

by any other name

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The Heritage Rose Journal of the World Federation of Rose Societies



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Cover image: Charles Quest-Ritson
'Tricolore de Flandre' [Van Houtte, 1846 but bred by Parmentier]

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Editors' note

Welcome to this latest edition of *By Any Other Name*. In it we report on climate change and its impact on rose growing. This was a topic that cropped up repeatedly at the World Federation of Rose Societies' meeting in Adelaide, where – despite it being almost Summer – we had heavy downpours and at one point even hailstones. Climate change does not just mean warmer and drier weather.

The remarkable Murray Radka tells us about his garden, Brandy Hill, in New Zealand and the lengths (and heights) he has gone to in gathering this important heritage rose collection.

We also look ahead to the European heritage rose conference that takes place in Belgium shortly. We explore the Belgian rose traditions and give a foretaste of what some of the speakers will share with us.

It promises to be a good event and we are excited at the thought of seeing so many heritage rose lovers there. For those who cannot make it, we hope these articles offer some compensation.

You may find this publication more enjoyable to read online – you can find a page turning edition at bit.ly/BAON27

Charles Quest-Ritson and Martin Stott

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Charles Quest-Ritson is a writer, historian and journalist, with a column in the lifestyle magazine *Country Life*. He is the author of *Climbing Roses of the World* (Timber Press, 2003) and, jointly with his wife Brigid, of an *Encyclopedia of Roses* that was first published in UK by Dorling Kindersley in 2003 and has since been translated into seven languages, including American English.



Martin Stott is a former journalist who has made programmes for the BBC World Service and Radio 4 in 21 countries and written for most of the UK's national press. Passionate about roses and garden history in general, he has also written for *Gardens Illustrated* and the *Historic Roses Journal*. He is a particular fan of Dean Reynolds Hole, the Nottinghamshire vicar who founded the National Rose Society. Martin's garden history blog can be found at www.storytellingarden.co.uk.



“A rose by any other name would smell so sweet.”

William Shakespeare,
Romeo and Juliet

'Sweet Juliet'
[David Austin, 1989]

Climate change and the impact on rose breeding

Martin Stott



A recurring theme at the triennial convention of the World Federation of Rose Societies in Adelaide in October 2022 was climate change.

The rose is an incredibly adaptable genus, growing wild from the Tropic of Cancer to the Arctic Circle. But different climates can have a huge impact on how well a rose grows.

Thomas Proll, head of the breeding department at W. Kordes' Söhne, told the convention of one bright orange semi-open bush rose he hybridised at the company's nursery at Sparrieshoop in the north of Germany in 2008. He says: "It was a nice rose, but it was a lazy bloomer in Germany. The first flush was only single flowers. It wasn't floriferous enough to

be a great, great rose." Reluctant to give up on it, he sent the rose to Ludwig Taschner, Kordes' distributor in South Africa. He was taken aback when Taschner expressed his enthusiasm for it.

"Taschner said it flowered all through the season in Pretoria, with masses of blooms – like a



Judges at international rose trials test plants for their quality and health Réunion (2019).

Image: courtesy of Meiland Roses



Images: courtesy of Meiland Roses, Kordes Roses and Martin Stott



1. The overall winner of this year's Barcelona international rose trials was this unnamed ground cover rose bred by Spain's Matilde Ferrer.
2. 'Winchester Cathedral' – one of the roses discontinued by David Austin this year.
3. 'Afrikaans', hybridised by Kordes roses in Germany in 2008. Left, the rose growing in German trials – healthy, but compact and not particularly floriferous. Right, the same variety in South Africa, where it makes a blooming hedge at four times the height.

wall of flowers," says Proll. Taschner suggested the name 'Afrikaans'. Proll sent the rose to Australia, where it performed similarly well, winning the People's Choice Award at the National Rose Trial Garden Awards of Australia in 2021.

Others had similar stories. The veteran Australian rose breeder, George Thomson, once invited Britain's David Austin to his nursery in South Australia. He says: "We were walking around when he stopped by a tree and looked up at a rose growing high up into it. He frowned and just stared, then said: 'That looks like my rose, 'Graham Thomas', but it can't be. It doesn't climb that high.' 'It does here,' I said!"

Changing conditions

In a sweeping history of gardening in Australia, eminent garden historian Trevor Nottle discussed how gardening in a modern sense was brought to the continent by the English settlers and convicts.

That northern European idea of gardening has dominated for nearly three centuries but now much of Australia is increasingly enduring drought conditions (though you would not have believed it had you witnessed the summer rainfall – and even hailstones at one point – in Adelaide). Australians are having to adapt. Watering lawns is no longer an option for many. Mediterranean gardening is becoming the future.

