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welcome



**I HAVE JUST RETURNED** from a fact finding trip to the USA – Washington DC and Virginia, to be precise. I was a first timer here, and among my list of useful 'facts' is that organic food and growing is on the up (although Nora's, a fantastic organic restaurant in downtown DC, was the first of only four registered to date in the US, and I don't suppose Obama's well publicised excursion to the Burger Bar will have helped). And, the next big thing will be Virginian wine. You heard it here first. Forget California (although the output of all the Virginian vineyards probably equals just one medium-sized west coast producer), but the quality is great. What interested me more was the 'tag' that Washington DC and the Capital region has given itself – 'hip and historic'. It's actually quite apt, with Monticello and Montpelier holding the flag for historic gardens, and the galleries, bookshops and the trend towards ecological design giving the city a contemporary edge. The phrase might also work as a sales pitch for designers... "we aim to be both hip and historic". In the same garden? Possibly. In the same design practice? Definitely. And who hasn't claimed to be one or the other, depending on what the client expects. There were interesting gardens too (more of that in a later issue). But if you get the chance to travel this month, it is good for the creative process to switch off from what we do all year round. A gallery discovered, a walk in the hills, a street market or a poster glimpsed unexpectedly in a café can all change and refresh our thinking. Go away and let go.  
**Jackie Bennett, Editor [gdj@jppublishing.co.uk](mailto:gdj@jppublishing.co.uk)**

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**“Gertrude Jekyll was a fantastic designer, but that was a hundred years ago. We don't need to slavishly follow her style now – by all means use box, but not in 18th century parterres”** JILL BILLINGTON, FSGD

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“Ah, summer, what power you have to make us suffer and like it” Russell Baker

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