Outside Interests

CLARE FOSTER finds fresh gardening inspiration

Jonathan Snow photographed at Chelsea Physic Garden, SW3

Garden Designer

Jonathan Snow

Continuing our series of profiles of a new generation of design talent

From an army background, Jonathan Snow followed the initial career route that everyone expected and spent five years with the Scots Guards. Having left to take up various sales jobs but finding he wasn't happy in this area, in 2005 he decided to head in another direction. 'I've always been interested in design. When I was young, I liked to draw plans of my bedroom and redesign rooms on paper. Then I went to the RHS Chelsea Flower Show and the penny dropped. I realised that making spaces look good could happen outside, too.'

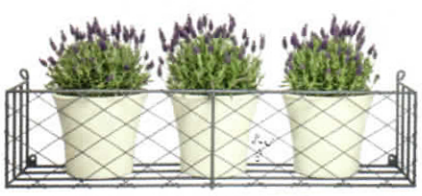
Jonathan enrolled at the Inchbald School of Design, leaving in 2006 with a diploma in garden design. He went to work for Arne Maynard as a project manager on a variety of country gardens, absorbing the planting aesthetic distinctive to Arne's studio. 'Arne also taught me an appreciation of hard landscaping and good craftsmanship,' he says.

In 2008 Jonathan set up his own practice, taking on any projects that came his way, from window-box schemes to friends' roof terraces. London-based, he now has projects in the capital and the Home Counties, from smart, pared-back urban courtyards to more traditionally conceived country gardens, where the ultimate aim is to make the landscape look effortless and natural. 'My mantra is not to overdesign,' he says. 'I tell myself that my first idea is probably the best one, and I try not to overthink the brief.'

Plants have become a passion and he draws inspiration from seeing them in their natural environment, a theme in the Trailfinders Garden he is designing for Chelsea this year, which will showcase the flora of Chile. 'Fourteen years ago, I was a total novice,' he says. 'I didn't know a single plant. Now my own garden is stuffed with plants and, if I had time, I'd garden all day.' *jonathansnowdesign.co.uk*

THREE OF THE BEST: WINDOW BOXES

Handmade with an aged finish and Tudor-rose detail, the **'Galvanised Steel Window Box'** comes in two sizes; from £170 for 18 x 85 x 15cm. *arthurjack.co.uk*



This pretty lattice-design **'Wirework Window Box'** is available in two sizes and four finishes; from £185 for 25 x 104 x 25cm. *garden-requisites.co.uk.*

The **'Oak Window Box'** can be custom made in either wall-mounted or free-standing designs; from £96 for 20 x 70 x 20cm. *bespoakdesigns.co.uk* ▷