Rose breeders understand the challenges and are determined to

“That northern European idea of gardening has dominated for nearly three centuries but now much of Australia is increasingly enduring drought conditions.”

ensure that the rose maintains its position as the world's favourite flower, whatever the conditions it is grown under.

Matthias Meilland belongs to the sixth generation of the famous French rose-breeding family. The Meilland company, creator of perhaps the world's most famous rose, 'Peace' ('Mme. A Meilland'), sows up to 200,000 hand-pollinated seeds of roses each year, like other breeders discarding more than 90% of the seedlings in the first year.

Eventually Meilland whittles the number down to some hopefuls that it grows in test beds around the world that he calls "rose hell" – a process it began in 1935. In none of them are pesticides or fungicides used today. Nor are they watered once established. In the south of France they are subject to 45 degrees Celsius heat and 70 days without rain. In Germany, the roses are exposed to sodden soil. In Pennsylvania the field is rife with blackspot. In California they have to survive drought and heat. In Kenya cut roses are tested – not just for how well they grow under glass, but how they survive shipping.

Testing enables the company to identify roses suitable for different parts of the world, and those resilient enough to thrive in a vast array of conditions. “We want better roses that can cope with climate change and are more disease resistant and more floriferous,” says Mathias Meilland. “We take traits from existing roses that we think future gardeners will like and try to carry them over on to stronger plants. We are trying to create plants that will last 100 years.”

But what does this mean for heritage roses? Neither Meilland nor Kordes maintains a collection

of their older roses. This year David Austin has “retired” several of its well-known English roses from the catalogue, including ‘Munstead Wood’, ‘Wildev’, ‘The Alnwick Rose’, ‘Winchester Cathedral’, ‘Shropshire Lad’, ‘Lady Emma Hamilton’ and WFRS Hall of Fame rose ‘Graham Thomas’.

The company blames climate change and the evolution of plant diseases, which it says means some of its older varieties no longer reach its increasingly high standards.

Austin’s former head rosarian, Michael Marriott, highlights black



Top: Rose Hell Pennsylvania USA Bottom: A rose trial in France with zero spraying

Images: courtesy of Meilland Roses

Watching the weather

Perhaps the world’s most challenging place to grow roses successfully is Iceland. Vilhjálmur Lúðvíksson, former president of the Icelandic Horticultural Society, is seeing big changes in the weather, but it is not necessarily getting warmer. Between 1990 and 2010 the number of ‘good summer days’ in Iceland (as defined by Icelandic Med Office measurements) rose from under 20 to over 50. But this has dropped back to near 25 today and appears to be falling further. He says: “This is probably related to the North Atlantic Oscillation. The unpredictable atmospheric and oceanic forces here mean seasonal and annual fluctuations are quite strong, but so are variations on a decadal scale.

“Our winters are not nearly as cold as our latitude would suggest. In January the average temperature in Reykjavik is close to +1 °C. Hardiness measures for plants based on lowest expected winter temperatures have limited relevance here. Late winter and spring fluctuations between warm and cold days can be hard on the plants, but summer cold rather than winter frost is our main problem – it prevents roses from maturing properly. Here we talk about a rose’s tenacity rather than its hardiness.”

Meanwhile, at the international rose trials in Barcelona’s Parc de Cervantes this month (May 2023) the organisers have battled with the lowest rainfall in 160 years. Gabino

Carballo Pérez, from the Barcelona Parks and Gardens Department, said: “We’ve had hardly any rain and one of the coldest Februaries on record. I think that in less than a decade some areas of Spain that are currently fertile will be arid and unproductive. As water tables fall you get aquifer contamination; water quality drops and salinity rises. The soil degrades over time and you have a crust of salt that puts the roses under long-term stress. We will see then which rose varieties survive and which fail.”



Gabino Carballo Pérez, from the Barcelona Parks and Gardens Department

He believes people will have to prioritise between watering the garden and filling the jacuzzi or swimming pool. Parks and public roses gardens could become precious oases. He said: “As the crisis deepens and we become more aware of the lack of resources I think we will see the importance of our rose heritage and of the cultural value of parks and gardens, which may lead to us investing in them. We will probably have fewer but perhaps they will be better quality.”

