

## GARDENING | GARDEN TOUR

In this four-square garden room, boxwood hedges frame beds of roses punctuated with shapes that landscape architect Chip Callaway says resemble snails. The arches in the tall yew walls echo the eyebrow-shaped windows of the house beyond. Moss grows between stone pavers, a detail Callaway says he's borrowed from Hidcote "a million times."



# Hidcote Manor Garden

North Carolina landscape architect **Chip Callaway** takes us through a century-old Cotswolds garden with surprising American roots

**GRAND GARDENS** in England, France, and Italy inspire garden designer Chip Callaway. Since the 1970s he has toured many, spending lots of time with fellow garden lover and friend Jackie Fielding of England. "It is sort of like a scavenger hunt of the best of English gardens," says Callaway.



One night, around a fire at Fielding's Dorset home, she posed a tough question: "After all this, what's your favorite garden?" Callaway balked. There were more than 50 on his list, private and public spaces that they'd traipsed through together from early morning until sunset through the years. But at last, he shocked his friend with his final answer: Hidcote Manor Garden.

Fielding had to agree it's a lovely place. But she, who reveres British female garden designers such as Gertrude Jekyll, Penelope Hobhouse, and Rosemary Verey, was surprised, outraged even, because the quintessential English garden of Hidcote was designed in the early 20th century by, of all things, an American. True, Major Lawrence Johnston was born in France, was educated at Cambridge, became a British subject, and fought in the British Army, but he was American nonetheless, part of a wealthy Baltimore family. "Jackie said, 'Not only was Hidcote designed by a man, it was designed by an American man!' She thought my choice was the height of cheap," Callaway remembers, chuckling.

But together the pair had walked through Hidcote, marveling at Johnston's ingenuity and how his ideas have been maintained through the years. Located near Chipping Campden in Gloucestershire and

**Enveloped by hostas, brunnera, wood anemone, and shade trees, a canopied stone path (above) offers a visual break. "This is a perfect example of a connector between the sunnier garden rooms," Callaway says. "Some of these rooms are really intense, and this is a quiet space where you can reflect and rest your eyes for a minute." Bird-shaped topiary forms (above right) alight on wide, trimmed yew pillars.**



## Touring Hidcote

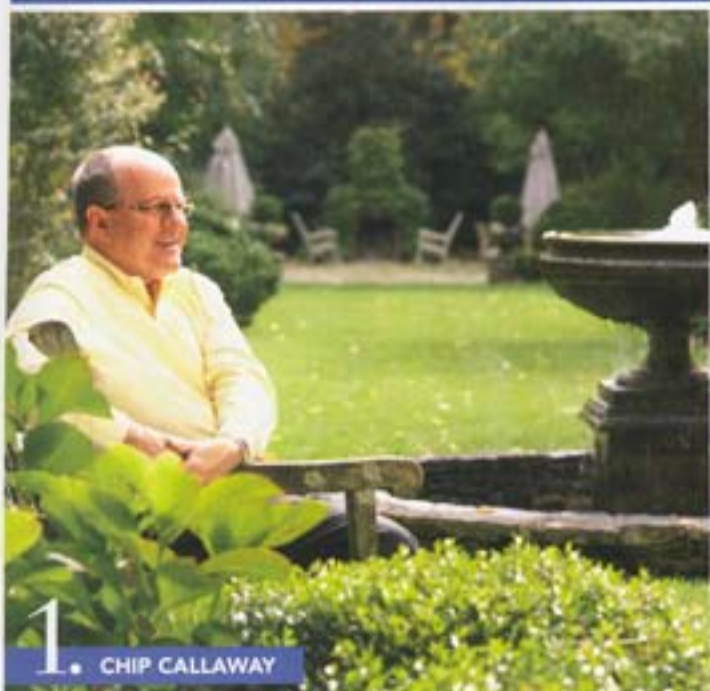
**When to go:** The garden (Hidcote Bartrim, near Chipping Campden, Gloucestershire, England; 011-44-138-643-8333; [www.nationaltrust.org.uk/hidcote](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/hidcote)) is most crowded in the summer and on weekends and bank holidays; it is least crowded after 3 p.m. It is typically open from late March through the end of October.

