

SLOW FLOWERS

Journal

CELEBRATING THE SEASON | FALL 2022



IN THIS ISSUE

PORTRAIT OF
A FLOWER FARMER

FLORI COGNOSCENTI
HANG A WREATH

THE HOLIDAY HOME

SEASONAL RITUALS

WHERE WE BLOOM
FESTIVE DESIGN
STUDIOS

HARVEST + HOLIDAYS



ON THE ROAD BY DEBRA PRINZING

PHOTOGRAPHY BY SARAH STATHAM

autumn in east neuk.

cambo estate | scotland

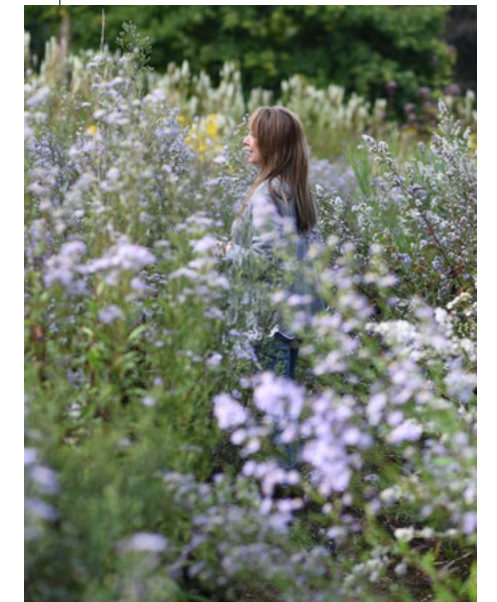
In early September, I journeyed to St. Andrews, Scotland, for a creative floral retreat. I began planning this visit in 2019; my delay probably sounds familiar to anyone whose international travel plans were sidelined by the pandemic for a few years.

Ultimately, I arrived at Cambo Estate, a beautiful location near the Fife village of Kingsbarns, a few miles outside of the university town of St. Andrews.

For years, I have wanted to participate in one of my friend Sarah Statham's workshops. We first met in 2015, when she hosted me at her centuries-old stone house in Yorkshire, England, as part of a tour organized by Flowers from the Farm, the U.K. growers organization. Three days spent in Sarah's beloved Yorkshire forever secured my affection for the breathtaking, pastoral landscape, with endless green pastures outlined by low stone walls.

Sarah owns Simply by Arrangement, a design studio and cutting garden in Yorkshire's village of Hebden Bridge. It's not far from the Brontë House in Haworth, which of course I also visited on that 2015 trip. Many of Sarah's workshops, courses, and one-on-one floral design instruction take place at the charming studio cottage in her garden; she also teaches throughout the U.K.

Workshops in Scotland, and specifically at the Cambo Estate and Gardens, are part of Simply by Arrangement's ongoing schedule. There's something about that place that captured Sarah's heart when she first taught there in 2016. To me, it permeates one's senses with sea air, dewy light, and the way you feel transported to a few centuries earlier in time. The Georgian garden, entered through a low opening in a thick wall of golden stone, is an



SIMPLY BY ARRANGEMENT WORKSHOPS

"Much tea will be drunk and lightness and laughter, as well as masses of flowers and good food, are the main ingredients for every class."

SARAH STATHAM

Simply by Arrangement will return to Cambo Gardens September 4-6, 2023. Learn more at simplybyarrangement.co.uk/workshops

FOLLOW

simplybyarrangement.co.uk
[@simplybyarrangement](https://www.instagram.com/simplybyarrangement)



A FLOWER FARM VISIT

Sarah and Rachael organized a special outing to visit Sarah Hunter's Keeping the Plot, described as, "a meticulously run Scottish flower-farm." We met this unassuming talent and entered her beautiful place, two acres organized logically, with a gardener's eye for pleasing ornamentation. Keeping the Plot rents land from the Balcaskie Estate in St. Monans, producing annuals, biennials, perennials, bulbs, herbs, and shrubs, with a special focus on the unique foliage of woody ornamentals.

Customers include local DIY designers and florists, who purchase through a wholesale program. Keeping the Plot's dahlia beds drew me and the camera. With one ear on the conversation taking place between grower and designers, I snapped photos and labels to document everything that caught my eyes. Like all of my flower-farm visits, this one added depth and meaning to the creativity I would explore when I picked up clippers and began to make an arrangement, knowing the woman who grew each stem.

FOLLOW

keepingtheplot.co.uk
[@keepingtheplotflowers](https://www.instagram.com/keepingtheplotflowers)

informal mixed landscape of perennials, trees, shrubs, and grasses, connected by meandering interior paths, a few low footbridges, and a practical walkway around its perimeter. This is a horticultural paradise with origins dating to the early 1800s. My friend Marty Wingate, a mystery writer who has led many garden tours to the U.K., gasped and purred, "oh, Caaam-Bo," when I told her I was heading there.

