

Hugo Bugg: MY DEVON

The RHS Chelsea award-winning designer is inspired by the county's narrow lanes and rolling hills, which also provide a good workout

Tell us briefly about yourself and what you do in the county.

I've lived in Devon for most of my life, and it's truly home to me. I'm a garden designer and co-founder of Harris Bugg Studio, where I spend my days creating environmentally responsive gardens across Devon and further afield. I'm also a trustee of the Devon Gardens Trust, and when I'm not working, I'm usually with my family: exploring, walking and cycling across Dartmoor and the surrounding countryside.

Where in Devon do you live?

I live in the Teign Valley, right on Dartmoor's eastern edge. It's a wonderfully quiet, rural setting, with a strong sense of community and an ever-present connection to the landscape. Our studio is based in Exeter, which gives us that balance between city life and easy access to the countryside.

How long have you been here and what brought you here?

Devon's been home since I was about five. I grew up near Musbury, headed off to university in Cornwall, and eventually found my way back, settling first in Exeter and then into the Teign Valley.

It's always pulled me back – that closeness to nature where the seasons are felt properly. Growing up here shaped my connection to the land and continues to inform so much of my design work, as well as what I now want my young family to experience.

What's the best thing about living in Devon?

For me, it's the classic Devon lanes and hedges. When you're winding through those high-banked, narrow lanes, you just know you're home. And then it's the people – the hedge layers, potters, craftspeople and artisans. There's a wonderful creative community here, and being surrounded by that level of skill, care and making is endlessly inspiring.

And the worst?

It's a love-hate thing. I love the hills and the drama of the landscape, but I'll admit they make my cycle commute over Haldon Hill a real workout.



Describe your ideal day out in Devon.

It starts with making pancakes on a camping stove out on a tor, with wide views and that feeling of being completely open to the weather and the landscape. Then a family walk, before heading back, hungry, for a Sunday lunch at one of Devon's many wonderful rural pubs. The afternoon is spent pottering in my own garden, followed by a quiet evening in front of the fire.

What is your favourite Devon journey, by any mode of transport?

Cycling, despite those hills. There's something special about moving through the landscape at that pace, feeling properly immersed in it.

What is your favourite view in the county?

There's a spot by the River Dart in summer,

with dragonflies and dappled light, where you feel utterly at peace and cut off from the world. A swim too, if it's warm enough.

What is your favourite month to be in Devon?

May, when everything is bursting into life – cow parsley, hawthorn, fresh green ferns. It's lush and vibrant wherever you look.

What gift from Devon would you give to a friend?

A beautifully hand-made billhook from Jordan at Dartmoor Greenwood Handles. I'm drawn to tools like this. They are thoughtfully designed, made by hand, and rooted in traditional greenwood craft.

What three words best describe Devon?

Lush, rugged, and right now, wet. ●