Rose breeders Viru and Girija Viraraghavan live on the Palni Hills, an eastern offshoot of the Western Ghat mountains, which run along the west coast of peninsular India. Viru Viraraghavan says: “There can be little doubt that considerable warming has taken place here. Plant species like *Tithonia diversifolia* and blue-flowering morning glory (*Ipomoea indica*) used to, used to be confined up to 1500m but in the

last decade they have climbed the mountains and can be found up to 2200m. What has happened with *Lantana camara* is quite extraordinary. Originally, when we first moved to Kodaikanal in 1980 we had noticed that the flowers were a lilac pink colour in the upper plateau but as we went down the mountain side to around 1200m the colour changed to orange. In more recent times the orange flowered version of the lantana started appearing even at the altitudes of the upper plateau.”

For many years the couple have been breeding roses for warmer climates like India, South-East Asia and the southern regions of China. He says: “These southern areas have been so far denied the pleasure of easily grown roses, though enthusiasts still manage to raise some of the modern roses

hybridised in Europe and USA, with extraordinary care, involving weekly sprays of fungicide and great attention to the best possible cultivation practices.

“Among heritage roses, the first Bourbon, ‘Edward’, some of the heritage Chinas, e.g. ‘Cramoisi Supérieur’, and many other China roses which have been grown for centuries in China itself are the only roses that can be grown with normal care in southern Asia. Apart from Chinas, I should also add some of the ancient Tea rose hybrids, for example, ‘Mrs B R Cant’, ‘Mme. Falcot’, ‘Devonienses’, and some closely related Teas. There are some pleasant surprises – for example, the Hybrid Musk ‘Prosperity’ – copes. In the somewhat cooler parts of S. Asia, particularly in areas above 500m, the Noisettes, ‘Rêve d’Or’ and ‘Maréchal Niel’ can also be grown.”

“Testing enables the company to identify roses suitable for different parts of the world, and those resilient enough to thrive in a vast array of conditions.”

1. Veteran Australian rose breeder George Thomson.
2. Australian garden historian Trevor Nottle.
3. Matthias Meilland (left) and Thomas Proll (right) with the Australian Rose Awards they received at the WFRS conference in Adelaide.



spot and rust as key problems. He said: “I’m very sad that ‘Munstead Wood’ is going, and also ‘Lady Emma Hamilton’, which has the most wonderful fragrance. I used to encourage people to sniff and they’d always come up with a smile on their face. Yes, it’s not the healthiest of roses but it is just so beautiful and so fragrant.

“I think that there could be a bit more leeway given to roses that are supremely beautiful and fragrant but perhaps not as healthy as other varieties. With a bit of foliar feeding and careful positioning you can still keep them looking pretty good. I think these special older varieties should be kept on. But if you want to be known as producing very healthy roses, and you’re still selling some of the less

healthy ones, then I can see that it’s difficult.”

Meilland says: “Yes there are varieties like ‘Peace’, which should be conserved, but it is not our job as breeders to conserve. That is the job of the heritage rose gardeners. That said, we have a field with many of our old varieties in what is a gene pool area. But if these roses do not survive because they need pesticides and fungicides, we are not going to cry over their loss.

“I have used a species rose from Japan that I think will be interesting as source material for heat-resistant roses in future, but 99% of the time we hybridise roses using only modern varieties.”

Proll says: “When I started with Kordes my predecessor suggested it would be good for my education to start a collection of pretty much everything Kordes had ever bred, going back to the first release of a Kordes rose in 1918. Some had got lost but most of these roses were still available through rosarians and rose collections, like Sangerhausen. This is the best source. We had them for a while but keeping them healthy – the whole effort was not worth the output. We rely and trust on Sangerhausen to take care of the collection.”

He does not see himself needing these roses as part of his breeding programme. He says: “It’s not genetic material you would want to use any more. Spraying was the way to handle roses in the 70s and even into the 80s. Since then we have bred super roses that may

not be care-free but they are largely trouble-free. We have been pesticide-free for 30 years. So there are hardly any of those older roses you would still grow today. If you are a collector, it might be another story but as an average person you wouldn't drive to work in a car made in the 70s today. You would take a modern car. So why go with old technology for your roses?"

Meilland raises the question of how close the genetic material of the older roses we might want to save are to the original. He says: "Peace' became a different rose everywhere in the world. The 'Peace' rose in Australia is not the same as the one in India. It has been reproduced so much that micro-mutations have been reproduced endlessly in different countries."

From a commercial perspective the breeders' response may be understandable – if you are focused on ruthlessly weeding out the weak from your breeding programmes, why would you change your mindset over historic roses?

However, tastes in roses change. If older roses drop from the catalogues, as they are doing, will we lose some roses that breeders might one day regret? What happens if a rose disease strikes that the more modern roses cannot resist? Should the responsibility for maintaining this biodiversity lie just with collectors? Do we need to worry about this?

Encouraging news comes from America where Jackson & Perkins, the breeder founded in Newark,

New York in 1872, has announced a partnership with the Louisiana State University College of Agriculture's botanic gardens in Baton Rouge.