**Where to eat:** Enjoy lunch at the restaurant on the grounds or venture out to Chipping Campden. "Wonderful pubs and restaurants are everywhere," says landscape architect Chip Callaway. The Pudding Club (Three Ways House Hotel, Mickleton, 011-44-138-643-8429, [www.puddingclub.com](http://www.puddingclub.com)), formed in 1985, celebrates traditional British pudding. For Continental cuisine, head to Joel's Restaurant (High St., 011-44-138-684-0598) or Huxley's Restaurant & Bar (High St., 011-44-138-684-0520).

**Where to stay:** The Cotswolds area offers a bevy of ancient-feeling inns, charming hotels, and bed-and-breakfasts. Buckland Manor (Buckland, Worcestershire, 011-44-138-685-2626, [www.bucklandmanor.co.uk](http://www.bucklandmanor.co.uk)), a luxury hotel located in a 13th-century manor house, gives you a taste of historic England. The Lygon Arms Hotel (High St., Broadway, Worcestershire, 800/745-8883, [www.lhw.com/lygonarms](http://www.lhw.com/lygonarms)) has welcomed guests for more than 500 years.

**Nearby attractions:** The garden directly across from Hidcote, called Kiftsgate Court (011-44-138-643-8777, [www.kiftsgate.co.uk](http://www.kiftsgate.co.uk)), is worth a visit too. "The Cotswolds are one of the most attractive visitor destinations in Europe," says Callaway.

IN AN ARTS AND CRAFTS-STYLE GARDEN



1. CHIP CALLAWAY



2.



3.



4.

1. Separate garden rooms at Hidcote Manor "create different experiences as you walk through," says Callaway, shown in a client's garden.

2. At the rear of Hidcote Manor, roses and a variety of perennials in a pastel palette border a flawless lawn.

3. Vivid pinks and reds line the gravel walkway that leads toward extraordinary hedges and walls made of yews. Fanciful, conical yews break up the horizontal lines.

4. This passageway leads to an expansive view of the English countryside. "It looks like the gates of heaven," says Callaway.

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purchased by Johnston's mother in 1907, Hidcote just celebrated a century since Johnston transformed 10 acres of estate grounds into a masterpiece of garden design. "He was among the first to create gardens as a series of 'rooms,' each dramatically different from one another," Callaway explains. "Johnston

### English Lessons

Hidcote enchanted Chip Callaway not only on his first visit, but also on almost a dozen more since. What he's seen there affects his design philosophy back in the States. Here, he identifies elements of Hidcote that can influence anyone's garden design.

- **Sparing use of architectural elements.** Hidcote shows restraint when it comes to structures such as gazebos, pergolas, statues, and the like. "It's not overdecorated at all," Callaway says. "The stars of a garden should be plants, not sundials and statues and all the tchotchkes. My rule for art in the garden: few, fine, and far between."
- **Verticality.** "The garden walls are spectacular, and the hedges are incredible," Callaway says. "In some gardens, the walls are completely green. Here, the walls are made of wonderful plant material so that you have red leaves, green leaves, and gray leaves." The height of the hedges and walls also adds to the experience. "When you're standing in one of the gardens, you can't see over the hedges. Each room is an entity in itself that envelops you. It's a wonderful sense of anticipation."
- **Creative use of color.** A pastel palette in the space just behind the manor contrasts with the fiery reds and oranges in another area.
- **Natural elements.** "The materials are so honest, with the stone and all the quintessential English elements," Callaway says. "Strong central paths of sod have beautifully articulated sequences of plants, from low to medium to tall, walled in either by brick or by yew hedges."

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was a genius at providing strong architectural elements, such as boxwood and yew topiary, to give the gardens great structural interest even in winter, let alone during the milder months.”

Strolling through the grounds can take the average visitor a couple of hours, but Callaway can linger for almost half a day. “Here’s my rule for any garden: Always plan to see it

“Johnston was a genius at providing strong architectural elements to give the gardens great structural interest even in winter.”

—*landscape architect*  
*Chip Callaway*

twice. You might see something you missed the first time. Tour it in reverse. The discovery continues.”

Now owned by The National Trust of England, Wales, and Northern Ireland, the Hidcote garden still benefits from the exquisite hedges Johnston created and the exotic plantings he retrieved during travels around the globe. Many experts call it an Arts and Crafts–style garden that borrows from Italian, French, and English traditions, but Callaway describes the design as quintessentially English. He hails the garden as the finest of those designed in the early 20th century—the golden era of garden design. “In my opinion,” Callaway says, “Hidcote is the greatest of that era.” ♦

*For details, see Sourcebook, page 178.*