
Media Release

For Immediate Release

THE TRAILFINDER'S AUSTRALIAN GARDEN PRESENTED BY FLEMING'S SETS SAIL FOR CHELSEA, LONDON

14 OCTOBER 2010

Just as Botanist Sir Joseph Banks did some 242 years ago, horticulturalist and Chelsea Flower Show regular, Wes Fleming and his crew, are this week setting out on an international botanical voyage of discovery.

Embarking on his 7th Chelsea Flower Show entry, Mr Fleming has this year teamed up with respected Melbourne landscape designer, Ian Barker, whose garden is based on the 1768-71 voyage of 'The Endeavour'.

Albeit by jet-plane rather than tall ship, Fleming and Barker will leave this week for the United Kingdom, the first of numerous international trips the duo will make to rediscover Banks' botanical collections found from England to Australia.

With plans to visit iconic locations such as Portsmouth where Cook and Banks set sail, London where they will uncover Banks' original documents, drawings, letters and more, the '2011 Trailfinders Australian Garden presented by Fleming's' is set to be unlike anything the Australians have presented before.

The annual Chelsea entry by Fleming's Nurseries has become a major hit at the premier English event with their previous six entries gleaning two silver-gilt and four gold medals with past designers including Jim Fogarty, Jack Merlo, Dean Herald, Mark Browning, Jamie Durie, and Scott Wynd.

The 2011 garden will be constructed by an all-Australian crew of volunteer landscapers captained by Apex Landscapes' Matt Seymour, and will take over three weeks to complete with the team steadfastly set on a BEST IN SHOW outcome.

This year's entry pays homage to the long standing English-Australian relationship with the theme centered on the botanical discoveries of Banks, who was also a founder of the Royal Horticulture Society - the organisation that runs the prestigious Chelsea Flower Show.

Not just a green thumb, Mr Fleming is third generation director of Fleming's Nurseries, Australia's largest grower of deciduous, fruit, ornamental and native trees and shrubs.

Mr Fleming said he was immediately entranced by Ian Barker's design and theme which the designer started to conceptualise in 2008.

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“Ian’s company, Ian Barker Garden Design built our 2008 design with Jamie Durie and Ian fell in love with what we do there. He immediately set about creating a design he felt worthy of that ever elusive best in show mantle.

“His hours and hours of research has produced an amazing design with a very appropriate theme that we believe is worthy of further exploration.”

Ian Barker said the journey is just about to begin for them.

“The garden theme is a celebration of Banks’ voyage and is intended to engage the visitor in their own journey of discovery. With nautical references and vast plant pallet and a pond, it will also incorporate a limestone backdrop representing the cliffs of the imposing and sometimes treacherous Australian coastline,” Mr Barker said.

And with a plant pallet to include both traditional English plants together with various species Banks discovered on the lands from England to Australia, Mr Fleming is particularly thrilled.

“What we’re really excited about is the plants taking centre stage. It will be a showcase of some of the flora discoveries by Banks on the HMB Endeavour,” Mr Fleming said.

The design incorporates a main canopy structure which is a symbolic representation of the canvas sails of tall sailing ships, as well as the canvas tents that played a vital role in early days of Australian settlement which Banks was heavily involved in.

“This initial journey will start our plant sourcing tour as we take all hard landscape from Australia and source our plants from the Northern hemisphere – we’ll also use the trip to further delve into the Banks story and hopefully discover more about our historical botanical past,” Mr Barker said.

With over 11 acres of gardens and 600 entries across various categories, the Chelsea Flower Show is by far the largest in the world. The event is renowned for its horticulture extravagance with a past garden design featuring over twenty million pounds of diamonds!

For the English, the Royal Horticultural Society’s Chelsea Flower Show is up there with Wimbledon.

In 2010 the event sold out eleven days prior to opening – the earliest ever. Scalpers were asking \$350 a ticket – that’s right a garden show ticket retailing on the black market for up to five times its original value!

The media lap it up too. Imagine complete domination of the front pages similar to our AFL Grand Final. Picture shop fronts florally decked out as we do with Spring Racing Carnival. Plus Masterchef’s viewing audience tuning in to the daily show wrap up. Needless to say, it’s a media frenzy to rival the best of them.

Sir Joseph Banks

On the 25th August 1768, Joseph Banks set foot on the HMB Endeavour and set sail from Portsmouth, England, aided by what Captain James Cook called ‘a nice little breeze off the land’.

The wealthy young Englishman with a thirst for adventure and a passion for botany was bound for the unknown regions of the South Pacific.

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By the time HMB Endeavour returned in 1771, three years later, having experienced unprecedented highs and lows, Sir Joseph Banks and his team had discovered 738 plant species never before seen in England, elevating Banks to legend status amongst The Royal Society.

During the exploration journey, the east coast of Australia was mapped for the first time and Banks' notable collection of flora and fauna became the largest offshore English collection of its day. The voyage remains a significant piece of history, linking Australia and England, particularly in the botanical world.

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