The university will preserve J&P's proprietary and historic genetics going back over 100 years, including many roses no longer in commercial production.

An important additional part of the programme is to ensure J&P's historic roses remain free of rose mosaic virus. The LSU's facilities are 300 miles south of any known case of another problem – rose rosette disease. This is a virus spread by tiny mites that cause roses to grow strangely deformed stems, leaves and flowers. We will endeavour to write more on this project in future editions of BAON.

“If you are focused on ruthlessly weeding out the weak from your breeding programmes, why would you change your mindset over historic roses?”

Rose judging in France

Images: courtesy of Meilland Roses





Murray Radka
arrives by helicopter
at Port Craig

Images: Murray Radka

“I feel emotional as I gaze at the spindly little plant growing in dense bush, alive simply because of its determination to push up into the light.”

War of the roses – saving New Zealand’s rose heritage



Murray Radka

Safely propagated, planted and blooming at Brandy Hill – a cluster of flowers from the rose Murray Radka rescued in his perilous trip to Port Craig. If any readers recognise the rose, please let us know its name.

Prologue

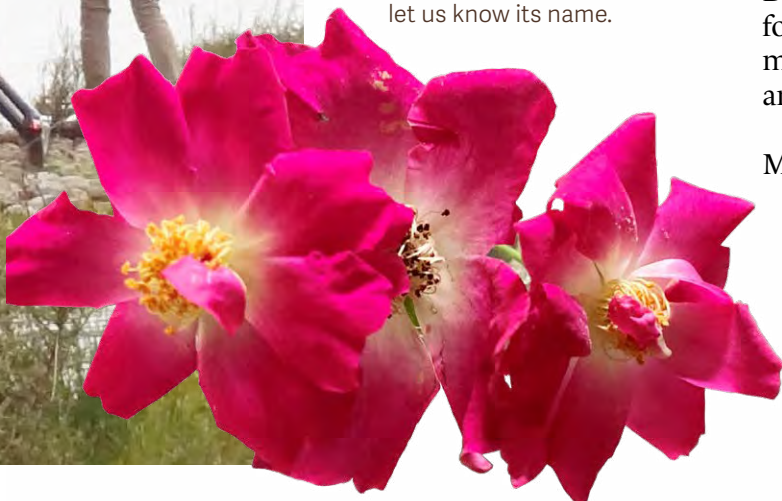
Te Waipounamu, the Māori name for the South Island of New Zealand, is blessed with vast tracts of wilderness and abandoned settlements where early settlers attempted to make their homes for a while before leaving just their ramshackle huts, rusty equipment and plants as evidence of their stay.

In the bush, regenerating at the former logging settlement of Port Craig in the far south of the island, grows a rose planted more than one hundred years ago by someone unknown and with the probable distinction of being the most south westerly growing rose in the world.

I am standing in nervous anticipation on the beach at Te Wae Wae Bay with a small group of Department of Conservation workers waiting for the rain to clear so that a helicopter can take me into the old settlement to inspect the rose and perhaps gain a cutting.

My nervousness stems from a fear of heights equalled only by fear that the weather will not allow us to fly. It has taken three years to organize this flight with no certainty it will be repeated.

My journey the day before had taken me along a magnificently stark and wild



coastline of green fields, high cliff views of a calm, sunlit ocean that belied its latent ferocity and, close to Orepuki, clumps of trees in gnarled communities that bear witness to that ferocity. Appearing to bow in unison before a greater power, these living sculptures are trimmed and coiffed by the wind to within an inch of their lives leaving not a twig, leaf or seed to raise its head.

Fate is on my side this day. The sky clears, the helicopter arrives and I am whisked into the old settlement for a truly flying visit with just minutes to inspect the rose and find a suitable cutting before being whisked out again to civilization.

I feel emotional as I gaze at the spindly little plant growing in dense bush, alive simply because of its determination to push up into the light. My mind dwells on the person who cared enough to bring it into this tough environment so long ago, who tended it and gave it the start that has allowed it to survive against all odds and long after the life of its benefactor has passed.

I manage to find a barely useful cutting, wrap it as carefully as I am able before catching the return flight of the helicopter back to the beach.

In February my cutting produces its first bud and with care another historic New Zealand rose may have been rescued.

Fighting the good fight

We have a war raging within New Zealand. Not a conventional war

with conventional troops, but a band of middle-aged, elderly men and women in the provinces who have taken a stand and are determined to find, rescue, and take control of the treasure we call Heritage Roses.

The 2013 World Federation of Rose Societies' Conference in Palmerston North was an illuminating experience, challenging me to justify my ideas about preserving the old varieties.

