

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Lotusland Celebrates with Martha Stewart, Jane Lynch, and Wendy Schmidt

500 guests gathered for *Lotusland Celebrates: Botanical Splendor*, an immersive evening celebrating horticulture, beauty, and spirited philanthropy in support of Lotusland's care of its extraordinary collections.



Press images (BFA) Steve Lucerno: <https://bfa.com/events/55079/share/1bd2edb3c0cf22>

MONTECITO, Calif. — On Saturday July 18, 500 guests gathered at Ganna Walska Lotusland for *Lotusland Celebrates: Botanical Splendor*, its 32nd edition of the Garden's fundraising gala, raising **more than \$1.5 million** to support one of the world's most unique and celebrated public gardens.

Proceeds from the evening sustain Lotusland's rare and threatened living collections, as well as promoting horticultural stewardship, conservation initiatives, ornamental displays, education programs, and public access. Home to more than **3,800 plant taxa across 37 acres**, approximately **one-third of Lotusland's living collections are classified as threatened in the wild**, making the Garden an internationally significant center for plant majesty and horticultural excellence.

Hosted by **Lotusland member Jane Lynch**, the evening welcomed garden and lifestyle icon **Martha Stewart**, whose lifelong passion for horticulture and deep appreciation for Lotusland made her a fitting guest of honor. Ms. Stewart first visited Lotusland in 2012 for a cover story of *Martha Stewart Living*. She praised Lotusland's beauty and significant plant collections, commitment to sustainable gardening practices, and the extraordinary work of the Garden's legacy left by its creator, Madame Ganna Walska.

As Honorary Chair and Lotusland Trustee Wendy Schmidt introduced Martha Stewart she reflected on the importance of gardens as places that inspire wonder, foster a deeper connection to the natural world, and remind us of our shared responsibility to care for extraordinary landscapes.

Throughout the evening, guests experienced new heights of *Botanical Splendor* through a series of immersive garden displays including exceptional culinary, and artistic experiences inspired by a gardener's lens.

Guests were welcomed by a striking living photo wall created by **Lush Elements** before setting out on an immersive garden walk through the Garden's remarkable landscapes. In the Japanese Garden, guests encountered **Sonic Butterfly**, a monumental interactive harp installation of a songstress playing the harp with strings in the surrounding tree canopy, followed by a live jazz trio in the Water Garden by the first blossoms of the Lotus' annual bloom, before savoring a refreshing custom flavor of Lotusland Lemongrass Lime ice cream concocted for Lotusland by Rory of **Rory's Artisanal Creamery**.

The evening continued under a tented lounge and bar on the **Great Lawn**, where an immersive environment conceived by **Merryl Brown Events**, with production by **SJR Events**, welcomed guests with botanical cocktails in a beautiful bar. The soundtrack for the evening was upbeat as guests enjoyed thoughtfully curated encounters with décor by **Emily Joubert home and garden**, sweet treats by **Solvang Bakery**, **The Well Gardens**, and **Field & Fort**. The elegant setting also featured a live botanical painting being created by artist **Kristi Johnson** and décor by **Theoni Collection**.

A formal dining service followed featuring a seasonal menu by the acclaimed **Paula LeDuc Fine Catering**. Following dinner, guests experienced the premiere of **Rooted in Vision**, a new film produced by **Verité Studios** and narrated by Jane Lynch. In this short film created for the evening to promote the mission of the garden, guests were treated to the first video speech by Ganna Walska whose recording of her own tribute to women's trailblazing evoked the leadership of Martha Stewart, Honorary Chair Wendy Schmidt and Lotusland Event Co-Chairs Jeanne and Julie Morley.

"This year's Lotusland Celebrates reminded us of all a garden offers: a respite from a noisy world, a feast for the senses, a unique dialogue between humans and plants," said **Wendy Schmidt**, Lotusland trustee and honorary chair of the gala. "The relationship we have with a garden requires work, time, money and emotional investment. We're grateful to all of Lotusland's supporters who recognize the significance of this special garden."

"Gardens nourish more than landscapes, they nourish the soul. Lotusland offers a place for worship of the natural world, as well as a space for reflection, inspiration, wonder, and renewal. We are proud to share that gift with our community," said **Rebecca Anderson**, Chief Executive Officer

Lotusland extends its sincere gratitude to its Board of Trustees, members, donors, volunteers, sponsors, and community partners whose generosity made the evening possible. Special thanks to Presenting Sponsor **The Nora McNeely Hurley Foundation**; Botanist Sponsor **Leslie S. Thomas**; Premier Partner **Oscar de la Renta**; and Hospitality Sponsor **Rosewood Miramar Beach** for their exceptional support of this year's event with fashion, luxury lifestyle accommodations and dining, and generous underwriting. As the **Premier Partner**, **Oscar de la Renta** continues its support of Lotusland through a special giving initiative. Through **July 31**, **10% of eligible purchases** made using the code **LOTUSLAND10** will benefit the Garden and its mission.

A complete list of sponsors and partners is available at [LotuslandCelebrates.org](https://lotuslandcelebrates.org).

About Ganna Walska Lotusland

Ganna Walska Lotusland is a 37-acre nonprofit public garden in Montecito, California, recognized for its extraordinary botanical collections, innovative garden design, and commitment to horticultural excellence, conservation, education, and sustainable horticultural practices. Open to the public by advance reservation, Lotusland inspires visitors from around the world while preserving one of the nation's most significant cultivated landscapes.

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Media Resources

Press images (BFA): <https://bfa.com/events/55079/share/1bd2edb3c0cf22>

Additional media materials available upon request:

- Pre-Event Media Kit
- Additional galleries by David Mendoza III and Elizabeth Messina will be shared with media upon release.