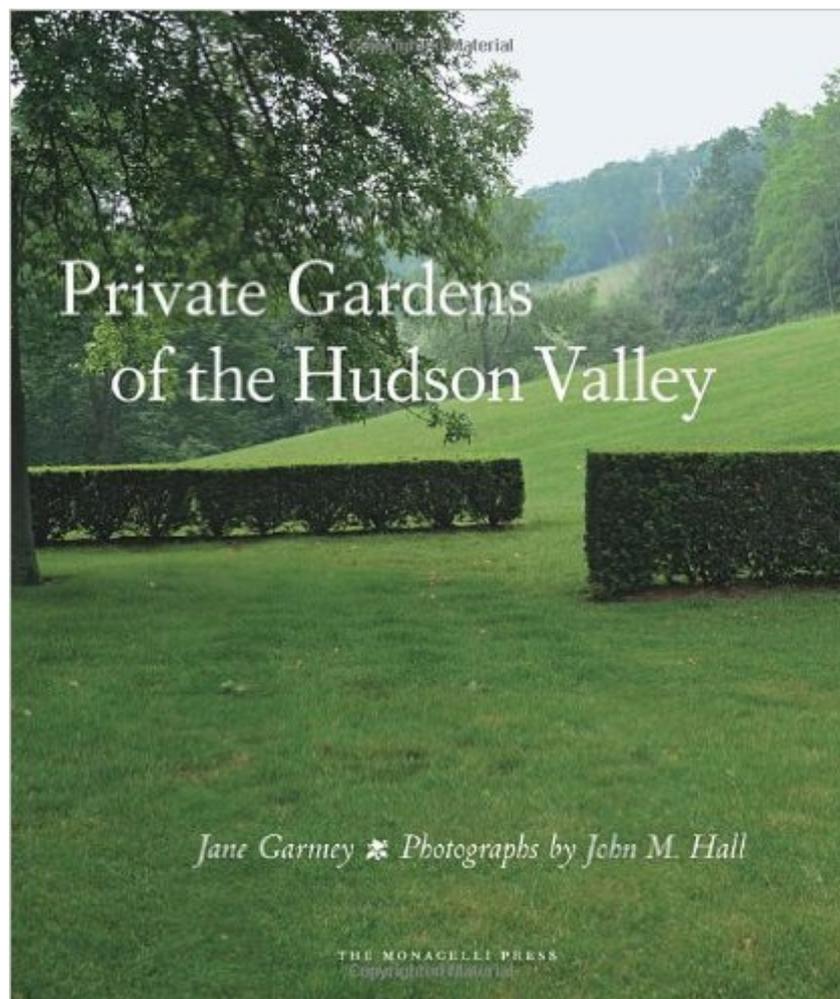


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# Private Gardens Of The Hudson Valley



## Synopsis

Private Gardens of the Hudson Valley surveys the majestic landscape that borders the Hudson River, an area rich in history and unique garden designs. The scenery, which encompasses riverfront meadows, craggy hills, and long open valleys, is inherently dramatic. Twenty-six private gardens are presented here, chosen to establish a sense of place and to convey the romance of the landscape. John Hall's photographs give a privileged view of the life within, while Jane Garmey's warm and engaging narrative traces the development of the gardens and the great pleasure their owners take in nurturing them. As Garmey notes in her introduction, each of these gardens has been made by the owner, and special attention given to the transition between the cultivated garden and the grandeur of the larger landscape beyond. The splendid setting of the Hudson Valley encompasses an almost infinite variety of design approaches from formal and traditional to naturalistic and an equal range of scale from multiple gardens within a vast estate to charmingly diminutive spaces between historic village houses. All have much to tell us about the complexity, challenges, and finally the unforgettable pleasure of making a garden.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Before buying this book I read some of it on line, and was interested in this description, from the Introduction: "All the gardens in this book, with the exception of John Driscoll's garden in Garrison.....have been entirely made by their current owners." I was fascinated that such large, beautiful, well-designed gardens could be made entirely by the owners, without any assistance from

professional garden designers. Then as I read through the chapters I found that the gardens were designed by - no, not the owners, but - John Brookes, Edwina von Gal, Oehme & Van Sweden, Fred Callander, Paul Mayen, Deborah Nevins, Tim Steinhoff, Wayne Winterrowd & Joe Eck, Michael Trapp. Almost none were the work of the owners. The owners sometimes worked in the gardens themselves; naturally they contributed to the overall goals and effects. But 'entirely'? No. Not even close. Now I don't object to using a garden designer. I am one. But if the authors/editors have an animus against professionally designed gardens, then they should have used fewer of them -- and certainly not claimed to have avoided them. So that is part of the reason for my 3 star rating. The other reason is that the photographs, while very beautiful, are uncaptioned. So unless one is quite familiar with the plants photographed and described, and can carefully coordinate the text and photographs, the book is mostly 'just' beautiful pictures. Very beautiful pictures in fact. And fortunately I am familiar with most of the plants described, so I can enjoy and learn from the combinations and juxtapositions and vistas. But I think captions or page references would have made the book much more useful and interesting.

A sumptuously photographed survey of gardens in and near the Hudson Valley, 'Private Gardens' includes twenty-six engaging private gardens representing the full range of garden types: from cutting edge modern to more traditional and 'natural' landscapes. The finely-honed writing beautifully illuminates the attitudes and the design approach to each garden with remarkably crisp and evocative descriptions. A highly recommended addition to any serious, or amateur, gardener's library.

When I buy a gardening or decorating book, I make a list on notebook paper of the valuable insights in the book, with page numbers, and tape it to the front cover. This book offers a few crumbs of knowledge, but mostly it is many many full-sized photos of masses of vegetation. It doesn't help to read the text, because what is described is not shown, and vice versa. The owners built this, found that, or planted whatever...really? Because all I see is what looks to an amateur eye like a big messy overgrown area. A disappointment. Only slightly worse than the author's other book on Connecticut gardens...another letdown. Better to describe what is pictured, and better still to include some humans or dogs or pickup trucks in the photos for an idea of scale. There are rarely even houses in these jungle photos. An expensive mistake I made twice.

I have a growing collection of garden books, and was eagerly awaiting the publication of Private

Gardens of the Hudson Valley. Jane Garmey writes beautifully and informatively, and there are many gardens that I have never seen before that are included in this book. However, the photography is disappointing. Many of the gardens that are known to me from other books look a bit drab and sad, which really is not the point. I wish this book could be rephotographed, as the subject could not be richer.

This book is a 'swoon'...my breathe was taken away by the photos...it's inspirational and just gosh darn so lovely.....unlike a number of the other commenters, I did not expect this book to be a how-to journal. Rather, I love the a-picture-is-worth-a-thousand-words approach....love, love, love how the authors approached the project.

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