

SPRING CELEBRATION: CHELSEA, COTSWOLDS & SOUTH WALES

May 9th – 22nd 2025

With Karen Chapman



Lower Slaughter, Cotswolds

Our adventure begins in the ancient city of [Oxford](#), famous worldwide for its prestigious university, and ornate architecture. Serving as a gateway to the Cotswolds which is renowned for its quaint, honey-colored limestone cottages, we will journey west to visit world-class gardens including [Hidcote](#), a Grade 1-listed garden inspired by the Arts and Crafts movement, [Kiftsgate Court Gardens](#), a charming smaller garden that exudes romance, and [Bourton House](#) which will delight visitors with its exciting plant combinations, imaginative topiary and charming water features. We will also visit several less well-known gardens including the tranquil landscape of [Rousham](#) and [The Gardens at Miserden](#), a timeless 17th century garden with spectacular views. Where many other tours then return east, we will continue on into South Wales, a region dotted with humble miners' towns, framed by rolling hills and a scenic coastline. Here we will take the opportunity to learn more about the rich history of this region by visiting [Llandaff Cathedral](#), [St. Fagans National Museum of History](#), and the [Big Pit National Coal Museum](#). Our visit to [Aberglasney](#) is sure to be a highlight as we learn more of the garden restoration and how [Frank Cabot](#), founder of the Garden Conservancy, was an unexpected benefactor.



What sets this tour apart, however, are the hidden gems such as [Llanover Garden](#) , now managed by the seventh generation family members Ross and Elizabeth, featuring streams, ancient trees, expansive borders and a walled garden, [Pettifers](#), a colorful, private English country garden, and several other carefully selected private gardens both in the Cotswolds and South Wales.

For our *grand finale* we will enjoy a full day at the iconic [Chelsea Flower Show](#) on members day. As a bonus, all tour guests will receive a complimentary, one-year membership to the Royal Horticultural Society with all the associated benefits.

Rather than visiting as a tourist – I invite you to join me *as family*. I want you to have time to simply sit in these beautiful gardens and “be”, to have time to chat with the locals, and to experience true English hospitality. These are the memories that will linger long after the blossoms of spring have faded.

This tour promises to be a unique blend of treasured experiences.

ITINERARY



Day 1: Friday May 9th (-/-/D)

Your adventure begins in earnest when we meet at our [Mercure Eastgate Hotel](#) (3 nts.) in the medieval city of **Oxford** (*above*) for our celebratory **welcome dinner**.

Day 2: Saturday May 10th (B/L/-)

After breakfast we will enjoy a **guided walking tour** of the city, renowned for its prestigious university established in the 12th century, followed by a visit to the [Oxford Botanic Garden](#) (*right*) the oldest botanic garden in the UK. Our coach will then transfer us to the [Burford Garden Company](#) to enjoy a delicious **lunch** with plenty of time afterwards for browsing (and shopping) the fabulous displays before returning to our hotel late afternoon. Independent dinner.



Day 3: Sunday May 11th (B/-/-)

A leisurely start to the day with time to pick up something to eat on the coach for lunch, before we drive to the serene [Rousham Gardens](#) for a guided tour. Monty Don describes Rousham as “one of the greatest gardens in the world” yet it is often overlooked. We then transfer to a very different style of garden, one filled with imaginative tapestries of color; [Pettifers](#). The owner will lead us through her private garden followed by time for solo exploration and **refreshments**. Independent dinner.

Day 4: Monday May 12th (B/L/D)

After checking out of our hotel we travel to [Sudeley Castle](#) (*right*), a Tudor jewel where history comes to life for a guided tour of the gardens followed by free time and a group **lunch**. We then head into the heart of the Cotswolds and our base for the next 3 night, the [White Hart Royal](#), a 17th century coaching inn situated in charming **Moreton-in-the-Marsh**. Enjoy **dinner** together this evening.



Day 5: Tuesday May 13th (B/L/-)

A bucket-list day for many of us! We begin by visiting [Hidcote](#) (*left*) an Arts and Crafts-inspired garden with a series of garden rooms to explore after an initial orientation. We will enjoy our **picnic lunch** (provided) here.

It's then just a short walk to [Kiftsgate Court Gardens](#) for a self-paced visit of a charming English garden designed and nurtured by three generations of inspirational women. To round out our full day we will visit [Bourton House](#) for a self-paced visit. From topiary chickens to exotic borders, this garden is full of surprises. Independent dinner.