For two days I listened as breeders, retailers and knowledgeable rosarians discussed the health and problems in the present day rose world and, apart from presentations from two of our own members, the over-riding theme was that the salvation of the rose lies in the future and within the modern.

There was no sentimentality at this conference. People are acutely aware that roses are no longer the plant of choice for many gardeners. Breeders and retailers are finding it more and more challenging to find gimmicks and niche markets in which to sell them and generally the future looks bleak. The solution appears to lie with breeding the perfect rose within a throwaway society and there was even talk of throwaway roses. All of this flies in the face of all we are trying to achieve when we endeavour to save varieties which are at least one hundred years old.

By their very nature heritage roses are a finite resource. What we have now is all we shall ever have. History does not allow us to go back and

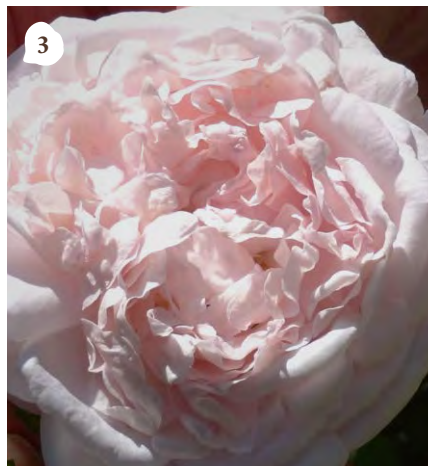


“We have a war raging within New Zealand. Not a conventional war with conventional troops, but a band of middle-aged, elderly men and women in the provinces who have taken a stand and are determined to find, rescue, and take control of the treasure we call Heritage Roses.”



1. *Rosa corymbifera* found by Murray Radka in an abandoned Marae garden in Waiau River Valley
2. Found rose at Brandy Hill, probably 'Charles Lefèbvre' [Lacharme, 1861]
3. *Rosa hemisphaerica* 'Flore-Pleno' at Brandy Hill, found beside an abandoned cottage in Central Otago but believed never sold in New Zealand
4. Unidentified Gallica found in an old orchard near Alexandra, Central Otago

Images: Murray Radka



restore what has been lost no matter how much we wish it could be so.

In the last decade rose supply in New Zealand hit crisis point and the decline of rare varieties from public collections was just as calamitous. When I began collecting heritage roses 40 years ago, I could purchase from 11 suppliers. Today I can think of just two. In addition, the great collections of these suppliers have been lost to the public, although some still exist privately. Adding to this problem it is apparent that rare varieties are disappearing from the collections still open to the public because of a lack of expertise or awareness of the value of those collections among staff and those responsible for their safe keeping. Roses are not propagated to preserve the variety and when one dies a new one, usually common, replaces it. Commercial suppliers report that the time and effort to import heritage rose bud wood is too expensive for the financial return which means that once lost our roses are probably lost to New Zealand forever.

Left unchecked it is obvious that the greater part of the New Zealand collection of Heritage Roses will disappear within a short space of time.

New Zealand has always had an impressive supply of all kinds of roses which have been a much loved and valued plant starring in most gardens.

I grew up with Hybrid Teas and Floribundas which featured conspicuously in my mother's

garden. From boyhood she took me to smell the delights of 'Etoile de Hollande' and wonder at the dark beauty of 'Josephine Bruce'. Later I watched her enjoy the beautiful complimentary colour combination of 'Thais' and 'Woburn Abbey' which, by chance, she had planted side by side in a new garden, but modern roses do not fit the rugged landscapes of Central Otago where I live and, when we first gardened here, they were sacrificed for plants that suit this environment.

In 1983 my focus and world changed with the chance sighting of a beautiful photograph of Botzaris, a lovely damask rose, in Trevor Griffith's book, *My World of Old Roses*. Of course I had read of damask roses, China roses, French roses and Tea roses in literature but had never thought they may still be available let alone housed in the largest collection of heritage roses in the southern hemisphere in Timaru, just three and a half hours from Brandy Hill where I live. I hatched a cunning plan suggesting to my wife that we take the kids to Timaru for a lovely, safe family Christmas holiday and so I came to meet Trevor and view his collection.

