

GET TO KNOW AARON MCINTIRE

TOM CRAIN - OCTOBER 19, 2015

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Aaron McIntire is senior project manager at Gunn Landscape Architecture, a landscape architecture practice based in New York City and the Hamptons. The firm has an extensive portfolio in high-residential projects and select commercial and public work throughout the U.S. Founded by Alec Gunn in 2000, the firm's body of work runs the gamut from classic Upper East Side balconies and contemporary downtown rooftops, to multi-acre estates in Connecticut and the Hamptons.

Working his way from landscape designer to his current senior position, McIntire has worked with **Gunn Landscape Architecture** since 2006. His expertise ranges from creating and facilitating roof garden design concepts to the development of furniture, fashion and art details. He is currently working on many of Gunn's private garden projects. McIntire is a graduate of the **Rhode Island School of Design** with bachelor's degrees in fine art and landscape architecture. Notable projects he's working on include **One Jackson Square** penthouse terraces, a historic townhouse private garden and master plans for Connecticut and Bridgehampton estates.

Proudest moments in landscape design: Completing projects that result in satisfied clients.

Biggest business challenge: Managing high workloads, the demanding expectations of clients, short time frames for projects, value engineering and meeting rules and regulations for buildings.

Landscape design/build inspiration: Gardens I've visited in America, Europe and other parts of the world, as well as those I've read about and seen in books and films.

Favorite plant or plant combination: I go through phases of using different plants that I like. I love layering textures such as stiff plants and loose grasses that can move in the wind. For example, Mexican feather grass and yarrow are a great combination.

Monday morning motivation: The thought of Friday evenings. I have a farmhouse in Upstate New York where I go every weekend. There, I get to experiment in the garden. I really love materials and finishes, especially patina on metal surfaces, stone and wood.

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Year founded: 2000

Client mix: Primarily high-end residential; small number of commercial projects

Service mix: Landscape design through collaborations with architects, interior designers and consultants. Pre-design through construction administration.

Business motto: Creator of otherworldly designs combining modern elements with backyard comforts.

Business worry that keeps you up most at night: The majority of my work is about rooftop terraces. High winds and bad weather impacting construction sites is always a worry, as well as the life spans of these gardens. Everything is more or less in a container at varying scales. I worry about how long these container gardens will stay in place considering today's high-end residential customers who change their minds so often.



Landscape design mentor: I have several. I greatly admire the work of Piet Oudolf. I love the gardens of Capability Brown, Humphry Repton and William Kent and even Martha Stewart. I grew up watching Martha's gardening segments on TV when she demonstrated her classic love for perennial gardens and old colonial houses and do-it-yourself instruction for reclaimed brick garden edging.

Favorite business or landscape design book: I don't have a favorite one because I like too many.

Landscape design project that makes you smile every time you drive past it: With rooftop projects, I don't necessarily drive by, but when visiting on foot I'm thrilled to see that my ideas about how the plants will grow, how the patina will develop and how the materials will last come true.

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In five years, where do you see your business going? I will have been at this job for nearly 15 years. It's hard to say what I will be doing beyond five years, but most likely I will still be at it. I would like to be working very much as I am: designing modern gardens with a sense of timelessness and sensitivity to the environment. I am also very fascinated with building organic forms made of living willow branches, expanding on the concepts of living architectural structures, pergolas and hedges. I've been at the beginnings of developing this in some of my current projects.

PHOTOS: AARON MCINTIRE, ISTOCK

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