Day 6: Wednesday May 14th (B/L/-)

This morning, we will enjoy a self-paced visit to [The Garden at Miserden](#), (*right*) a 17th century garden with spectacular views over the rolling Cotswold countryside. Our locally sourced **lunch** will be at the acclaimed pub [The Pig in the Cotswolds](#) where the original listed gardens were designed by Rosemary Verey. Our coach will then take us to arguably one of the prettiest villages in the Cotswolds: [Bibury](#) where we will visit the private home of my friend and author [Victoria Summerley](#) for **refreshments** and a guided garden tour with additional time to meander independently. Dinner at your leisure this evening.



Day 7: Thursday May 15th (B/L/D)



After checking out of our hotel and collecting a **picnic lunch** we travel west into South Wales. Our first destination is the [Big Pit National Coal Museum](#) (*left*) with an (optional) underground tour plus self-paced visit to an excellent multi-media experience, workshops, galleries and other historic colliery buildings. This is a perfect introduction to the local history and to the hard-working people who call this area home. We'll then make our way to our hotel for the next 3 nights, the [Angel Hotel](#) in **Abergavenny** on the edge of the Bannau Brycheiniog National Park (*Brecon Beacons*). **Dinner** together this evening.

Day 8: Friday May 16th (B/L/-)

A leisurely start will allow you a little free time to explore the market before we visit three very different **private gardens**. First stop is the 18th century [Llanover Garden](#) (*right*) where homeowner Elizabeth will provide **refreshments** before leading us on a circular walk through the estate. Look out for the walled Round Garden and the Rhy-y-Meirch (*Ford of the Stallions*) stream which flows through the entire garden. This is a true family garden, established by Elizabeth's great-great-great grandfather! From here it is just a few minutes to reach [Highfield Farm](#), (*below*) where the owners Jenny and Roger will guide us through their plant-lovers paradise. Jenny was born and grew up here and has some fascinating [stories](#) to share.



We will enjoy our picnic **high tea**, provided by our hotel as we continue to our third garden [Nant y Bedd](#) (*Stream of the Grave*), named for the 2 Bronze Age burial mounds where the stream begins its journey. Owner Sue will share how the 10 acre organic garden has evolved over 40 years. Lots to see in this RHS partner garden, including a natural swimming pond, shepherd's hut and a treehouse. Independent dinner.

Day 9: Saturday May 17th (B/L/-)

We begin our day with a guided visit to learn about the history, art and architecture of [Llandaff Cathedral](#).

(right) [Photo credit](#)

(Garden trivia: Dahlia 'Bishop of Llandaff' was selected and named to honor Joshua Pritchard Hughes, Bishop of Llandaff in 1924 and won the RHS Award of Garden Merit in 1928 although it didn't become truly popular until the 1990s). After enjoying **lunch** together our afternoon will be spent at the [Wye Valley Sculpture Garden](#) where you can explore the interface between art and landscape through their seasonal exhibits. Independent dinner



Day 10: Sunday May 18th (B/L/-)



This morning we head out to [St. Fagans National Museum of History](#) (left) for a self-paced visit.

There's lots to see including beautiful castle gardens and historic buildings, but be sure to leave enough time to walk through the galleries which depict life in South Wales through the centuries. We then have time to eat our **picnic lunch** (provided) on the coach as we drive west to [Aberglasney](#) (below) considered one of Wales' finest gardens. Here we will have a private guided tour and learn more about the backstory including the connection to Frank Cabot, founder of the Garden Conservancy before exploring further on our own. Be sure to see the restored Elizabethan Cloister Garden, the only one of its kind remaining in the UK today. Independent dinner.

Day 11: Monday May 19th (B/L/-)

After check out this morning we will begin our journey into **London**, stopping first at a **private garden** for refreshments as well as enjoying **lunch** together en route. Our London base for our last 3 nights is [Bailey's Hotel](#) in centrally located South Kensington. Dinner at your leisure this evening.



Day 12: Tuesday May 20th (B/-/-)

We begin this morning with a private, **guided walking tour** to orient ourselves. Kensington is home to the Royal Albert Hall, countless museums and galleries, Kensington Palace and so much more.

The remainder of the day will be yours to explore further. Perhaps visit the [Chelsea Physic Garden](#) and meander the [Chelsea in Bloom](#) displays (*right*)? Or some retail therapy at [Harrods](#), [Liberty's](#) or [Selfridge's](#)? Maybe ride a [double-decker bus](#) to see the sights? In the evening you might choose to take in a West End show. Enjoy lunch and dinner at your leisure in order to make the most of your time today.



Day 13: Wednesday May 21st (B/-/D)

For our Grand Finale we will have members day tickets to enjoy a full day at the iconic [Chelsea Flower Show](#). Glean design ideas, explore the plant displays in the Floral Marquee and shop 'til you drop!

