

TWO DECADES *and counting*

In its 20th year, Belderbos Landscapes is rewarding its team's efforts to reach this milestone by becoming employee owned

WORDS: ASHLEIGH BROWN

From starting his own landscaping company 20 years ago from his kitchen in South West London, to growing it to be one of the most respected landscape design and build businesses in the South East, Ed Belderbos has a lot to be proud of over the last two decades. With the help of his wife Claire and a trusted team, Belderbos Landscapes is now recognised for its high-end garden design, landscaping, and maintenance, working on desirable residential gardens and exclusive commercial projects across London and the home counties.

Like most, it has weathered a few storms to reach its 20-year milestone, such as navigating economic downturns, a global pandemic, the changeover to a now mostly ULEZ compliant fleet, as well as talent and material shortages. The Belderbos Landscapes team has worked tirelessly to overcome these challenges and is resolute in its efforts to deliver inspiring and immersive green spaces and customer experiences standing the test of time.

Despite its growth, the company still retains the original 'family feel', with courtesy and professionalism a notable mainstay of all office and on-site interactions. There is a visible 'one team' approach and progression through the ranks for those with a hard-working ethic and commitment to excellence. To further strengthen its focus on the team, Belderbos Landscapes will become an Employee

Ownership Trust business this spring.

As it approaches this anniversary, it is important to Ed and Claire Belderbos, that the future success of Belderbos Landscapes is secured. "We have a fantastic team who have shown the company great loyalty over the years. We would like to take the opportunity to pass the ownership to the entire team, who are actively involved on a daily basis, so they have more responsibility

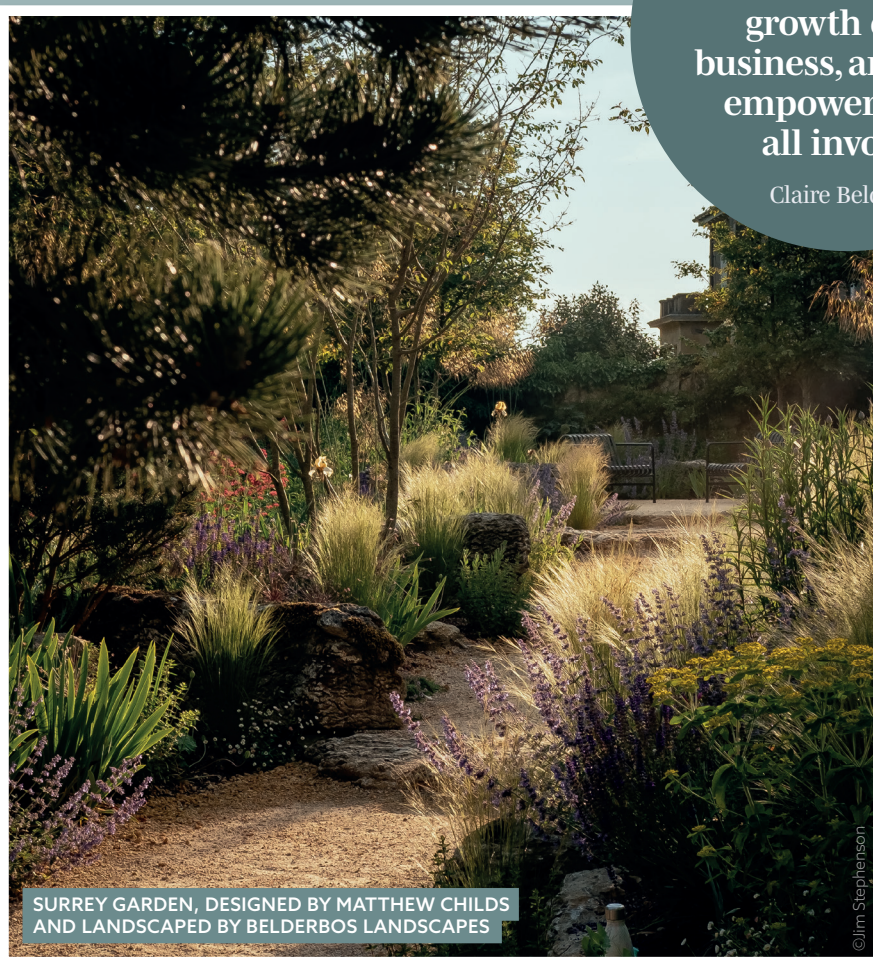
and reward from the future success of the business," says Claire Belderbos. "Everyone can have a direct influence on the growth of the business, and this is empowering for all involved."

