

their *ferme ornées* at Mount Vernon and Monticello were hymns to an agrarian republic that, by 1803, had doubled in size.

The intense cultivation of secluded, horticulturally lush garden spaces as, for example, the gardens of St. George Tucker and Joseph Prentis in late eighteenth-century Williamsburg, came to dominate nineteenth-century gardening on private estates. The celebration of the North American continent's grandeur became the domain of public parks, Martin argues. While vastly contributing to our understanding of gardening in Virginia's colonial and early republican eras, Martin overlooks the significant impact the Picturesque Movement made in democratizing private gardening. By the mid-nineteenth century Andrew Jackson Downing's promotion of picturesque rural cottages in pastoral settings had become the model of healthful living for workers in an increasingly urbanized, industrialized America.

DONNA C. DODENHOFF

Wilhelm Miller, **The Prairie Spirit in Landscape Gardening**, introduction by Christopher Vernon, Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2002 (originally published in 1915 by the University of Illinois), 72 pages, 133 b/w illustrations, ISBN 1-55849-329-8, \$34.95 cloth.

Wilhelm Miller's 1915 publication, *The Prairie Spirit in Landscape Gardening*, extended the notion of a distinctive "prairie style" that was then being applied to works by architects such as Louis Sullivan, Frank Lloyd Wright, and others to a regional movement within landscape gardening being led by Jens Jensen, Ossian Cole Simonds, and Walter Burley Griffin. Miller's treatise here and in several other articles on the Prairie style characterized the work of these individuals as being distinctly different from work by their contemporaries elsewhere in the United States and Canada. In this particular publication, he extolled "the prairie spirit" as a populist movement within Illinois gardening circles that celebrated the use of native plants adapted to the region; actively promoted conservation and restoration of wilder tracts of native scenery; and urged continued development of a

regional form of garden art that idealized forms and patterns of the natural landscape in parks and gardens.

This reprint of Miller's writing, along with a well-researched biographical introduction by Christopher Vernon, is a welcome addition to the growing body of rediscovered classics in landscape design. Miller's work has particular relevance to the current rebirth in interest in "native" gardens across the Midwest which has as much of an emphasis on ecological fitness and energy conservation as on rediscovery of the native flora that has largely disappeared from most urban and suburban areas. Miller's book provides a still-practical handbook for Midwestern gardens that lends a strong historical basis for linking such work today with its precedent. What is particularly intriguing (and at times challenging) about Miller's writing in this 1915 book is the patriotic fervor used to promote the Prairie style. At the end of each chapter is a series of pledges calling on the reader to participate in some way to help to conserve Illinois scenery by land management or planting efforts. At the end of the book is "The Illinois Citizen's Oath," linking adherence to the Prairie style principles with larger civic ideals and obligations.

Vernon's introduction tells the important story of Miller's own evolution through his work as garden writer-critic-editor with Liberty Hyde Bailey at Cornell, his involvement with Bailey in the Country Life Movement, and his move to the University of Illinois in 1912 to develop "propagandist work in the state for the 'country beautiful'" to parallel the City Beautiful work in civic design by the then-recently hired Charles Mulford Robinson. As the first person in the country to be hired expressly for purposes of landscape extension, Miller vigorously assumed the role of an evangelist, using university publications, the horticultural press, lantern slide lectures, and demonstration landscape designs for community parks, farmstead designs, and street tree plantings to advocate for a regionally based design approach. Miller's over-zealousness apparently proved problematic for the University of Illinois and his contract was terminated after only four years.

Miller's promotion of the Prairie style was not espoused by Simonds and Griffin, who saw their

work as relating to individual site characteristics and not responding to specific stylistic conventions. Jensen, on the other hand, relished the characterization of his work as Prairie style. Still, whether or not all agreed with this labeling, Miller did provide an important historical analysis of their work, aptly identifying key themes such as the long view, broad view, and use of stratified plants and stonework as important parts of the Prairie style. For anyone with interest in the landscape work of Jensen, Simonds, and Griffin, *The Prairie Spirit in Landscape Gardening* is certainly requisite reading, and I am grateful that this publication is once again available.

ROBERT E. GRESE

Benedetta Origo, Morna Livingston, Laurie Olin, and John Dixon Hunt, **La Foce: A Garden and Landscape in Tuscany**, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001, 125 color plates, 59 b/w illustrations, 2 maps, 1 plan of garden, 320 pages, notes, ISBN 0-8122-3593-2, \$49.95 cloth.

*La Foce: A Garden and Landscape in Tuscany* is an engaging hybrid of a book, composed of four illustrated sections: a history and memoir by Benedetta Origo, the present owner of the garden; Morna Livingston's photographic chronicle of the garden and landscape through the seasons; Laurie Olin's ink and watercolor drawings of garden vistas, architecture, and details accompanied by his astute commentary; and finally John Dixon Hunt's historical analysis of the garden spaces designed for Antonio and Iris Origo from 1927 to 1939 by English architect Cecil Pinsent. Such a multi-layered approach from four distinctive points of view is particularly apposite to such a rich and complex garden and landscape, deeply imbedded in the history and culture of southern Tuscany.

The estate bought by the Origos in 1924 and 1934 occupied nearly 8,000 acres in the Val d'Orcia. Although the land had been continuously occupied since prehistoric times, it was then a wild and bleak valley dominated by the conical mass of Monte Amiata. Antonio Origo's task was to put the dozens of farms back into production, restore buildings, and construct roads. Cecil Pinsent was brought in to

make the house, a former inn dating to 1498, habitable and to design farm offices, a school, and other essential buildings. Iris Origo had known Pinsent since childhood as he had restored the garden at the Villa Medici, Fiesole, for her mother Lady Sybil Cutting, widow of American William Bayard Cutting.

Iris Origo began the garden at La Foce when she planted scores of roses during her first winter there. Her daughter Benedetta writes, "the harsh climate and the superhuman quality of the Val'd'Orcia made it essential for my mother to create a kind of haven for herself, with green grass and flowers and geometric box hedges to give a sense of order to nature." Visitors noted her passion for flowers, evident throughout the garden. In 1927 Pinsent began work on the garden with the walled and hedged space next to the house that incorporated the roses in narrow beds. His final design in 1939 was for the lower garden with its travertine stairs, grotto, box hedges, statue, and octagonal pool reminiscent of sixteenth-century Tuscan prototypes. The garden's formal axis runs through Pinsent's series of garden rooms and terminates in the grand lower garden. A cross-axial path lined with cypress leads up the terraced hill on the left to another statue and a spectacular view of the valley.

John Dixon Hunt, in his essay, credits Pinsent for his brilliant integration of the garden with the landscape both visually and conceptually, and analyzes the garden in terms of the play of oppositions such as modernism/tradition, personal expression/generic formulae, vistas/enclosures, and geometric planting/natural growth. It would seem that much of this vital dynamic was due not only to Pinsent's design, but to the personality, vision, and passionate engagement of Iris Origo herself.

Iris Origo had grown up in gardens, the manicured Long Island estate of her American grandparents and the lushly overgrown park and garden of her Anglo-Irish ones. She wrote movingly of both in her own memoir, *Images and Shadows* (1970). Central to her garden vision was a profound response, both sensuous and intellectual, to the landscape of the Val d'Orcia, and the deeply felt connection of family and place, cemented in 1933 when, following the death of her young son, the family cemetery and chapel were built. The vital spine of the La Foce garden is, then,