

Adventures in San Diego:

Sunshine, Succulents and Savvy Gardening Strategies

April 13th – 20th 2027

With Karen Chapman



Grab your sunglasses and camera for an unforgettable adventure in southern California.

Garden travel is about so much more than finding new plants that you can grow. It's an opportunity to glean design ideas, explore new color schemes, and learn how others strategize to keep their gardens thriving despite summer drought, wildlife pressure and other common challenges.

This small group tour will begin with a presentation by my good friend and colleague [Nan Sterman](#). A celebrated local garden expert, award-winning author and TV host, Nan will set the scene explaining the local gardening climate and challenges.

During our week long tour we will visit world class public gardens including [San Diego Botanic Garden](#) and the new elephant exhibit at the [San Diego Safari Park](#), cited as having the "best Baja garden outside of Baja". We will have an excursion to the historic [San Juan Capistrano Mission](#) and visit several outstanding private gardens in order to appreciate the breadth of design and planting possibilities that this region affords.

To better appreciate the natural beauty of this area we will also enjoy a docent led tour of [Torrey Pines State Reserve](#) to see wildflowers and the rarest pine tree in North America with a stunning ocean backdrop.

Visiting private gardens and learning from their owners and designers is always a highlight of our tours, so I know you will enjoy this exciting selection that vary in style and size.

Finally, no visit to California would be complete without a wine tasting and we found the perfect venue.

If you're looking for a unique, small group tour of this charming region, this adventure is for you.

ITINERARY

Day 1: Tuesday April 13th (-/-/D)

Del Mar will be our picturesque base for the week, chosen for its central location and amenities which include a wide range of restaurants, sandy beaches and parks.

Our tour begins this evening when we meet in our boutique, coastal hotel, the [Hotel Indigo Del Mar](#) (7 nts) for a short **presentation** by our **special guest expert** [Nan Sterman](#). She will explain the climate, soils and challenges of gardening in San Diego to help us better appreciate all that we will see this week. This will be followed by our **welcome dinner**.

Day 2: Wednesday April 14th (B/-/-)

After breakfast we head into San Diego and visit [Balboa Park](#) for a private tour of the historic [Botanical Building](#) (right). Dating back to 1915, the Botanical Building is an iconic wooden conservatory featuring elegant arcades and Palladian windows. It is recently completed including updated interior gardens designed by Nan who will be our guide for this visit.

From here we will transfer to the world class [San Diego Zoo](#). Large tree ferns, giant coral trees and tropical specimens all thrive here due to the mild climate and proximity to the coast. A horticulturalist will lead our tour here with additional time for an independent lunch and exploration. Evening at leisure.



Day 3: Thursday April 15th (B/L/-)



Visiting **private gardens** is always a highlight and today we have been invited to tour two of the very best.

[Jim Bishop's](#) garden in Mission Hills (left) is a garden-lover's paradise: not surprising since Jim is a renowned horticulturist, self-confessed plantaholic and former president of the San Diego Horticultural Society. He has crafted a true botanical oasis out of this steep, rocky site with an artist's eye for detail. This is going to be a real treat.

After a stop for a group **lunch** we will continue to Spring Valley where **Jim Merzbacker** will meet us and share his garden which is well off the beaten track and rarely open for tours. Jim is well known locally for his expertise in native plants and ecosystems. Evening at leisure.

Day 4: Friday April 16th (B/-/)

This morning we head to the majestic [Torrey Pines State Reserve](#) where docents will lead us on a short walk to see the rare Torrey pine as well as one of the last salt marshes and waterfowl refuges in Southern California.

We then transfer into Encinitas with time for an independent lunch in one of the many cafes there.

To round out the day we will visit a nearby **private garden** designed by Nan Sterman who will be on hand to answer questions. Independent dinner.

Day 5: Saturday April 17th (B/L/-)

[San Diego Botanic Garden](#) (right) in Encinitas offers lots to explore during your self-guided visit with over 29 uniquely themed gardens and over 4 miles of trails. If the weather is breezy be sure to meander through the bamboo grove and the iconic musician topiaries are a must-see. Rekindle your childhood by visiting the children's garden which includes Dr. Seuss-like trees, fragrant vines and a shallow meandering stream to splash in.