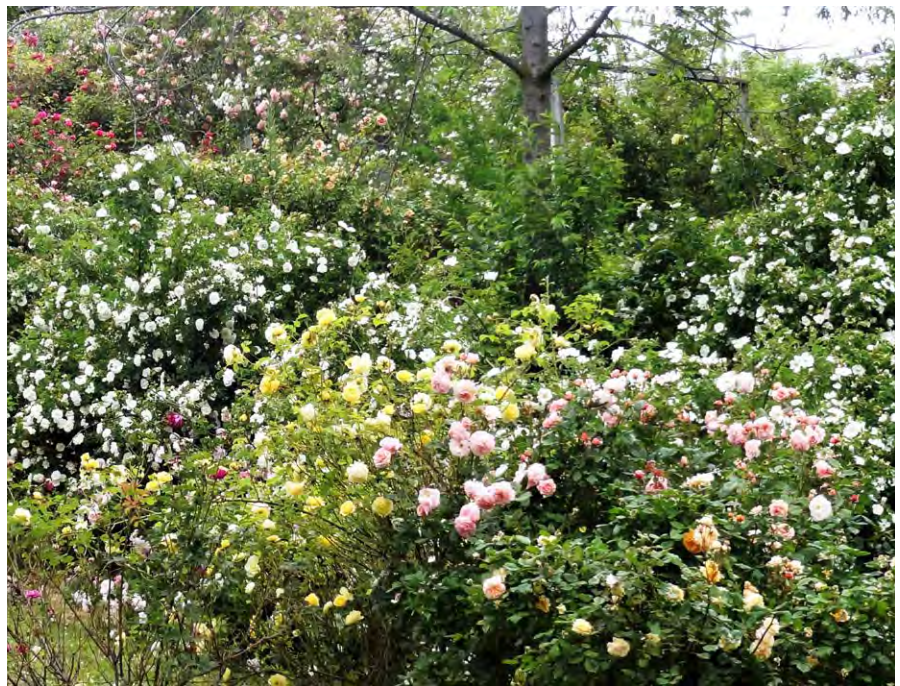
The discovery of old roses, those Damask, Alba, Moss, Musk, Tea and China shrubs that sit so well within the landscape, provide sumptuous blooms, unsurpassed fragrance, year-round interest and easy care, changed the nature of this garden and created a passion that has changed my life.

From the very beginning it was not just the beauty of the roses and

“Left unchecked it is obvious that the greater part of the New Zealand collection of Heritage Roses will disappear within a short space of time.”

their landscaping potential that drew me to them but their history. As an historian and former teacher of history, I am captivated by their stories and the images I have of them taking their place in the lives and loves of the people of our past. I spent the next 20, wonderful years collecting any rose with a story from at least 10 suppliers, my only dilemma being how to choose from an impressive list and decide what could wait for another year.

Slowly and imperceptibly at first, the scene began to change, unnoticed by anyone who did not study the catalogues and buy large numbers every year. Even I failed to recognize the warning signs until our largest suppliers, including Griffiths, closed their doors and the pickings from the catalogues became more and more meagre. The day finally arrived when there were just two suppliers and no new roses to choose from. The situation worsened with a few varieties deleted every year from remaining catalogues, while rare varieties disappeared from public collections and were replaced with modern, common varieties. Desperate times call for desperate measures and for a time I took to nicking suckers and cuttings from sick and rare varieties wherever I found them. Herein lies a story in itself and much could be



Brandy Hill. Tea roses with Alba roses behind

written about the adventures in my newly chosen career as a rose rustler but suffice to say it could not continue and fortunately fate took a hand with a chance conversation with Fran Rawling, the then president of HRNZI.

It had occurred to me that the lost roses were probably still growing in gardens throughout the country and perhaps the creation of a national Register could be the beginning of a renaissance for them. Fran was an energetic, imaginative President who did much for Heritage Roses in New Zealand during her tenure as President and continues her work today. We discussed my concerns and suggestion of a rose Register, she grasped the idea, asked for detail and within days I had a job. A small committee was created to design and oversee the Register. With just four people, it was an inspired selection each one of us having a different set of skills, which together have allowed the speedy realization of this project.

The goals we set were simple: find, register and if possible propagate rare and commercially unavailable varieties. Long-term goals were to publish the Register online, increase the number of public plantings of rare varieties and eventually make the found varieties available to the public. A very long-term goal is to investigate ways of importing bud wood of varieties we cannot find.

To date we have rescued more than 300 rare varieties, many of which were frail and sickly. We have published The New Zealand



Gallica seedling rescued by Murray Radka from under a Canina rootstock then propagated and returned to an Otago Botanic Garden.

“We recognize that the public collections are paramount in our quest to save and retain heritage roses.”

Register of Heritage Roses on the Heritage Roses website. Inger Gledhill, our archivist, has researched old catalogues to find the roses that came into New Zealand and noted what is still available and from where. She updates the Register when necessary. We have declared it to be a living document and expect it to grow slowly as more old varieties are discovered.

