

# NEWS RELEASE

Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau



## Rockford Inspired Garden Wins Gold Medal at International Garden Show

*Landscape Architecture Students Used Rockford as Inspiration in Garden Design*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**October 18, 2013**

**ROCKFORD, IL** — Students from Gloucestershire University in the United Kingdom have won a gold medal award as well as “Best in Show” for their garden design inspired by the Rockford Region. Jake Poloni and Steve Mann displayed a 15 foot by 15 foot replica of their design concept at the prestigious Malvern Autumn Garden Show in Worcestershire, UK.

In June, the Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau (RACVB) facilitated a competition for landscape architecture students at Gloucestershire University. Using Rockford as inspiration, the students created garden concepts that were judged by a panel of experts from Rockford. Poloni and Mann created the winning design concept, which allowed them to participate in the Malvern Autumn Garden Show in Malvern, Worcestershire just last month. The internationally renowned garden show draws approximately 64,000 people each year.

“We are thrilled that Jake and Steve have won not only the gold medal, but also best in show for their garden concept,” said John Groh, President/CEO Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau. “Our goal is to gain awareness for the region and tout Rockford as a tourist destination. The fact that the winning garden was inspired by Rockford—the ‘City of Gardens’—speaks volumes to the beauty that surrounds us. We hope Jake and Steve can visit Rockford and replicate their garden so residents of Rockford can view and enjoy their winning design.”

Poloni and Mann’s garden concept incorporated elements of the Rockford Region by demonstrating the contrast between the layout of the countryside around Rockford to that where the Gloucestershire University students study in England. Additional research into the history of Rockford and features of the region as it is today inspired other elements incorporated into the garden design.

“We really appreciated the opportunity and challenge of creating a garden to celebrate the city of Rockford. We were thrilled just to be a part of the Malvern Autumn Show, and we are simply ecstatic about winning these awards,” said Jake Poloni, one of the winning student designers. “

“The British are renowned for their love of gardening, as shown by the millions of visitors to garden shows every year,” said Yolanda Fletcher, Managing Director of Cellet Marketing and Public Relations. “As the Illinois and Rockford UK tourist board we are tasked with developing innovative and creative ways of promoting Rockford and were very excited to see Rockford represented at the Malvern Autumn Show. It provided a great opportunity to bring together consumers, students, experts and travel companies to showcase the fantastic garden attractions in Rockford with the intention of driving holiday bookings to the area. The gold medal and best in show awards are simply icing on the cake.”

*RACVB is a private, non-profit organization established in 1984 to champion efforts to promote the Rockford Region as an overnight visitor destination. The RACVB adds wealth to the region’s economy by investing in marketing programs that grow tourism. [www.gorockford.com](http://www.gorockford.com)*

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