After **lunch** at an oceanfront restaurant it's just a short transfer to see a **private garden** designed by Nan before visiting **Nan Sterman's own private garden** which has been recently renovated. Independent dinner.



Day 6: Sunday April 18th (B/-/-)

After breakfast we will head to the [San Diego Zoo Safari Park](#) in San Diego's North County which offers outstanding Baja gardens and an exceptional [elephant exhibit](#). A guided tour will ensure we make the most of our visit with additional time allowed for an independent lunch at one of their [many options](#).



In the afternoon we will have a private visit to **Mt. Woodson Flora**, a specialist protea nursery on the outskirts of Ramona. (The protea should be in full bloom)! Daniel MacDonald and his partner Steve purchased this property in 2011 and now propagate and sell seed or cutting grown plants from their nursery as well as cut flowers.

Before returning to our hotel we will stop off at the historic [Bernardo Winery](#) for a **wine tasting and tour**. This winery is one of the oldest, continuously operating wineries in California.

Evening at leisure.

Day 7: Monday April 19th (B/L/D)



Today is our last full day – and we have some excellent excursions to round out our adventures in this beautiful area.

First, we head north to the historic [San Juan Capistrano Mission](#) (left) founded over 200 years ago. Originally built as a self-sufficient community by Spanish Padres and Native Americans, the Mission was a center for agriculture, industry, education and religion. Famous for the Annual Return of the Swallows this is truly a very special place. Our guided tour will teach us about the history of the Mission with additional time allowed for you to enjoy your (provided) packed lunch in the peaceful gardens and visit additional displays at your leisure.

We then transfer to [Sherman Library & Gardens](#), a renowned botanical garden in Corona del Mar currently being renovated. At just over 2 acres, what it lacks in size it more than makes up for in diverse plant collections. The succulent mosaic and tropical conservatory are especially popular.

Our final stop of the day will be at [Roger's Gardens](#), a destination that includes home décor and gifts in addition to inspirational outdoor themed garden displays and indoor plants. Our farewell dinner will be in their highly acclaimed restaurant '[Farmhouse](#)'. Named as one of Open Table's 100 Best outdoor Dining Restaurants with a focus on farm-to-table fare, this promises to be the perfect tour finale.

Day 8: Tuesday April 20th (B/-/-)

Tour services end after breakfast today. Independent transfer to airport at your leisure.

(B = breakfast L = lunch D = dinner)

INTERACTIVE MAP OF OUR ADVENTURE

<https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/0/edit?mid=1lrrxf97t3gjUWuKOPbIIWSoXZhmeS-Q&usp=sharing>

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

While some periods of free time are built in, this is still a full itinerary.

- Are in good general health?
- Can you comfortably manage walking 4-5 miles each day at a moderate pace, often on uneven, **hilly** and/or **rocky** ground?
- Can you comfortably climb steps (often made of uneven stone) and also stand unaided for periods of time?
- It is worth stressing that several of these gardens are on steep hillsides. **There will be lots of steps – without handrails**. Please ensure you can manage these with a smile 😊

WHAT MAKES THIS TOUR UNIQUE?

- [Nan Sterman](#) will be our special guest this week. Nan and I first met through Garden Writer's Association (now renamed [GardenComm](#)) and have enjoyed many conferences and garden visits together over the past 20 years. I'm both delighted and honored that she not only was willing to help me refine this itinerary for you but has also made herself available to lead some visits and share some of her clients' gardens as well as her own newly renovated garden. I know you'll appreciate her knowledge and insights as much as I do.
- 'Taking the road less traveled' to see several top-notch private gardens.
- A full yet well-paced schedule that combines guided tours, self-guided visits, and free time.

