

PRIVATE VIEW

PHOTOGRAPHS NICOLA STOCKEN | WORDS DEBORAH CURTIS

A formal pond and structural planting combine to create seclusion and intimacy in the garden at Field House on the banks of the River Thames in Chiswick

The six months that Rupert King spent in Japan in the early nineties had a profound and lasting effect, so much so that when he at last had the chance to create a garden of his own in Chiswick, west London, he took inspiration from the Japanese temple gardens he had visited during his stay. 'I was captivated by their sense of intimacy and enclosure,' he says. ▶



private view

When Rupert bought the house in 2008, the 10m x 30m, north-facing garden with its clay soil was mostly laid to lawn. There was a large, flowering cherry in the centre, a substantial leylandii hedge at the bottom, and minimal planting down either side.

'It was very much a blank canvas, and one of the main things in terms of the design was connecting the extension at the back with the outside. We use that room a lot and I wanted one thing that would anchor it to the rest of the garden,' he says.

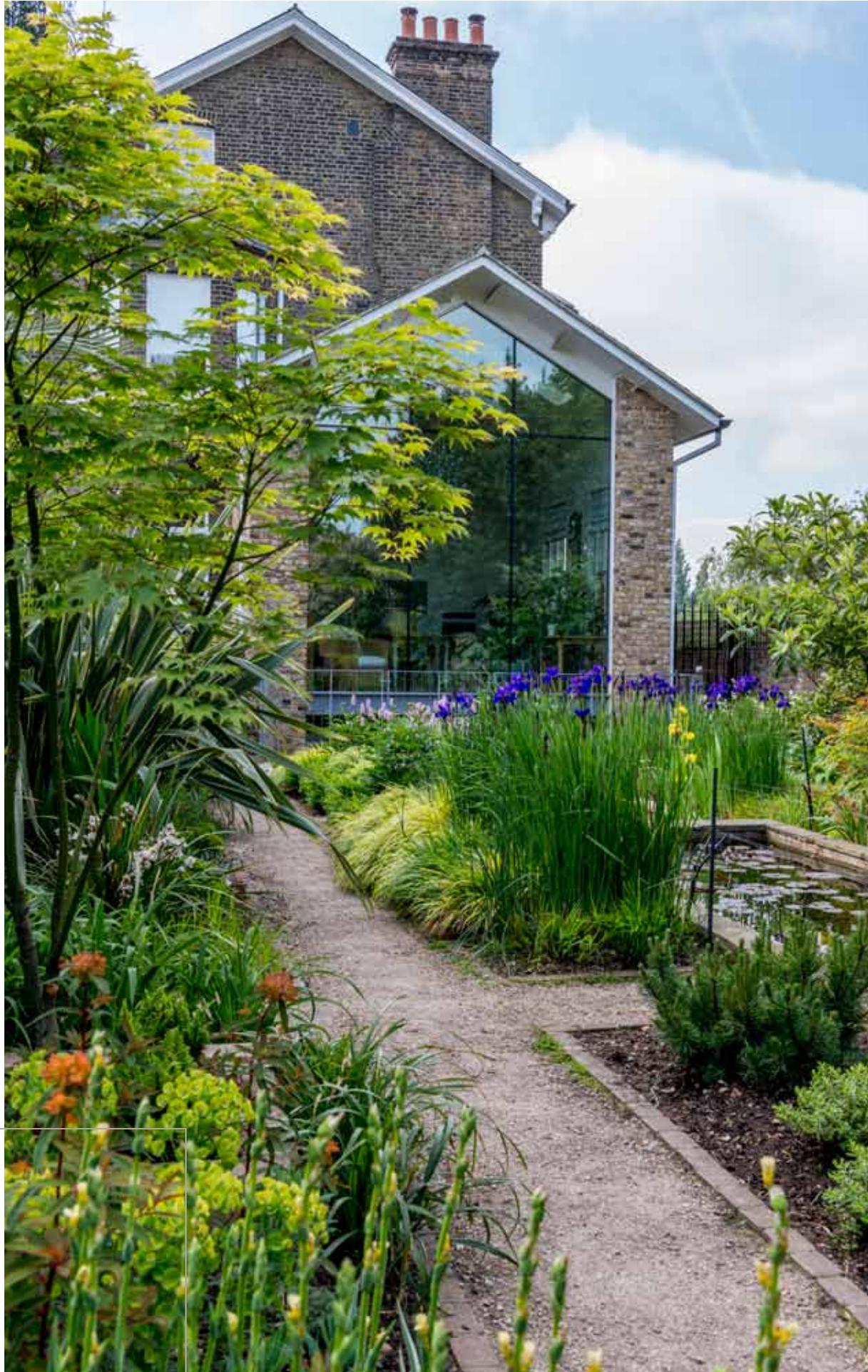
He decided on a long, central pond, along the lines of an Islamic paradise garden, which draws the eye down the length of the garden to the tree ferns at the bottom. 'Once I'd gone for the water feature, it began to dictate what I did with the rest of the garden,' he says.