Last year we celebrated our 12th anniversary. Much has been achieved in this time, not the least of which is the reinvigoration of our society. Most of our members

have taken this project to heart and support us actively, sending information about unidentified roses and bud wood from around Aotearoa New Zealand.

Of course none of this happened by chance. From the beginning we embarked on a major education and public relations programme where we travelled the country to promote the cause, published a history of our work as well as articles at home and internationally and have presented at several national and international conferences. Our work is generating interest abroad as a conservation model for groups who are concerned by the loss of other garden varieties.

We recognize that the public collections are paramount in our quest to save and retain heritage roses and to that end are forging strong links with council representatives and managers of botanic gardens around the country, including holding a seminar with managers and making regular visits to their gardens. Our goal is to help them maintain the integrity of their collections by finding the roses they have lost. Daphne Whitfort-Smith, the inspiration for the Timaru Public Rose Species Garden, has a special responsibility for monitoring our donations to the public gardens. I add at least one plant of each variety that is found to the collection at Brandy Hill to help ensure their continued survival. Slowly and surely the lost roses of Aotearoa are being restored to us along with our joy in their rescue.

Heritage roses are, for us, a tangible link with our ancestors and the past. Modern rose enthusiasts desire the beauty of the individual flower and seek the perfect rose. The heritage rose lover's passion is much more emotional and comes from admiring the plant in the landscape, the fragrance and the history. When I gaze upon a flower of 'Maiden's Blush' I know that Henry VIII gazed upon this rose and that Empress Josephine beheld 'Marie Louise' just as I am able to do. When I admire the little Polyanthus 'Orange King', my grandmother is standing beside me.

Though these people have gone, we can gaze upon their portraits, read their stories and sometimes we can hold and smell their roses. If we lose the old roses that survive we will have lost not only their unique beauty and fragrance but a wonderful and tangible part of our history.

Epilogue

The label, *Rosa gallica*, in the public garden bed mesmerises me. I glare resentfully at the large, prickly rose standing behind it, so obviously a canina seedling deposited by a bird and, no doubt, the author of *Rosa gallica's* demise.

I have stood in this place many times since finding this label as if willing a gallica to reappear. *Rosa gallica*, that iconic wild rose from the mountains of France and ancestor of most of the roses we grow today, was never commercially available in New Zealand and

“Heritage roses are, for us, a tangible link with our ancestors and the past... The heritage rose lover's passion is much more emotional and comes from admiring the plant in the landscape, the fragrance and the history.”

Murray Radka of Brandy Hill, Central Otago, is co-founder of the National New Zealand Rose Register, formed to conserve NZ's rose heritage. On four acres of land, called Brandy Hill, he has overcome irrigation challenges and marauding rabbits to plant a remarkable collection of around 1500 roses.

Murray Radka and 'Complicata'



this plant was imported as seed by the botanic garden in which it grew.

Pondering how near and yet so far I am, I resent as well the bird whose call of nature hadn't waited a few seconds longer.

In a moment of insanity I tell myself to go in. It is difficult, painful and exciting as I consider that I may find a living strand of the rose I so desperately seek. I am not disappointed. In the depths of the canina grow a few straggly branches of another rose identifiable by the larger foliage and one, deep pink bud. I scratch around, find a little rooted piece and, unable to turn around, make my way out backwards.

Finally standing, torn and dishevelled, I find myself face to face with three elegant matrons carefully dressed and coiffed, their eyes wide and mouths ajar. They have come, no doubt, for a leisurely garden stroll and then to take tea at the pavilion. They have not expected to meet “the wild man from Borneo”.

I fear that they may scream, faint or both but instead they take off, the one on a stick well in the lead, her dignity and arthritis out the window in one fell swoop.

Relieved, I turn to leave, my eyes making contact with an old man resting on a park bench. He gives me a slow, grateful smile and tells me that this is the best entertainment he has experienced in a long while.

A visit to Brandy Hill

Jane Forbes and Noeline Smith recount their pleasure at meeting Murray's roses.

Brandy Hill is steeped in history. Legend has it that a wagon carrying barrels of brandy to the Otago goldfields in the 19th century overturned negotiating the rough and difficult terrain down the hill and some of the barrels burst. Conscientious folk appeared from nowhere and reluctant to sanction waste felt it their duty to imbibe as much of the precious liquid as possible before it was lost. Later reports described a party of monumental proportions and as a result the grateful participants christened the hill "Brandy".

Brandy Hill is not designed to be a colour co-ordinated "pretty" garden. It is a "Collection" – more like a library of fine works, a celebration. And it's *our* New Zealand part of that story.