Our **Farewell Dinner** this evening will round out our memorable adventure.

Day 14: Thursday May 22nd (B/-/-)

Tour services end after breakfast today. Our hotel is just a 1 minute walk from Gloucester Road tube station which has a direct service to Heathrow airport. See Airport Transfers below for more details.

HEALTH CONSIDERATIONS

Our aim is to keep everyone healthy and be sensitive to those who may be more vulnerable. No proof of any vaccination is now needed to travel. However, by registering for this tour **all guests understand and agree to the following:**

- Any guest who displays symptoms of *any* upper respiratory infection other than seasonal allergies (persistent cough, sneezing, sore throat) will be asked to wear a mask on the coach and in confined indoor areas, and to practice social distancing whenever possible to minimize the risk to others.
- Any guest who is running a fever will be asked to take a rest day at our hotel (if we are returning to the same hotel that evening) to allow for self-medication and isolation. Should the fever last more than 24 hours or should we be in transit that day, the guest may be asked to remain at that hotel until they are recovered from their fever and then make their way, at their own expense, to rejoin the group. We will assist you in making the necessary arrangements and stay in communication with you throughout. Purchase of travel insurance and collection of all expense-related receipts, however, is highly recommended
- Special note for room buddies: please discuss in advance how expenses will be covered if one person gets sick and necessitates the healthy guest needing to book another room.

Thank you for your understanding.

HOW DO I KNOW IF THIS TOUR IS RIGHT FOR ME?

To fully enjoy this tour, please be sure you:

- Have an adventurous spirit and easy-going attitude.
- Are comfortable walking 5-6 miles each day at a moderate pace, often on uneven or grassy paths. There may also be steps and/or slopes to navigate.
- Can stand unaided as we listen to our guides for periods of time and manage occasional stairs.
- Can manage your own suitcase (tips will be provided to help you pack light) as 300-year-old coaching inns were not designed with elevators! Porter assistance may be available, however.

SMOKING

Please note that all our hotels are non-smoking establishments.

POTENTIAL CHANGES

Should any changes have to be made to hotels or tours for any reason, a suitable alternative will be found of equal standing, and finalized closer to departure.

DISCLAIMER

Le jardinet acts only as an agent for the various independent suppliers that provide hotel accommodations, transportation, sightseeing, activities, or other services connected with this tour. Such services are subject to the terms and conditions of those suppliers. Le jardinet and their respective employees, agents, representatives, and assigns accept no liability whatsoever for any injury, damage, loss, accident, delay, or any other incident which may be caused by the negligence, defect, default of any company or person in performing these services. Responsibility is not accepted for losses, injury, damages or expenses of any kind due to sickness, weather, strikes, hostilities, wars, terrorist acts, acts of nature, local laws or other such causes. All services and accommodations are subject to the laws and regulations of the country in which they are provided. Le jardinet is not responsible for any baggage or personal effects of any individual participating in the tours/trips arranged by Le jardinet. Individual travelers are responsible of purchasing a travel insurance policy, if desires, that will cover some of the expenses associated with the loss of luggage or personal effects.

MEET YOUR HOST: KAREN CHAPMAN



Karen grew up in northern England and lived in the heart of the Peak District before moving to Seattle in 1996 with her English-born husband Andy and their two young children.

A love of the English countryside was evident even in those early days, which for Karen naturally led to an interest in gardening together with photographing landscapes. As the saying goes, *“You can take the girl out of England, but you can’t take England out of the girl”*. And so it is that the rolling, green hills and wild hedgerows of the English countryside always touch a deep part of her soul and say “home”.

Today, as a landscape designer, award-winning author, and international speaker Karen has the knowledge, enthusiasm, personal connections, and detailed, organizational skills that are needed to put together a tour of inspirational gardens, historical sites, and cultural experiences.

Tour guests are treated as **family** – not a tourist, as you are introduced to Karen’s favorite places and people. Today that family has grown with many guests returning for new adventures year after year.

“Join me: I would love to share ‘my England’ with you.”