Parallel paths lead down the garden flanked by linear borders which frame the pond. In terms of plants, there is an emphasis on form and structure to his planting scheme.

'I'm not so much into flowers and colour. I wanted it to be more sculptural and foliage with just one or two things standing out: the blue irises, for example. They only flower for two weeks a year, but they are very striking,' he says.

Rupert does all the maintenance of the garden himself; finding peace and rejuvenation in the garden, which enhances his work as a psychotherapist.

'It's very important for me to get out into the garden,' he says. 'It's a very healthy way of switching off from the work I do and getting in touch with nature.'



▶ A VIEW OF THE POOL

Royal blue *Iris* 'Caesar's Brother', and *Hakonechloa macra* line the pool, which is stocked with koi carp; protected from hungry herons by a low fence. On the left, maple and giant phormium stand tall over *sisyrinchium* and *euphorbia*.



▲ **PLANTING FOR PERFECTION**

Iris pseudacorus, yellow flag iris (above left), thrives on the margins of ponds. It flowers in midsummer, and is vigorous so needs siting with care. *Cornus alba* 'Sibirica Variegata', variegated dogwood, has green and white leaves and, in late spring, white flowers, with red stems in winter.

▼ **BOTTLEBRUSH BEAUTIES**

Summer-flowering perennial *Persicaria bistorta* 'Superba' (below, left) grows up to 90cm in height; the hardy evergreen shrub *Callistemon* 'Red Clusters', flowers in summer and likes a sunny spot.



A long central pond, along the lines of an Islamic paradise garden, draws the eye down to the tree ferns at the end



LINE OF SIGHT

This view along the pool looks down over lavender and potted hosta, past *Iris sibirica* 'Caesar's Brother', *Hakonechloa macra* and pink *Persicaria bistorta* 'Superba' and male ferns to a ceramic sculpture by Peter Hayes (www.peterhayes-ceramics.uk.com), and the tree ferns at the end. The bottom left-hand corner is defined by a large flowering photinia.

THEATRE IN THE ROUND

A large, ceramic moon jar by ceramic artist Adam Buick (www.adambuick.com) stands in the border beneath a loquat; edged in *Libertia grandiflora*, and *Fatsia japonica*. ►





▲ **BORDER COUNTRY**

A wooden bench in a peaceful, reflective spot, halfway down on the left, offers a different perspective on the pond and garden. Planting in this left-hand border includes *Libertia grandiflora*, *Allium hollandicum* 'Purple Sensation', dogwood, maple, bamboo, *Koeleruteria paniculata*, and photinia. In the right-hand border, Rupert has selected plants including phormium, choisya, and *Phoenix canariensis* to stand along the west-facing boundary.

▶ **STYLISH SCREENING**

Thriving tree ferns, *Dicksonia antarctica*, hide pump paraphenalia for the pond, above rhododendron, royal fern, bamboo, hosta, hellebore and box balls.





▲ CREATIVE CORNER

This ceramic bird bath by Sarah Walton (www.sarahwalton.co.uk) stands in a new part of the garden that was freed up when a large mimosa tree blew down. It is planted up with sisyrinchium, euphorbia and yellow bamboo. The raised beds contain bronze phormium, ligularia, white periwinkles and white erigeron.

This is a quiet reflective place. You can hear the lovely sound of the water and gaze into the pond.



▲ WATCH THE BIRDIE

Rupert found this small, alabaster bird bath, in the shape of a lotus flower, in a junk shop. It is edged with hebe, ferns and *Fatsia japonica*, and is a firm favourite with the blue tits who sit in the loquat tree and take turns having a bath.

PROFILE

SKILLED OWNER-DESIGNER

Rupert King discovered a love of gardens as a small child playing in his great-grandmother's garden in Little Marlow, Buckinghamshire. However, it wasn't until he owned his first garden in London's Notting Hill that the passion really took hold. 'I'm completely self-taught,' he says. 'Everything I did in my small garden in Notting Hill was an experiment, and that was one of the reasons I decided to move. I wanted a bigger canvas.' Rupert's garden opens as part of Chiswick Mall Gardens on June 8. See www.ngs.co.uk

