarded « 5 blooms » from Communities in Bloom in the special attractions category and a special mention for excellence in design and the impeccable maintenance of the gardens.

The efforts for the conservation and preservation of Estevan Lodge by Les Amis des Jardins de Metis were recognized with a prix du patrimoine du Bas-Saint-Laurent for La Mitis region in the category « Sauvegarde, restauration et conservation » for the quality of the work executed and the impact on improving the site over the past years.

International Garden Festival

The 11th edition of the International Garden Festival offered an ambitious program of gardens. The Festival presented 21 site-specific gardens, 3 of which were chosen by international competition and 3 of which were selected by designers chosen from the city of Berlin. The 11th edition had a record number of 5 extra-mural gardens, with gardens presented at Canada Blooms in Toronto, Olympic Plaza in Calgary, the Place de la Daversière next to the Musée du Château Ramezay Museum in Montreal and the IIDEX/Neocon Show in Toronto. The *Fractal Garden* is presently on view at the Evergreen Brick Works in Toronto.

The gardens of the 11th edition fascinated, surprised and even shocked visitors. The garden of Thilo Folkerts and Rodney Latourelle, *Jardin de la connaissance*, was the subject of more than 130 articles by local, national and international media. The “controversy” engendered by the garden contributed and perhaps even sparked a debate about the future of the book and its place in the multi-media platform of today's world. This garden, like others, proves the continuing relevance of the Festival to provoke visitors and its role in presenting cutting-edge designs and designers.

Designers chosen for the 12th edition of the Festival

The competition for the 2011 Festival attracted 194 proposals from more than 600 landscape architects, architects, artists and designers from 33 countries. The theme of the 2011 Festival is « Secret Gardens ». More information on the gardens and designers of the Festival will be published in the spring edition of our newsletter.

Cultural Events

The gardens again hosted a wide range of cultural activities throughout the summer for members and visitors, including 11 musical brunches featuring local musicians. Seven literary teas were held in collaboration with the Carrefour de la littérature, des arts et de la culture de Mont-Joli (CLAC) and attracted record attendance. Guest authors were Edem Awumey, Gil Courtemanche, Chrystine Brouillet, Sarah Hampson, Normand Cazalais, Paul-Chanel Malenfant and Neil Bissoondath. Chef Ferry and his staff presented the 3rd edition of the Wine and Cheese in aid of the CLAC with authors Normand Cazalais, Julie Tremblay, Soleil Perreault and Marie-Pier Tremblay and musicians Martin Roussel and Steeve St-Pierre. We also presented the film *La dernière fugue* by Léa Pool in the presence of journalist and novelist Gil Courtemanche who participated in a question and answer session with the audience regarding the film adaptation of his novel *Une belle mort* and the political climate of Quebec.