

BLOOMING MARVELLOUS

Adam Vetere owns a Ferrari and is pretty handy with a pair of secateurs, so he's perfectly placed to raise some cash with the National Garden Scheme

WORDS AND PICTURES: ADAM VETERE



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TO CHANGE LIVES...

We are Hospice UK's largest charitable funder donating over £4.5 million to support hospices in local communities

NATIONAL GARDEN SCHEME

The National Garden Scheme

In 1927 the National Garden Scheme (NGS) was founded, with individuals asked to open up their gardens for "a shilling a head". With over £8000 raised in that first year and with 609 gardens opened to the public, it was clearly an idea with legs.

The NGS is the most significant charitable funder of nursing charities in the country, donating £55m so far. The NGS helps garden owners to open their beautiful gardens to the public, sharing their passion and raising impressive amounts of money through entry fees, teas and slices of cake.

The NGS's beneficiary charities are The Queen's Nursing Institute, Macmillan Cancer Support, Marie Curie, Carers Trust, Hospice UK, Perennial, Parkinson's UK and other guest charities. Around 3700 gardens open each year for the National Garden Scheme, and all of those gardens can be found on the NGS website ([ngs.org.uk](https://www.ngs.org.uk)).



To support all of the very worthy beneficiaries of the National Garden Scheme ([ngs.org.uk](https://www.ngs.org.uk)), each year for the past two years my wife Heidi and I have opened our gardens to the public, usually the first weekend in August. Unfortunately this year it clashed with the supercar weekend at Beaulieu, but we still had a great turnout from Wessex members, some of whom managed to squeeze in both events. The Wessex group is spread far and wide, but they are a warm and friendly group who love to support charity events.

The visitors to our Hampshire-based gardens always enjoy the added bonus of a display of Ferraris – who doesn't? Over the weekend we schedule four different displays, creating a slightly different look and feel as members opt for either a morning or afternoon slot. We even had Tony Reed bring his Cobra replica to stir the pot up!

My 458 Italia was on display all weekend along with a 488 Spider, 488GTB, 599, 430, 360 Spider, 360, 348 and Peter James's (Wessex AGO) Mondial. A wonderful display that drew gasps and expressions of joy; in fact, one gentleman preferred to stay with the cars while his wife enjoyed the gardens, which resonated with me.

As a landscape and garden designer ([adamvetere.co.uk](https://www.adamvetere.co.uk)), after completing building works in 2008, the focus of attention turned to developing the grounds at Old Camps, our home in Hampshire; you can see what it looks like by visiting our dedicated website ([oldcamps.co.uk](https://www.oldcamps.co.uk)). The garden, set over an acre, benefits from panoramic views of Watership Down and is in part, south-facing. It is clear to see why such a site would have been deemed fit for a Roman settlement, which reconciles wonderfully with our display of Italian exotica.

The design was completed late in 2009 and construction began in early 2010. The design was intended to take the visitor on a journey through the gardens, so as not to be

viewed all at once. Openings through planting or gates entice you on to see what is there. Mature and bountiful planting abounds, inspiration is in abundance, and underlying it all are ideas for sustainable practices to limit the impact on the environment – the vast Mediterranean terraces, prairie and tropical borders all require minimal watering, even throughout the dry summer of 2018.

The key to the design was reconciling the old and the new, as we had done with the house; the bungalow was originally built in 1929 and is still there today (lower half) and was then developed in 2008 into a 21st century contemporary house with the addition of an upper floor and an internal atrium. The flowing herbaceous borders full of cottage planting, pay homage to the building's 1920s roots and seamlessly move into the 21st century, with formal structure and contemporary planting schemes. The gardens were finished in 2016, the final piece being the formal potager, which supplies the house with fresh fruit and vegetables for most of the year.

In essence the gardens were designed to be good for the soul and mind in today's fast-paced life. The design succeeds as it clears the mind and transports you to another place, where your mind can flow and unwind; it is a real tonic, allowing you to recharge your batteries ready for life's next challenge.

The Wessex members, plus Mike and Pauline Davies from Surrey, had a fabulous visit, taking time to relax and unwind as the gardens were intended for, while helping to raise a large sum of money for the many charities supported by the NGS. In fact, over the past two years we have raised nearly £8000, which without the support of our wonderful members would not have been possible.

We will open again next year, the first weekend of August, to share our wonderful gardens and the sights and sounds of the dazzling Ferraris. ■