HEALTH CONSIDERATIONS

Our aim is to keep everyone healthy and be sensitive to those who may be more vulnerable. 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 (e.g. 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 to allow for self-medication and isolation. Should the fever last more than 24 hours the guest may be asked to remain at that hotel until they are recovered from their fever. I will assist you in making any necessary arrangements and stay in communication with you throughout. Purchase of travel insurance and collection of all expense-related receipts, however, is highly recommended.

Thank you for your understanding.

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 with a trowel in her hand, since gardening is a way of life rather than a hobby in the UK. She first met her husband Andy as a teenager before eventually marrying in 1987. They lived in the heart of the Peak District before moving to Seattle in 1996 with their two young children.

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.

Yet what sets Karen's tours apart, is that every guest is treated like family – not as a tourist. Her sincere wish is that you *experience* each destination, not simply visit it. With that in mind, each tour is kept to 22 guests or less and in addition to guided tours, time is built in for you to savor each moment at your own pace.

Come and join our family!

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

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

What's included:

- 7 nights' accommodation (including all taxes) in a 3-star hotel
- All ground transportation in an air-conditioned coach
- Breakfast daily
- 3 lunches, 2 dinners, 1 wine tasting
- All entrance fees and private guided tours to gardens and estates per itinerary
- Private guided tours led by owners, designers, a horticulturist or a knowledgeable guide.
- Special guest **Nan Sterman** leading several tours + introductory presentation
- All taxes
- All gratuities with the exception of housekeeping.
- A virtual get together for all guests to meet before our tour
- Design and horticultural expertise from your Tour Leader, Karen Chapman
- Hosts Karen Chapman traveling with group at all times

NOTE: transfers to/from San Diego airport are NOT included to allow you maximum flexibility. With guests' permission, however, nearer the departure time I will email everyone guest names/emails/travel details so you can arrange taxi/taxis/uber.

Tour Cost

For 16-22 passengers (group is capped at 22 plus two hosts):

\$4150 per person based on double occupancy

Single supplement: **\$900**

Additional nights can be arranged subject to availability- please contact [Dee](#) to discuss.

Payment schedule and cancellation policy:

A **\$1000 deposit per person** is due at time of booking and is non-refundable.

Final payment is due **January 7th 2027** and is non-refundable.

Check is the required form of payment for deposit and final payment.

Note: our tour will proceed with a minimum of 16 reservations. If those criteria are not met Le jardinet 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 anticipate this tour may sell out quickly, so please **email Karen** (karen@lejardinetdesigns.com) initially to confirm space and get further instructions.

Please make **checks payable to Ma Petite Tours**, writing “**Karen Chapman – San Diego Tour**” on the memo line, and mail along with your **reservation form** to my booking agent Dee Montpetit at the address below:

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

Insurance:

Insurance is highly recommended. Our local agent [Dee Montpetit](#) will send you a link for a personalized insurance quote once she receives your documents. Note this this generally must be **purchased within 14 days** of paying your tour deposit for any pre-existing coverage.

Air Travel:

Do NOT book your flights to San Diego until notified by Karen in writing that we have enough guests to proceed with the tour and are advised of our meeting time/terminal.

If you need assistance booking your flights online, please contact [Dee](#).

For more information or questions please contact:

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

RESERVATION FORM: PLEASE PRINT

April 13th – 20th 2027 to San Diego with Karen Chapman

Passenger One:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Cell phone number: _____

Email: _____

Non-tour emergency contact person and phone: _____

Relationship to above: _____

Date of birth: _____

Dietary restrictions: _____

Food allergies: _____

Medical allergies: _____

Other:

How many additional nights do you wish to book? _____

Do you wish to purchase insurance? _____

May I share your contact information to facilitate ride shares to/from the airport? _____

Special requests:

Are you booking as a single but would be interested in a room share? _____

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

_____ (signature)

Passenger Two:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Cell phone number: _____

Email: _____

Non-tour emergency contact person and phone: _____

Relationship to above: _____

Date of birth: _____

Dietary restrictions: _____

Food allergies: _____

Medical allergies: _____

Other:

How many additional nights do you wish to book? _____

Do you wish to purchase insurance? _____

May I share your contact information to facilitate ride shares to/from the airport? _____

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

_____ (signature)