

FRESH GARDENS



08 BENEATH A MEXICAN SKY *Manoj Malde (Pre-Registered Member)*



CHELSEA 2017, IN Manoj Malde's own words, is a 'baptism of fire'. Although he has years of gardening experience, his formal design education at the English Gardening

School finished only five years ago, and this is his first RHS show garden. Certainly, he has helped out on other designers' gardens in the past, but doing Chelsea is plunging into the deep end of show garden design and something most designers build up to. "I'm aware that this is going to push me onto the world's stage, and it will require strength, confidence and grit to pull it off."

Grit was much in evidence during the search for a sponsor. He spent a lot of money sending out information packs, but those companies that actually responded were not interested. It was only once he'd got his contractor and plant supplier on board that his fortunes changed and Inland Homes agreed to back the garden.

This garden is no shrinking violet, with orange, pink and coffee walls inspired by the work of Mexican architect Luis Barragán. "Subconsciously I am attracted to bright colours and I associate that with my Indian ancestry and the fact that I lived in Kenya, and Barragán's architecture is a perfect backdrop for a really dynamic garden," he says.

Malde is determined that the garden remains true to Mexico and the original Barragán concept, with colour washed walls that will create a strong framework for the architectural palette of drought-tolerant plants indigenous to Mexico and the Mediterranean. A water feature represents the large pools that Barragán included in his designs. Malde is working with a budget of around £120,000.

As is often the case at Chelsea, the success of this garden is heavily reliant on the weather. The plants require clement conditions in the lead up to the show to put on growth and sunny days during show week to enhance the bold colours.

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