An EOT allows the owners to control the exit speed and strategy to create a safe and orderly transition. Having given the future of the business a great deal of thought over the last few years, the directors spoke to different people with wide-ranging business experiences and felt the EOT approach best suited the future of the business. Ed Belderbos is still very involved day-to-day and will continue to ensure the business continues to be strong and well managed.

He is most proud of his exceptional team, with some people having been with the company since the early days. Growing, creating employment, and finding ways to navigate external challenges as a cohesive unit, Belderbos says "the team is galvanised; ▶

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Claire Belderbos



SURREY GARDEN, DESIGNED BY MATTHEW CHILDS AND LANDSCAPED BY BELDERBOS LANDSCAPES

©Jim Stephenson



TOOTING GARDEN, DESIGNED BY SHELLEY HUGH-JONES AND LANDSCAPED BY BELDERBOS LANDSCAPES

everything feels optimised.” The team has built a loyal following of designers whom it works with on projects of all sizes, whilst also enjoying working with new designers. “We have started working with three new designers since January and have been heartened with a theme of positive feedback about the calibre of “really good people” we employ – ensuring a positive experience for everyone.”

Projects range from a Wimbledon family home to a hotel in Central London; no project is off limits so long as the vision, brief and budget are aligned.

Belderbos Landscapes has completed more than 1,600 landscaping projects over the last 20 years and learned valuable lessons within that time, “so I can safely say that there is not much we have not seen or experienced, which should provide peace of mind to any designer or client,” says Belderbos.

Having studied Landscape Architecture at Manchester Metropolitan University, Belderbos began fulfilling his lifetime ambition, after spending five years as an infantry officer serving in a battalion whose informal motto is ‘Make it happen!’ “There are many parallels in the two environments, such as working outside and being given a problem to resolve. “Working with people to build landscapes is challenging and rewarding. Our work ethic here is strong, and our culture is always ‘solutions focused.’”

With several interesting projects on the horizon, Belderbos Landscapes is constantly moving forward and adapting its strategy and approach to stay relevant and succeed. In its 20th year, Belderbos Landscapes will be

landscaping its fifth garden at the RHS Chelsea Flower Show, Flood Re: The Flood Resilient Garden. “We have our process but there is always buzz of excitement and anticipation,” says Belderbos.

The journey towards building a garden at Chelsea normally begins with a designer having enormous faith and selecting Belderbos

Landscapes to be a part of their team – this year, it’s Naomi Slade and Ed Barsley. “Their confidence in our brand stems from our years of experience; not just delivering the finest quality gardens, but our reputation for providing customers with solutions. It is

both exciting and challenging to apply the knowledge and skills of our craftsmen to the design. Chelsea 2024 is no exception, and we have a fantastically challenging garden to build to an exceptional design.”

“Our work ethic here is strong, and our culture is always ‘solutions focused’ ”
Ed Belderbos

STRATEGY AND GROWTH DRIVERS

- 1 Diverse and inclusive company fostering creativity, and a positive atmosphere and culture that comes from the top.
- 2 Experienced and dedicated planting team, separate to the hard landscaping.
- 3 Building a stable and experienced team of horticulturists who maintain the completed landscapes.
- 4 Recruitment and retention committed to development and reward, with trust in its high-quality managers.
- 5 Open to change and new lines of business, like maintaining the interior planting for a large tech company; now offering Cane-line, high-quality outdoor furniture.

The plan for the future of Belderbos Landscapes is to continue to deliver high quality design, landscape construction and both internal and external maintenance. Belderbos Landscapes would like to build on its recent growth in the internal plant maintenance sector and continue a broad geographical reach in London and the home counties.

With so many new opportunities on the horizon, and a fifth Chelsea show garden to showcase its expertise, Belderbos Landscapes’ milestone year looks set to be one of its best yet.



BATTERSEA ROOF GARDEN, DESIGNED AND LANDSCAPED BY BELDERBOS LANDSCAPES