Karen Chapman, Le jardinet: <https://lejardinetdesigns.com/>

For questions or more information contact Karen: karen@lejardinetdesigns.com

Note to our alumni: *Regrettably, Andy is unable to co-host this tour due to other commitments*

What's included:

- 13 nights' accommodation (including all taxes) in 3-4-star hotels
- All ground transportation in England in an air-conditioned coach
- Breakfast daily
- 9 lunches, 4 dinners
- 4 traditional English refreshments (tea/coffee and cake)
- All entrance fees and private guided tours to gardens, historical sites, and Estates per itinerary
- All-day tickets to The Chelsea Flower Show on members day
- Membership to the Royal Horticultural Society for all guests (or 1 membership per couple) for 1 year.
- Private guided tours led by owners, Head Gardener or experienced garden guide
- VOX whisper system (audio) throughout the tour
- All taxes
- All gratuities with the exception of coach driver and housekeeping
- A virtual get-together for all guests to meet before our tour
- Design and horticultural expertise from your Tour Leader, Karen Chapman
- Host Karen Chapman traveling with group at all times

What's excluded:

- Transfer to Oxford from Heathrow airport (see Airport Transfer details below).
- Transfer from London to Heathrow Airport (see Airport Transfer details below).
- Any meals not listed

NOTE: There are limited *twin* rooms available on this tour

Tour Cost:

Tour is priced in **Pounds Sterling (£)** and final payment will reflect the actual cost.

For 20-24 passengers (group is capped at 22 plus host):

£5750 per person based on double occupancy

Based on rate of exchange (9/28/24) ~\$7647

For 15-19 passengers:

£6250 per person based on double occupancy

Based on ROE (9/28/24): ~\$8312

Single supplement: **£1589**

Based on ROE (9/28/24): ~\$2113

Payment schedule and cancellation policy:

A \$1500 deposit per person is due at time of booking and is non-refundable. Final payment due March 1st 2025.

Check is the required form of payment for deposit and preferred for final payment. A 5% surcharge will be added for credit card use.

Note: our tour will proceed with a minimum of 15 reservations. If that minimum is not met Le jardin et reserves the right to cancel the tour at which time all payments will be refunded in full. Please do not make your airline reservations until I have confirmed in writing that the tour has met these criteria.

To reserve your place:

We expect this tour will sell out quickly, so please **email Karen** (karen@lejardinetdesigns.com) initially to confirm space and get further instructions.

When confirmed, please make **checks payable to Ma Petite Tours**, writing “**Karen Chapman – UK Tour 2025**” on the memo line, and mail along with your **reservation form** to my agent at the address below:

Ma Petite Tours
9614 180th St. SE
Snohomish, WA 98296

Insurance:

Insurance is highly recommended. Once your deposit and reservation form are received, an email will be sent to you regarding insurance coverage as well as a link for purchase.

Air Travel & Airport Transfers:

Flights are not included in the tour cost, giving you maximum flexibility should you wish to arrive early or extend your visit when our tour ends. Please do not book your flights until insurance coverage information is provided and we have confirmed that the tour will proceed with a minimum of 15 guests.

For this tour you will need to make your own way from your London airport to our hotel in Oxford. There is a [direct bus service](#) from Heathrow airport (terminals 2,3 and 5) that makes this easy. The bus stop closest to our hotel in Oxford is [High St./Queens Lane](#), just 1 block west of our hotel. Full details and maps will be sent to all registered guests. If you are arriving in Oxford via train or a different airport email Karen for suggested routes.

You will also be making your own way to Heathrow airport from our London hotel. We will be just a short walk to Gloucester Road tube station. From here the Piccadilly Line westbound will take you directly to Heathrow. This journey takes approx. 45 minutes. All terminals are linked.

Documentation:

You will need a valid US Passport with at least 6 months validity from the return date to enter the UK. If you are not a US citizen, please let me know and I will advise you on the required documentation.

For more information contact:

Karen Chapman at **425-765-3574** or email: karen@lejardinetdesigns.com

RESERVATION FORM: PLEASE PRINT

May 9-22nd 2025 tour: Chelsea, Cotswolds & South Wales with Karen Chapman

Passenger One:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Cell phone number: _____

Email: _____

Emergency (non-tour) contact person and phone: _____

Relationship to above: _____

Legal name as it appears on passport: _____

Country issuing passport: _____

Passport number: _____

Expiration date: _____

Date of birth: _____

Dietary restrictions: _____

Food allergies: _____

Medical allergies: _____

Other:

Do you wish to purchase insurance? _____

Special requests:

Are you a single requesting a room share?

Health Considerations: I have read, understand and agree to the terms laid out above.

_____ (signature)

Passenger Two *(there are limited twin rooms available on this tour):*

Name: _____

Address: _____

Cell phone number: _____

Email: _____

Emergency (non-tour) contact person and phone: _____

Relationship to above: _____

Legal name as it appears on passport: _____

Country issuing passport: _____

Passport number: _____

Expiration date: _____

Date of birth: _____

Dietary restrictions: _____

Food allergies: _____

Medical allergies: _____

Other:

Do you wish to purchase insurance? _____

Health Considerations: I have read, understand and agree to the terms laid out above.

_____ (signature)