



Interview with Carson Arthur

By Mark Disero

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On an overcast yet mild day at the end of May, I was fortunate to interview Landscape Designer, Author and TV Gardening Host, Carson Arthur.

When I contacted him for the interview I asked him to pick a location to meet to do some photos. “Some hip urban park or something similar” I said. I had only ever driven past [The Toronto Music Garden](#), so when he picked it I was very happy to have the opportunity to actually see it. I was shocked and delighted to see how extremely beautiful it is. You really can’t tell from the street, but the views from within the garden looking out are beautiful. To the north you have this impressive scene of terraced Toronto condos, and to the south you look over the idyllic marina.



Within the garden, the design is a modern take on the art nouveau style. What surprised me the most was the plant material. I have never seen such a collection of rare and unusual plants and shrubs used in a public setting before.

I would have to say, that in my opinion, it is Toronto’s most beautiful public garden.

Carson arrived looking fit, having fully recovering from a diving injury suffered a couple of months earlier. He brought along his happy pooch, Dave!



Mark: You said that the Toronto Music Garden is one of your favourite parks. Why is that? Do you take those same aspects into account in your own design work? What are your considerations when designing landscapes and garden furniture?

Carson: There is something very special about the Toronto Music Gardens. The designers were able to create harmony in the heart of the city using some of the most current plants.



The garden blends beautiful vignettes with modern structure and free flowing pathways.

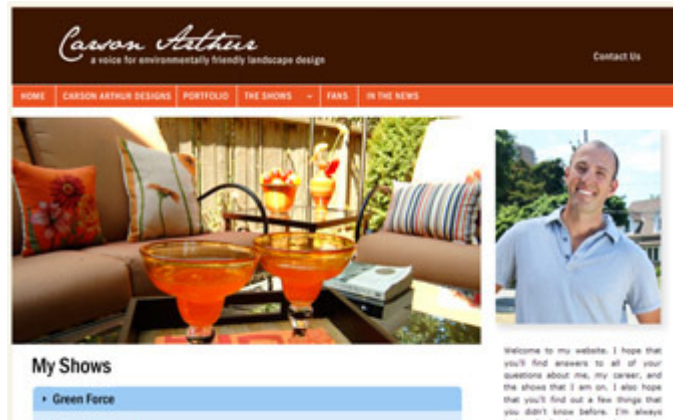


Whenever I need inspiration, I find it's the perfect place to walk my dog and contemplate how to overcome the day-to-day challenges I am faced with in landscape design.



Whenever I design a space, or furniture for that matter, I constantly try to recapture the same harmony that I find at the Music garden. For gardens, I try to balance the needs of the homeowners, with the style of the house, and the unique elements that make the yard special. Too often we want to remove the items that make our yards special in favour of a preconceived idea of what we think we want.

Mark: Your new website is beautiful. Did you design and build it yourself or did you hire a web design firm to do it for you? Are you pleased with their work?



Carson: I'm very proud of my website. While not web savvy, I had a vision of what I wanted and the design gurus at [ATsolve](#) made my vision a reality. I wanted my website to be personable and make me more accessible to the viewers who need me. I think my website does that and is entertaining at the same time.

Kudos to the designers.

Mark: Right now most of the television garden shows have been put on hold with the economic crisis. This situation is only temporary. Eventually production will start again. If you were to produce your own gardening show, what would it be like?

Carson: Actually, I have another show already in the works. Once the network's parent company resolves their financial situation, I hope to be filming again soon. [Green Force](#) has given me the opportunity to learn about eco friendly products, but more importantly, I have learned that we have a big misconception about landscaping. We assume that because we make a space look pretty we are doing something good for nature. That's not always the case. The new TV series will take me back to residential gardens but this time I'll be making them over with eco technology. My theory is that people will be happier in a yard that is not only functional and beautiful, but it's also doing right by the planet. People will always choose green products if they are the same price as the alternatives and if they allow the purchaser to continue the lifestyle that they have become accustomed to.



Mark: Where do you see yourself in 5 years time?

Carson: In 5 years, I'd like to not only have my own landscape firm, I'd also like to be a retailer. There is nothing I like more than shopping at some of my favourite stores like [Moss](#) on the Danforth and the [Copper Leaf](#) in Niagara-On-the-Lake. I'd like my own store where I can continue to help people create beautiful spaces, even if its one pot at a time.