

CHRISTIE'S *travel*

CHRISTIE'S ART JOURNEYS

On the Road with Capability Brown

*England's Finest Landscape Gardens
and Private Houses*

12TH – 17TH MAY 2015



Join Christie's on a tour of some of Lancelot 'Capability' Brown's most beautiful parkland, and celebrate the exceptional legacy of Britain's most influential landscape designer, regarded as the 'Shakespeare of gardening', ahead of the 300th anniversary of his birth.

Ten examples – each from a different stage in Brown's career, and many still privately owned – have been carefully chosen for this unique trip, which extends from London to Leicestershire, at the time of year when the landscapes are at their best. Hosted by an expert on Capability Brown's work, every night will be spent in one of the country houses for which these landscapes were designed. This is a rare opportunity to visit some of England's most exceptional estates, the majority of which are not open to the public.

SIGNATURE MOMENTS

A private tour of Spencer House, the only great 18th century private palace to have survived in central London, owned by the brother of the late Diana, Princess of Wales and now leased to Lord Rothschild; Capability Brown worked for the Spencers both in London and the country

Lunch at Packington Hall, private home of the Earls of Aylesford, hosted by Lord and Lady Aylesford; Capability Brown remodelled the park in 1751

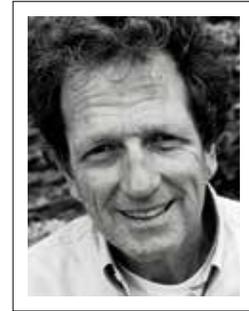
A private view of Grimsthorpe Castle; Capability Brown redesigned the medieval deer park for the 3rd Duke of Ancaster in 1771

A private tour and lunch at Burghley House, hosted by its owners Miranda and Orlando Rock, Deputy Chairman of Christie's Europe; Capability Brown spent 25 years working here and Burghley has not only arguably Brown's largest parkland landscape but also some of his greatest architectural achievements, including a Gothic folly

Dinner and a night spent at Belvoir Castle, private home of the Duke and Duchess of Rutland, at the invitation of Her Grace, the Duchess of Rutland. The castle holds one of the largest private collections of Old Masters; this was one of Brown's final works



YOUR HOSTS FOR THIS TRIP



Lord Charles FitzRoy and Johnny Phibbs

Lord Charles FitzRoy is the Chairman of Fine Art Travel. After working at Christie's as a specialist in the Old Master Paintings department for six years, he went on to found the company. He is a director of Robert Holden Ltd., the leading firm of fine art agents, and has written a number of historical and art historical books including *Italy: A Grand Tour for the Modern Traveller*, *Return of the King: the Restoration of Charles II*, and *Florence on Five Florins a Day*. He is currently writing a book on Titian's *Rape of Europa*.

Johnny Phibbs is one of the world's leading experts on Capability Brown, and has initiated the celebration of his tercentenary in a series of articles for the *Financial Times*. His book on Brown is due to be published by Rizzoli in 2016. He is the principal of Debois Landscape Survey Group, which specialises in the management and understanding of historic landscapes, and sits on the National Trust Gardens Panel and the Georgian Group Design Review Panel.

FRONT COVER: STOWE ROTUNDA
LEFT: SPENCER HOUSE PALM ROOM
BACK COVER: STOWE LAKE PAVILIONS

———— TUESDAY 12TH MAY 2015 ————

We will start the day in the quiet elegance of The Stafford, a five star hotel in Mayfair, London, for a welcome tea during which you will be introduced to your hosts and the other guests.

Following our reception, we will walk the short distance to Spencer House, the only great 18th century private palace to have survived in central London. Owned by Earl Spencer, brother of the late Diana, Princess of Wales, it is now leased to Lord Rothschild. We will be given a private tour of this magnificent mansion, built from 1756 by John Vardy and James ‘Athenian’ Stuart, and of the splendid terrace and gardens; Capability Brown worked for the Spencers both in London and the country.

After a light lunch in Mayfair we will board a luxury coach and leave London for the glories of England’s countryside, and Fawsley Hall in Northamptonshire.

During the afternoon we will arrive at Fawsley Hall, former home of the Knightley family who hosted Queen Elizabeth I here in 1575. It is now a country house hotel, and we will spend two nights here. You will be given time to settle into your room before we begin to explore the gardens and the 2000 acres of private and unspoiled parkland. Capability Brown worked here from 1762-1766, and is reckoned to have reshaped the lakes, planted the surrounding woods and created a picturesque ruin out of the dower house. In the evening, Johnny Phibbs and Charles FitzRoy will host a champagne reception and dinner.

