

10

of the world's most romantic gardens to visit

chosen by Anna Pavord

1 Endsleigh

Humphry Repton, the great 18th-century landscaper, worked at Endsleigh and in the valley to the west of the house you catch the essence of his genius. Water charges under paths, tips down rock faces and meanders obediently along leats. 'Of all picturesque subjects there is none so interesting as Water in rapid motion,' he wrote. Endsleigh has a quality that is increasingly difficult to find in a garden: romance and a strong spirit of place. In 2014 the garden opens for the first time for the National Gardens Scheme.

Address Hotel Endsleigh, Milton Abbot, Tavistock, Devon PL19 0PQ. **Tel** 01822 370000
Website hotelendsleigh.com



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2 Dundonnell

When you cross the stone bridge over the river to Dundonnell in Scotland, you arrive in a different world. First are the trees – huge limes, beech and sweet chestnuts, as well as sycamore and ash. Then the house, superbly strong, white-harled, standing in a meadow of long grass. Then the walled garden, three acres of inspired beauty arranged around a monumental yew, thought to be at least 2,000 years old. Thrilling. Astonishing. Open for charity (see scotlandsgardens.org). **Address** Dundonnell House, Dundonnell, Little Loch Broom, Wester Ross IV23 2QW. **Tel** 07789 390028

3 Bolfracks

Bolfracks tells you immediately that it is a much-loved garden, beautifully looked after and impervious, quite rightly, to fashion. It has a quiet peace and self confidence, the planting still singing of the 1950s: cherries, acers, berberis, good species rhododendrons. The twig house makes a romantic hideaway. **Address** Bolfracks, Aberfeldy, Perthshire PH15 2EX. **Tel** 01887 820344 **Website** bolfracks.com

4 Gresgarth

"I'm getting more Italian as I get older," says designer Arabella Lennox-Boyd about her own garden at Gresgarth where a geometric arrangement of steps and terraces leads down to meet the lake on the southwest front of the house. The design may be formal but the planting is rich, lush and passionate. **Address** Gresgarth Hall, Caton, Lancashire LA2 9NB. **Tel** 01524 771838 **Website** arabellalennoxboyd.com

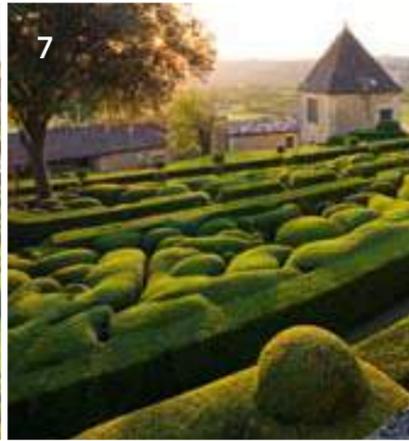
5 La Foce

For more than a decade in the first half of the 20th century, the brilliant architect-designer Cecil Pinsent worked with Iris Origo on her garden at La Foce in Italy's Val d'Orcia. Were they in love? "He was. And I was," said Iris Origo. "But not at the same time." Around the villa, a series of intimate gardens are enclosed by yew hedges and walls of gorgeous travertine stone. At a higher level, a pergola swathed in wisteria gives staggering views out over the vale. **Address** La Foce, Strada della Victoria 61, 53042 Chianciano Terme, Siena, Italy. **Tel** +39 057 869 101 **Website** lafoce.com

1 MARIANNE MAJERUS; 2 ANDREA JONES; 3 MARCH HILL / ALAMY; 4 MATTEO CARASSALE / GAP PHOTOS; 5 ATLANTIDE PHOTOTRAVEL / CORBIS



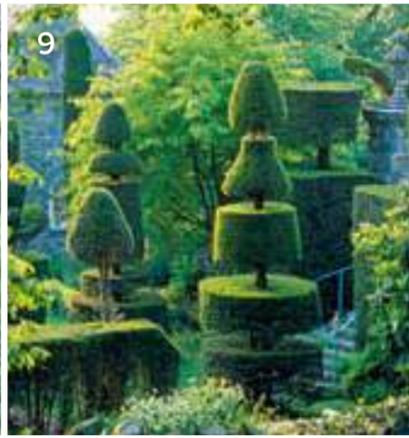
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6 Villa Lante

The garden at Villa Lante in Italy is said by connoisseurs to mark the beginning of the story of the pleasure garden in Europe. Made by Cardinal Gambara for love of himself, rather than another, the design hangs on a dramatic central vista stretching over fountains and pools, shady benches and stairways to a delicious grotto (just made for proposals) at the far end of the garden. **Address** Villa Lante, Via Jacopo Barozzi 71, 01031 Bagnaia (VT), Italy. **Tel** +39 0761 288008

7 Marqueyssac

Marqueyssac overlooks the Dordogne, one of a clutch of battlemented châteaux that glare at each other from their respective peaks. The garden was created by Julien de Cerveil, who adored Italy and made this place as close to his Italian dream as he could manage. The result, more than 150 years on, is spectacular: molten box topiary under tall cypresses and umbrella pines. **Address** Les Jardins Suspendus de Marqueyssac, 24220 Vezac, Dordogne, France. **Tel** +33 5 53 31 36 36 **Website** marqueyssac.com

8 Misarden Park

When I let myself into the garden at Misarden, it was so still, so enclosed in its own bubble of tranquillity, I thought I might have tripped into a golden afternoon of the Edwardian era. Generous herbaceous borders run down either side of a central lawn: echinops, plume poppy, inula, stately spires of delphinium. A pergola of roses and a wide yew hedge shield a kitchen garden. Timeless. Gorgeous. **Address** Misarden Park, Miserden, Stroud, Gloucestershire GL6 7JA. **Tel** 01285 821303 **Website** misardenpark.co.uk

9 Plas Brondanw

Architect Clough Williams-Ellis lived at Plas Brondanw in Wales for more than 70 years, gradually surrounding himself with architectural topiary and allées of box and yew, curling flights of steps, fountains, and the best vista in Britain, ending in the peaks of Snowdonia. For him, the place became a passion "an obsession if you like," and romance still lingers in this wonderful place. **Address** Plas Brondanw, Llanfrothen, Penrhyndeudraeth, Gwynedd LL48 6SW. **Tel** 01766 772772 **Website** brondanw.org



10 Lotusland

To British eyes, the extraordinary garden at Lotusland in Santa Barbara, California, is like a giant film set for the Disney film *Fantasia* with weird but wonderful cacti, superb succulents, rare cycads, flowering aloes and a forest of dragon trees. The only thing more extraordinary than the garden itself, with its Moorish rills and lotus pools, is its creator, the self-styled Madame Ganna Walska (1887–1984), who spent the fortunes of six husbands making this place. Not to be missed. **Address** Directions to garden when booking a visit. Ganna Walska Lotusland Foundation (offices only) is at 695 Ashley Road, Santa Barbara, California 93108, USA. **Tel** +1 805 969 9990 **Website** lotusland.org

6: CUBONAGES SRL / ALAMY; 7: OLIVE NICHOLS; 8: DEREK HARRIS / THE GARDEN COLLECTION; 9: CHARLES HAWES / GAP PHOTOS; 10: ANDREA JONES