

The Art of Gardening

Design Inspiration and Innovative Planting Techniques from Chanticleer

By R. William Thomas (RWT) and the staff of Chanticleer

Need

There was not as much a need as it dovetailed nicely with Chanticleers' educational mission, a mission that is stated in our employee manual.

Timeliness

Our last book, "Chanticleer" was released in 2011, by University of Pennsylvania Press.

Tom Fischer of Timber Press approached RWT soon after the 2011 release of the first book to discuss the next project, RWT felt it too soon to consider one at that point.

Ongoing conversations between RWT and Tom over the years led to an agreement that the time was approaching for a new book.

Spirit

During the discussions the idea of a book less about Chanticleer and its history and more about "How we do what we do" really surfaced.

Title

The title "The Art Of The Garden" was a direct extension of the working title of the book.

Assigned or created

As Chanticleer was contracted by Timber, they retained control of the book title.

Message

We wanted this book to be a enjoyable for gardeners at any level. From novice to professional, there is inspiration, guidance and information with in the covers.

Images

Timber Press suggested Rob Cardillo. Rob was geographically suited to this project. Additionally, he already had good relationships with many of the staff, and this made capturing the essence of the narrative even more successful.

Terms of contract

All of Rob's business dealing were with Timber Press, Chanticleer had no involvement with them.

Images

Timber Press suggested Rob Cardillo. Rob was geographically suited to this project. Additionally, he already had good relationships with many of the staff, and this made capturing the essence of the narrative even more successful.

Terms of contract

All of Rob's business dealing were with Timber Press, Chanticleer had no involvement with them.

Collaboration

Tom Fisher, Andrew Beckman (Timber Press) and RWT during all preliminary discussions held that this book would be most effective if the staff of the garden were the contributors and the RWT the editor, the unifier.

Unified

This idea is true to the very dynamic of Chanticleer, its gardens and its gardeners, all creative spirits and talents, unified through a common vision, so to should be the voice.

Tasking

There was an organic brainstorming session with the entire staff at Chanticleer. This led to a very broad rough outline of potential topics or points to be covered.

From this list RWT and Tom pared it down to a much more elegant and cohesive project.

From this leaner and more focused outline, the staff expressed interest and committed to contributions on appropriate outline points.

Selection

From the often several submissions per individual outline point, RWT selected the best and most logical threads to weave together, creating the first fabric of the narrative.

Proofing

Nearly all the narrative of the book is in the voice of RWT, nomenclature does not have voice, only consistency and accuracy.

Nomenclature

In keeping with Timbers choice to use botanical terms as descriptive, Common names were used whenever possible after to back reference the scientific terms. This was used to bridge the levels of our reading audience.

The manuscript was turned over to Eric Hsu, our plant records coordinator. His skillset provided the exceptional eye for detail that was necessary to give this project its credibility for even the most discerning audience.

Printing

This aspect was handled completely by Timber press.

As contractors Chanticleer had no say in this. Printing was done overseas.

Release

Timber press did want to have a release party, ideally in the garden. Chanticleer agreed and further enhanced both the guest list and the spirit of the event.

Chanticleers' additions offered access to the event to GWA members in the region as well as increased media attendance.

Promotion

In addition to the marketing of Timber Press, the staff at Chanticleer takes an active role in promoting the book.

As many of the staff have contributed, so to have many of the staff been asked to speak on the book and its message. Each of us that present brings our own insight, a unique perspective on what makes the book so readable and the garden so special.

Results

Robin Lane Fox of the London Financial Times had written two articles about Chanticleer without having visited the garden, which gave us an overseas presence.

Since then he has visited and experienced the garden firsthand, two more articles have come since his visit, one since the release of the new book.

Chanticleer the garden, and the experience within is not a secret anymore.

Response

As a public garden, accurate impact of a book such as this on visitation is difficult to gauge at best. Several variables, weather being the most obvious, taints any results we can quantify.

However this spring, our visitation was up nearly 25% over previous years.

An unforgiving summer has since suppressed average counts

We feel the spring surge was enhanced, even if only a small amount, by the popularity of the book.

The Art of Gardening

We thank you for your time.

Dan Benarcik

