



NEWS RELEASE  
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### **THE REAL MISTRESS OF “DOWNTON ABBEY” TO KEYNOTE LAURITZEN GARDENS ANTIQUE AND GARDEN SHOW**

Omaha, Neb. – The real mistress of “Downton Abbey”, the Right Honorable Countess of Carnarvon will be one of the keynote speakers for the 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Lauritzen Gardens Antique and Garden Show, September 19 - 21, according to Melissa Marvin, general chairman for this year’s event. “We are thrilled to bring Lady Carnarvon to Omaha as we embark on the second decade of this exceptional show,” said Marvin.

Lady Carnarvon has written two books about the ancestors of the family that lives in Highclere Castle, the setting for the popular BBC television series “Downton Abbey” that airs on PBS in the U.S. She will speak at Lauritzen Gardens on Saturday, September 20, at 10:30 a.m. Tickets for all Antique and Garden Show events are available at [https://www.lauritzengardens.org/Antique\\_Show](https://www.lauritzengardens.org/Antique_Show)

The destination weekend kicks off with Mary McDonald, author of “Interiors: The Allure of Style” and one of the stars of Bravo TV’s “Million Dollar Decorators” and “Property Envy” is one of the most admired, highly published and sought after tastemakers in America. Her licensed product lines include an acclaimed fabric collection for F. Schumacher & Company, lighting for Robert Abbey, rugs for Patterson, Flynn and Martin, and furniture for Chaddock Home.

The weekend will culminate with Chef Brian O’Malley and his team from The Institute for the Culinary Arts at Metropolitan Community College. A cooking demonstration has been added to the Antique and Garden show line-up for Sunday, September 21 at 11:30 a.m..

The Antique and Garden Show, [https://www.lauritzengardens.org/Antique\\_Show](https://www.lauritzengardens.org/Antique_Show), is a one-of-a-kind event bringing together approximately 30 national and international antique dealers with all genres of antiques and collectibles of exceptional quality and extraordinary style.

With educational experiences, great decorating ideas, along with fabulous and affordable shopping opportunities—the Lauritzen Gardens Antique and Garden Show has something for everyone in its schedule of events.

Follow the event on Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/LGAntiqueShow>

**Additional background information on speakers:**

Lady Carnarvon, born Fiona Aitken, is the eighth and current Countess of Highclere Castle. She is married to George Herbert, eighth Earl of Carnarvon, and manages all castle affairs, from the grounds and gardens to the special events that take place at the residence. Prior to her marriage, Lady Carnarvon had a colorful career as an auditor at Coopers & Lybrand and owner of the fashion label, Azur.

Her newest book, “Lady Catherine, The Earl and the Real Downton Abbey”, is a follow-up to the international bestseller, “Lady Almina and the Real Downton Abbey”, and focuses on the remarkable American heiress who came to reign at Highclere Castle in the 1920s. It was released in the U.S. in October 2013.

“Lady Almina and the Real Downton Abbey” tells about the life of one of the castle’s most famous inhabitants, the 5<sup>th</sup> Countess of Carnarvon. Lord Julian Fellowes, the writer and creator of “Masterpiece Theater’s Downton Abbey,” was inspired by the book about the remarkable life of Lady Almina who inspired Downton Abbey’s Cora Crawley.

McDonald’s style combines old-world elegance with a modern sensibility resulting in a fearless iconic style. Her ability to combine bold patterns, Chinoiserie, and classical influences with an impeccable sense of color has established her signature style. This highly published, award-winning designer has been the recipient of the prestigious Stars of Design Award and honored as one of the top 25 designers by Veranda Magazine. Her first book "Mary McDonald Interiors: The Allure of Style" was released in 2010 to unanimous praise and is currently in its fifth printing.

The Institute for the Culinary Arts at Metropolitan Community College consists of two programs, Culinary Arts and Management and Hospitality and Restaurant Leadership. They offer hands-on experience in state-of-the-art facilities.

*Lauritzen Gardens is an urban oasis of beauty and tranquility. This 100-acre botanical garden, comprised of several outdoor garden areas, creates a living museum of unique four-season plant displays, maintained to the highest standards consistent with environmental stewardship. The visitor and education center includes the 5,000-square-foot floral display hall, a café, gift shop, horticultural library, classrooms and a community room.*

*Lauritzen Gardens is conveniently located in the beautiful riverfront hills at First and Bancroft Streets and is close to the Henry Doorly Zoo and the Old Market. For more information, please visit [www.lauritzengardens.org](http://www.lauritzengardens.org) or call (402) 346-4002.*

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