





Landscaping by Patrick Hough

An Irish Country Garden

Words by Michelle Hunt
Photography by Alan Smyth. www.smartpix.ie

When Grainne O' Neill bought this old cottage in 1999 she saw in it the potential to be a home as well as a work place. The gardens were as important as the renovation of the house itself as her studio, where she runs Architectural Spaces is nestled in a wooded area a short distance from the house. Her studio is based on the design of an old hunting lodge. Grainne decided to build her studio in a curve as she wanted the garden to follow along these curved shapes in the walk ways, lawns and flower beds.



She was very lucky to have many existing plants and trees and wanted to retain as much of old plants as possible. Grainne insisted that the flow of the garden ran smoothly with no sharp corners. Grainne wanted a garden that would look beautiful from every angle, so when walking to her studio and beyond it had to feel like two separate areas but still maintaining the idea of a country garden. Grainne had another proviso for her country garden which was that it had to look equally as good in the winter as it did in the summer. The plants and shrubs were very important in their colour, shape and smell.

In order for her to achieve her definite plan she enlisted the services of Patrick Hough - Landscape Gardener. Together with Grainne, Patrick drew up the plans with arcs and curves being of the utmost importance. He suggested that instead of using harsh tarmac or paving that Grainne use sandstone chips for the driveway and larger pathways. This gave the driveway that magnificent



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colour in Summer and in Winter and complemented the eau de nil sash windows beautifully. The sandstone chips of the driveway curves around the studio with a shrubbery nestled on either side of the studio entrance - the colour and texture of the shrubs changes continuously throughout the seasons. The sandstone chips are mixed with limestone slabs around the lawns. The back door leads from a sandstone path to a circular limestone patio area which is perfect for outdoor dining in the summer months. Lavender plants are dotted around the pathways which was a must for Grainne not only for their textures but also for their wonderful summer scent. She also insisted on a rose garden for the same reason - textures and smells, Grainne has 20 different types roses and the scent when they are in bloom is almost toxic, much to Grainne's delight. No marks for guessing that roses are Grainne's favourite flower. As the garden comes into bloom in the springtime the colours and hues sprout around the house and garden that Grainne lovingly spent many years getting it just the way an 'Irish Country Garden' should look.