The geographic area is called the East Neuk of Fife. I learned that "Neuk" is the Scots' word for nook or corner, which suggests a sense of wellbeing, and that's just what I felt during my time there. Victoria Mary Bell, my father's Scottish mother who was born in 1887, was ever on my mind.

Edinburgh-based architect and floral artist Rachael Scott of Hedgerow is Sarah's frequent collaborator. "Rachael introduced me to Cambo, and we have taught there together since 2017," Sarah says. The women based our design experience around the historic garden's late-summer plantings, greenhouse, orchard, and wilder places. They commissioned Edinburgh potter Borja Moronta to create small, footed stoneware bowls for each of us to use as vessels. His glazes reflect the colors of the Scottish landscape in pearl gray, misty blue, and moss green. A Kenzan nested inside our bowls as the design mechanic.

Their low-pressure teaching style helps students explore individual design goals. We entered a workroom populated with buckets of locally grown flowers, most of which were procured from a nearby flower farm (see sidebar). The day began with introductions over mugs of tea, as each was encouraged to speak about her relationship with flowers (I participated for two days, a special treat that introduced me to six new floral-artist friends). I jotted down the vernacular, like "fettling," which grower-florist Carol Siddorn likened to "finishing off." Flower enthusiast Elizabeth Grundy introduced me to "faffing," which she uses for her Instagram account @faffing.with.flowers. Apparently "faffing" is like "fiddling," and I like the term very much.

An early morning stroll through Cambo's gardens, described by Sarah as, "at its quietest and most soulful time," was followed by pleasurable hours creating arrangements in bowls and urns. Rachael and Sarah like to start with a single "inspiration



ON THE ROAD

flower," placed in a bud vase at the head of our workstation. Design advice arrived just when I needed it, thanks to the instructors' unimposing teaching styles. Rachael, with her architect's eye, encouraged me to extend the scale of a larger arrangement with branches and grasses. She helped me add more depth, dimension, and texture, especially with a one-sided piece. Later, our cameras captured our pieces in places where the faint afternoon sun was just right.

When she launched Simply by Arrangement in 2014, Sarah's original vision paired excellent food with seasonal flowers. Her friend Christie Buchanan (aka Mrs. B.), prepared exquisite menus for workshop guests, and when I met her, I was smitten by both the woman and her hand-crafted savory and sweet dishes. Now, Mrs. B. is busy with young grandbabies, so Sarah draws provisions from other cooks and chefs.

You will remember this day and this garden because of what you made, and the flowers you picked here.

This time, lunches and refreshments came from the Cambo Cafe, located in the former stable and courtyard, with vegetarian and vegan dishes to fortify florists and garden tourists alike.

The workshop promised, "a chance to truly unwind and discover what flowers and gardens mean." That language lured Katy Tyndall, who owns Number Fifty-Nine, a bed-and-breakfast retreat in the garden of her 16th-century, thatched cottage outside of Cambridge, England. She found herself growing flowers during the pandemic, and she believes, "they contribute to the peaceful and restorative atmosphere we

are trying to create for our guests." Katy learned about the Cambo workshop through Sarah's Instagram posts.

"When Sarah wrote about Cambo, it sang to me, and although it is miles from here, I felt I had to go," she shared in an email. "To spend time with a small group of like-minded flower-lovers, given free rein to explore that magical garden, surrounded by buckets of local flowers and foliage, gently encouraged to pick, to experiment and to create – it's hard to put into words what a special day it was," Katy wrote. "I can only say that the glow it gave me is still burning bright, and the feeling that I was in exactly the right place persists."

Fiona Paterson is a gardener at Cambo, and she joined the workshop on one of her days off. I felt so grateful for her presence, as she knows the garden and its plants so well. Learning more about floral arranging has changed her view of Cambo, she says. "Sarah and Rachael taught me that creating a floral design is like planting a border, using different heights and textures," she wrote in an email. "Now, when I'm working in the garden, I'm looking at what colors look good together, and always the different shapes and forms – I'm obsessed!"

My own experience echoes Rachael's and Sarah's belief that seasons and place are powerful markers of time. As Sarah noted, "You will remember this day and this garden because of what you made, and the flowers you picked here."

When I sit quietly with my treasured memories of that brief time in Scotland, I know that the flowers I held in my hands will help me cherish the lessons, the people I met, and that place of great beauty.

SLOW FLOWERS
Journal
AMERICAN FLOWERS 2021



subscribe. advertise.

Slow Flowers Journal, a quarterly e-zine produced in collaboration by BLOOM Imprint and Slow Flowers Society, is available as a **FREE subscription to members of the Slow Flowers Society.**

Beginning January 2023 (winter), non-members can purchase individual issues for \$4.95 each or \$14.95 annually.

[JOIN OUR MAILING LIST](#) to learn more about subscribing.

Learn more about [advertising in the Slow Flowers Journal HERE.](#)