



On the Making of Gardens

Sir George Sitwell

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It was a nervous breakdown that drew Sir George Sitwell to Italy in the early years of the twentieth century. And it was the incomparable gardens of Tuscany, Rome, and the Italian lake district that inspired him to write his classic analysis of what he considered the timeless principles of garden design.

This is not a book about flowers, plants, and practical horticulture. Sitwell's stance is an intellectual one, invoking music and magic in his description of those mystical places where landscape and atmosphere are brought together in artful conjunction. Subjective and controversial as Sitwell's comments on the history and fashions may have been, they are also impressively researched, empathetic and deeply felt. This was a book that elicited a passion in England for all things Italian, especially for the magic of its landscape.

This is an ingenious, elegant, and erudite book about wild and tended places that, despite its distant voice, maintains a modern relevance. Sitwell believed in the therapeutic value of gardens, in the intrinsic beauty of both planned and unplanned ecological integrity. His stylish, knowledgeable, and poetically fervent book, long overdue for reprint and here illustrated with lovely period photographs of the gardens described, will delight gardeners of every taste, age or nationality.

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