

A quirky corner of Glen Wilkin-Holland's garden.

# HEROIC GARDENS FESTIVAL FEBRUARY 23-24, 2013

## HEROIC EFFORT

Lincoln Davies previews Auckland's premier gardening event.

**MARK** it on your calendar: February 23 to 24 celebrates the return of the Heroic Gardens Festival. Back for its 17th year, this iconic Auckland event offers gardening enthusiasts a rare glimpse into some of the city's most beautiful and unique gardens. Festival organisers are hoping to attract at least 2000 attendees when 24 private residences open their gardens for the public to enjoy. Besides two great days out (gardens are open 10am to 6pm daily), an added incentive to attend is that Heroic Gardens supports a great cause. Proceeds from every ticket sold (valid for both days of the event) will assist Mercy Hospice Auckland's work of caring for patients facing life-limiting illness, as well as their families. "The need for our charity's services is only growing and we are very grateful to have this support," says Sandy McGregor, Mercy's fundraising team leader. Sandy, a keen gardener herself, says the festival is a great opportunity for gardening enthusiasts to down tools for one weekend and get inspired by others who share their passion. Unique to the festival, attendees can talk with the garden owners themselves. The festival was originally created to showcase gay and lesbian gardens and

raise funds for Auckland City Mission's now closed Herne Bay House – providing care for people living with HIV/Aids. Garden designer and festival organiser Geoffrey Marshall has been on board since day one. He says Heroic Gardens has evolved into something much bigger. Gay or straight, the Auckland community has been quick to embrace the summer garden event. From its humble beginnings, it has grown from 500 to 2000 attendees over the years. Festival organisers now welcome gardeners from the wider Auckland community as well. "More and more Aucklanders are wanting to get into the spirit of the festival and offer their gardens in support of hospice," Geoffrey says. Sean and Annie Jacob's Mount Eden garden is a late and welcome addition to the 2013 lineup. Sean, whose family had used Mercy Hospice services on several occasions, wanted to give something back to the charity. When one garden unexpectedly pulled out, the way was clear for the Jacobs' garden to feature. Sean, director of Lahood Window Furnishings, is also delighted that his company has come on board as premier sponsor of the 2013 event. The Jacob family's property in Landscape Rd is impressive. At 1150 square metres



The main pavilion in the Jacobs' garden has a black bamboo roof.



Glen Wilkin-Holland will be welcoming festival goers to his recently completed chapel.

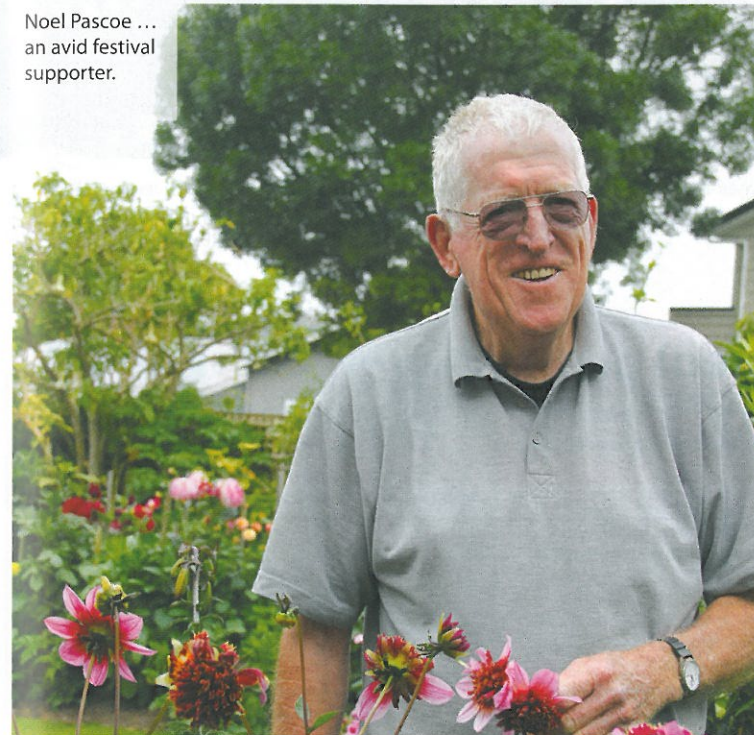
Noel Pascoe's garden with its beautiful begonia house will feature in this year's Heroic Gardens Festival for the last time.



Statues and crosses are a feature of Glen Wilkin-Holland's garden.



Noel Pascoe ... an avid festival supporter.



Sandstone statues and Cape Cod chairs on the rear garden boardwalk in the Jacob garden.



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in size, it is a mature subtropical garden with an abundance of majestic palms and striking bromeliads. But that's not all it boasts. This 17-year labour of love holds a dark secret: an 80m-long lava cave. Sean and Annie have been clearing and working on the cave for the past two and a-half years. "It's easily accessible and big enough to hold a small Eden Park crowd," Sean says. "It's quite unique to this part of Auckland." From Glendowie in the east to Titirangi in the west, this year's event will feature the return of 14 festival favourites as well as 10 new gardens. Whether it's a picture-perfect cottage garden or an orchidarium converted from a World War 2 bunker, every property offers a distinct point of difference. A crowd favourite, Glen Wilkin-Holland's New Lynn garden, is one of the most imaginative plots that Auckland has to offer with its salvation border of salvias, religious statues, marble crosses and contemplation platform in a sycamore tree. This year, festival goers will find a recently completed chapel. Noel Pascoe's nostalgic Sandringham garden will be on show for the last time. His old-school style garden features beautiful annual and perennial mixed floral borders leading to a superb collection of dahlias. A large begonia house displays the finest cascading blooms. Noel, who has been a mainstay of the festival since its inception, will not be leaving the festival completely. "I am looking forward to visiting other Heroic Gardens for many more years to come," he says. Heroic Gardens tickets are \$35 per person and are valid both days. For more details, visit [www.heroicgardens.org.nz](http://www.heroicgardens.org.nz).