

HOUSE

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bloom
Embracing your true style



R130 (incl VAT)





from season to season

House and Leisure contributing editor Jackie May visits Babylonstoren to stroll through its picturesque gardens with master gardener Gundula Deutschländer

If you've visited the large private garden at Babylonstoren's farmstead, you won't be surprised to learn that master gardener Gundula Deutschländer is a fine art graduate. For 13 years she has helped grow a masterpiece using the framework designed by French landscape designer Patrice Taravella. While Patrice drew the outline, Gundula and her fellow gardeners colour it in with edible and medicinal organic plants.

Gundula grew up in a beautiful garden in Somerset West, not far from where she now works, learning about gardens and plants from her landscaper mother, she describes having a connection with plants. 'I've always lived with plants, living with the life found in nature everywhere,' she says.

Gundula spent many years apprenticing in British and Greek gardens. Back home in South Africa, she responded to an advert in a local newspaper for a job at Karen Roos's fledgling project in the Drakenstein valley between Franschoek and Paarl.

'One of my roles here is to realise the idea of the owners and the designer. I bring it to life by retaining the formal idea and creating a safe place for visitors to play in nature.'

'My role is also to communicate the environment and help make it accessible for our visitors,' she says.

People need to be in a natural



environment, to play in and with nature, and the garden allows visitors to do this. Gundula is the guardian of this organic working garden, which feeds both body and soul. She talks of healing, and of the link between land and people.

'If we heal the land, we can heal each other.' It makes sense then that the garden is organic. 'I feel very strongly about this,' she says. 'The world is in a mess, and this is the difference I can make.'

Gundula explains that to be organic, you need biodiversity,

which she protects from the conventional farmland with a band of indigenous plantings. Over the years she has seen how the biodiversity of the gardens has increased. 'I have never seen as many chameleons as I have this year.'

Gundula is struck by how so many people have developed personal relationships with the garden that she watches change from season to season; it's one of her highlights of gardening at Babylonstoren. 'We are mostly unaware of the personal experiences that people have with what we create here,' she says, rubbing goosebumps on her arm. Gundula has the ability to see beauty, to create it and to help visitors spend time in it and away from the despair of the world. She watches the garden take shape and change shape with the seasons, knowing that there will be another cycle of seasons to nurture and admire the garden. ●

[@babylonstoren](#)

Above We have Gundula and her team to thank for Babylonstoren's awe-inspiring gardens

Garden Day South Africa

An annual highlight on the calendar, this year Garden Day falls on Sunday 17 October. It's all about taking a moment to enjoy the great outdoors to celebrate the joy that gardens bring us.

[@gardendayza](#)



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3 / Las Pozas, Xilitla, Mexico

(left) Deep in the moody jungle, encompassed by lush greenery, lies Las Pozas, an intriguing lost city of sorts, created by British writer, ardent surrealist art collector and millionaire, Edward James. Described by his friend Salvador Dalí as ‘crazier than all the Surrealists [put] together’, Edward – along with Plutarco Gastélum – embarked on creating a sculptural land that bridges fantasy with reality. Winding staircases that end abruptly, arched and cylindrical towers and myriad waterfalls and streams create a magical, surreal wonderland – an explorer’s dream. laspozaxilitla.org.mx

4 / Japanese Garden, full CGI creation by Six N. Five

(above) This is not your average garden. In fact, it’s not real. Celebrated Barcelonian design studio Six N. Five – inspired by the architecture of Japanese gardens and the meditative process that comes with maintaining them – created a sequence of captivating images. Art directors Ezequiel Pini and Joan Garcia Pons, along with Simon Kaempfer, produced this fictional visual series using CGI ‘to inspire introspective contemplation in the viewer’. Celebrating the clean lines and strict structure of Japanese architecture, coupled with the nation’s adoration of greenery, the compositions speak volumes. View the full series on Six N. Five’s website. sixnfive.com

5 / The Newt in Somerset, Bruton, England

(right) Where to begin when it comes to The Newt (sister property to the much-loved Babylonstoren)? Is it the Beezantium, which houses a selection of the estate’s wild bee colonies in observation hives, surrounded by a specially planted Apiary? Or the Parabola – originally designed by Henry Hobhouse II as a walled kitchen garden, which is now home to a collection of apple trees that are intricately trained to form curious shapes, and arranged in a Baroque-style maze? Or maybe it’s the Winter Garden (pictured) with its exotic ferns, orchids, succulents and tropical fruit trees – kept at a balmy 20-25°, and the perfect spot to enjoy the sunshine? With 800 acres to explore, this is only the beginning. thenewtinsomerset.com

