

# The delectable **duchy**

**Frank Ruhrmund** heaps praise on a new book celebrating some of Cornwall's great gardens

**A**s Charles Williams, chairman of The Great Gardens of Cornwall, says in his introduction to Tim Hubbard's new book, it was just twenty five years ago that "a distinguished group met on Tresco to inaugurate The Great Gardens of Cornwall".

Since then garden lovers from the Isles of Scilly and Cornwall to all parts of the British Isles have been grateful to them for having such courage and foresight. They will also surely now be equally grateful to Tim Hubbard (*pictured left*) for his splendid book which, to again quote Charles Williams, bears "testament to the achievements and successes of the Great Gardens over the last twenty five years".

Author, broadcaster and gardener, Tim Hubbard, who is in the process of creating a new garden of his own close to the cliff edge in West Cornwall, will be known to many in the region. For a quarter of a century his voice was to be heard on BBC Radio Cornwall, hosting news and current affairs programmes. He has also presented and produced arts and gardening features, documentaries and outside broadcasts. And it will be remembered that several years ago he developed a unique partnership between the BBC and the Royal Horticultural Society, part of which involved building a prize-winning show garden at Hampton Court Palace Flower Show. Currently a freelance presenter at Cheltenham Literature Festival, Cornwall Spring Flower Show and elsewhere, he could hardly be a better choice as author of *The Great Gardens of Cornwall: The People and their Plants*. With enthusiasm and

considerable empathy for and understanding of all that goes into the creation of a great garden, he tells the history of nineteen gardens, from that of Tresco's Abbey Garden on the Isles of Scilly to Trewithen Estate in mid-Cornwall, in an affectionate, appealing, easy to read style.

Like all good gardeners he has prepared his ground thoroughly, and the amount of research such a book entailed must have been staggering. Along the way he pays tribute to the people, owners and head gardeners alike, who have collected, grown and tended the plants that have made these gardens great.

Every reader of Tim Hubbard's words is likely to have his or her favourite garden or gardens. While mine happen to be the sculpture gardens at Tremenheere with its growing collection of contemporary art, and Glendurgan (*pictured right*) which, with its "maze of cherry laurel" has special memories for me, the variation they offer is extraordinary, from that of Cornwall's own "so-called eighth wonder of the world", the Eden Project, to the charming castle of Caerhays, and its long association the Williams family, not forgetting rhododendrons, magnolias and camellias.

In his foreword to the book, television presenter, author and gardener Alan Titchmarsh offers some of his fond and numerous memories of them, from "the great canyon of hydrangeas and gunnera at Trebah (*pictured far right*)" to "drowning in rhododendrons at Caerhays (*pictured top*) and marvelling at camellias in the woodlands at Antony".

He concludes his praise of our great gardens with these words: "Without their magic, our lives would be all the poorer."

How right he is, and how grateful we should be to the owners and managers of these nineteen great gardens for tending them so carefully, and allowing us to see



and share their glories, and of course, to Tim Hubbard for telling their story so admirably.

Generously illustrated, with full colour photographs from various sources, it is guaranteed to delight garden lovers everywhere.

**The Great Gardens of Cornwall: The People and their Plants by Tim Hubbard is published by Alison Hodge at £9.95.**