FAWSLEY HALL



FAWSLEY HALL



SPENCER HOUSE WEST FACADE

———— WEDNESDAY 13TH MAY 2015 ————

After breakfast, we will make the short journey to Wakefield Lodge, Towcester, which stands in the middle of the Whittlewood Forest, an ancient royal hunting ground. The house was designed by William Kent – as a hunting seat – for the Duke of Grafton, and it was one of the very first houses for which Capability Brown designed the landscape. We are invited to coffee with the owners, Mr and Mrs Richmond-Watson, who will also give us a private tour of their house.

We shall then set off for Stowe, one of the most famous of all Capability Brown’s landscapes, stopping for lunch at a traditional and excellent country pub en route. Many of the great 17th and 18th century landscape designers worked at Stowe, including Sir John Vanbrugh, James Gibbs, William Kent and Charles Bridgeman; Brown himself was head gardener and clerk of the works from 1741-1751. Created as an earthly paradise, and comprising winding paths, lakeside walks and views studded with temples, there are few better places in England to appreciate the beauty of the classical taste of Georgian Britain.

This evening, we meet for pre-dinner drinks in Fawsley’s splendid Elizabethan hall, scene of a magnificent banquet given in honour of Queen Elizabeth I in 1575.

FAWSLEY HALL

———— THURSDAY 14TH MAY 2015 ————

After breakfast we will leave for the handsome Packington Hall, Warwickshire, the private home of the Earls of Aylesford. The house stands in 300 acres of parkland, the remains of the famous Forest of Arden; Capability Brown flooded the valley below the house, creating two lakes when he took on the landscaping. His entire plan, one of the earliest to have survived, still hangs in the house, and we will be able to admire it when we have lunch at the hall as the guests of Lord and Lady Aylesford.

Moving on, we will stop for tea at Coombe Abbey. Built as a Cistercian Abbey in the 12th Century it became a royal property after the dissolution of the monasteries, and is where Elizabeth of Bohemia, daughter of James I was educated. Now a hotel, it retains many of its historical features. We will be able to view the immense river-like lake that runs from the house to the Menagerie, said to have been designed by Capability Brown and inspired by the Royal Menagerie at Versailles.

We will be spending the next two nights at the elegant Stapleford Park, Leicestershire, a luxury country house hotel with a small park designed by Capability Brown. Tonight we will be joined for dinner by Dr. Kate Felus, an expert on historic gardens and former Garden Historian for the National Trust. She will talk to us on the uses of parkland in the 18th Century.

STAPLEFORD PARK



FRIDAY 15TH MAY 2015

After breakfast we will depart for Burghley House, where we will spend the day. Burghley is one of England's greatest and most beautiful Elizabethan houses. Built by Sir William Cecil, minister to Queen Elizabeth I and King James I, it is still lived in by members of the Cecil family; Miranda and Orlando Rock, Deputy Chairman of Christie's Europe. They will give us a private tour of the interior of the house, including its magnificent art collection, before hosting us for lunch in Capability Brown's Gothic Orangery. Brown worked at Burghley for twenty-five years and many of his greatest architectural achievements, including a Gothic folly are to be found in the park; we shall have access to the pleasure grounds and to the south side of the lake, both of which are private.

We will return to Stapleford Park for dinner and to spend the night.

STAPLEFORD PARK

SATURDAY 16TH MAY 2015

After breakfast we will depart for Grimsthorpe Castle, Lincolnshire, which was redesigned by Sir John Vanburgh in the early 18th century. Capability Brown redesigned the medieval deer park in 1771 for the 3rd Duke of Ancaster, creating rolling pastures, woodland and lakes. The interior has a wonderful collection of furniture and fine art of which we will enjoy a private tour before lunch on the estate.

The spectacular Belvoir Castle, Leicestershire is our final destination on this trip, and we shall dine and spend the night here at the invitation of Her Grace, the Duchess of Rutland. A magnificent Gothic edifice located at the top of a steep hill, Belvoir Castle enjoys views for 30 miles across three counties. It has been the family's private home since the Norman Conquest in the 11th century, and is seldom open to the public. The surrounding parkland – a series of gardens with lakes, a dairy, a bridge and kennels – is one of Capability Brown's final works.

BELVOIR CASTLE

LEFT: BELVOIR CASTLE STATE DINING ROOM; ABOVE LEFT: BELVOIR CASTLE;
ABOVE RIGHT: STOWE CORINTHIAN ARCH; BELOW RIGHT: BURGHLEY HOUSE



SUNDAY 17TH MAY 2015

We shall spend the morning continuing to discover the glorious treasures of Belvoir Castle, which has one of the largest private collections of Old Master paintings, and the extensive grounds. Following lunch at the castle we shall return to London by luxury coach, where our programme ends.



The Chelsea Flower Show opens on Tuesday 19th May; should any guests wish to stay in London for it we would be delighted to assist with accommodation and any other recommendations.



CHRISTIE'S *travel*



Trip quotation: from £4,800 per person



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**Itinerary subject to change*