Murray has grouped all his treasures into their families, growing them in natural settings on the hillsides surrounded by woodlands. To the north of the house is the Rugosa hill, then down to the Hybrid Musks. On a bit further is the Early Settlers' Garden and further still, to the Gallicas and Noisettes.

Though I likened it to a library, it's not row upon row of roses. There are places for your brain to

“It is like walking through the pages of a rose encyclopaedia”

rest and digest. There are places to sit, take in the views and listen to the bird song.

Murray is still full of ideas. He sweeps his arm around and says: “Over here we have the forebears of today's roses, and along here we will have the progression of their development, ending in... our modern roses.”

On the hills behind the house, are the Asian and American species gardens. A bit further along, on the same level, are the old Hybrid Tea, Polyantha and European species gardens. Down the hill, through the little archways are the Hybrid Perpetuals, and Albas – with 'Rambling Rector' and 'Paul's Himalayan Musk' disappearing skyward, up some massive, vintage poplars.

And still the path meanders on, around the hill to the Damasks and Portlands side by side, and above them are the Centifolias and Mosses. And still Murray is talking, telling us stories, repeatedly complaining about the plagues of rabbits. And now

we have the Scots roses' garden and beyond that, the Bourbons.

It is like walking through the pages of a rose encyclopaedia and I haven't even mentioned all the different species gardens yet.

These roses were once loved and cherished, some travelled, via potato, to the far ends of the earth to remind settlers of a homeland many knew they would never see again. So, are we the generation that is going to turn our backs on them?

Murray has 29 Albas, but you can only readily get eight now. Brandy Hill has 58 Hybrid Musks but not even half are in the catalogues. The same is true for the 57 Chinas and 51 Gallicas. There are only about 27 Teas in the catalogues but here, there are 69. The list makes depressing reading. Or does it? Brandy Hill still has them; they are not lost forever – yet.

If one man can have a vision and produce a magnificent collection, a living memorial for all those roses that were once treasured, and still have the passion to help others, imagine what Brandy Hill could become if it were recognized as "significant" and Murray was able to access some of the help he so richly deserves.

Selling roses to the Empress Josephine



Martin Stott

“Famously, during the Napoleonic wars when the British navy was leading a blockade of French ports, the trade embargo was temporarily lifted to allow roses to pass through to her from the Lee & Kennedy nursery in London.”

Any history of roses in France will unfailingly mention the importance of the Empress Josephine and her collection at Malmaison – the château on the outskirts of Paris that she bought in 1799, while her husband, Napoleon, was attempting to conquer Egypt.

Famously, during the Napoleonic wars when the British navy was leading a blockade of French ports, the trade embargo was temporarily lifted to allow roses to pass through to her from the Lee & Kennedy nursery in London.

More recent writers on the rose have challenged the idea that Josephine brought together within the grounds at Malmaison the biggest collection of roses of her time. Or that her patronage of the artist Pierre Joseph Redouté – official “Flower-Painter to the Empress” – inspired him to make his masterly collection of rose paintings, three years after her death in 1814¹.

They point out that the Empress’s interests were far wider than roses. But receipts from nurseries demonstrate that she undoubtedly grew very many at Malmaison. Josephine – who was born Marie-Josèphe-Rose Tascher de La Pagerie, and who until her marriage





Joséphine at Malmaison in 1801 by François Gérard.

to Napoleon was generally known as “Rose” – may have not had the most comprehensive rose collection in France, but it was still one of the biggestⁱⁱ.

Vincent Derkenne estimates that Josephine bought as many as 1500 from one supplier alone. That man was André Dupont (1742-1817).

Derkenne has spent a decade trawling through the French National and Senate archives, meticulously researching Dupont, whom he describes as a *rosimane* – a French term meaning “keen rose enthusiast”. He published a biography in 2020.

Derkenne is a guest speaker at the forthcoming WFRS International Heritage Rose Conference in Brussels. He will tell the story of Dupont and also of his own discovery of Dupont’s forgotten rose herbarium.

About Dupont

Dupont’s family were employed as servants to French aristocracy, a career path he followed himself. In 1779 he was appointed caretaker of the Palais du Luxembourg – a role akin to chief steward – in the employ of the Comte de Provence (the future King Louis XVIII).

Through this role he came to know many leading Parisian gardeners and nurserymen and in 1785, then aged 43, he leased a plot of land close to the Palais to nurse a fledgling passion for gardening.



Above:
Rosa orientalis
A.Dupont ex Ser.

Overleaf:
'Rosa simplicifolia
Persica' Herb.
MNHN

Images: Vincent Derkenne

“In 1796 Dupont took up the challenge of building an *école de roses* – a scientifically classified collection of all known specimens.”

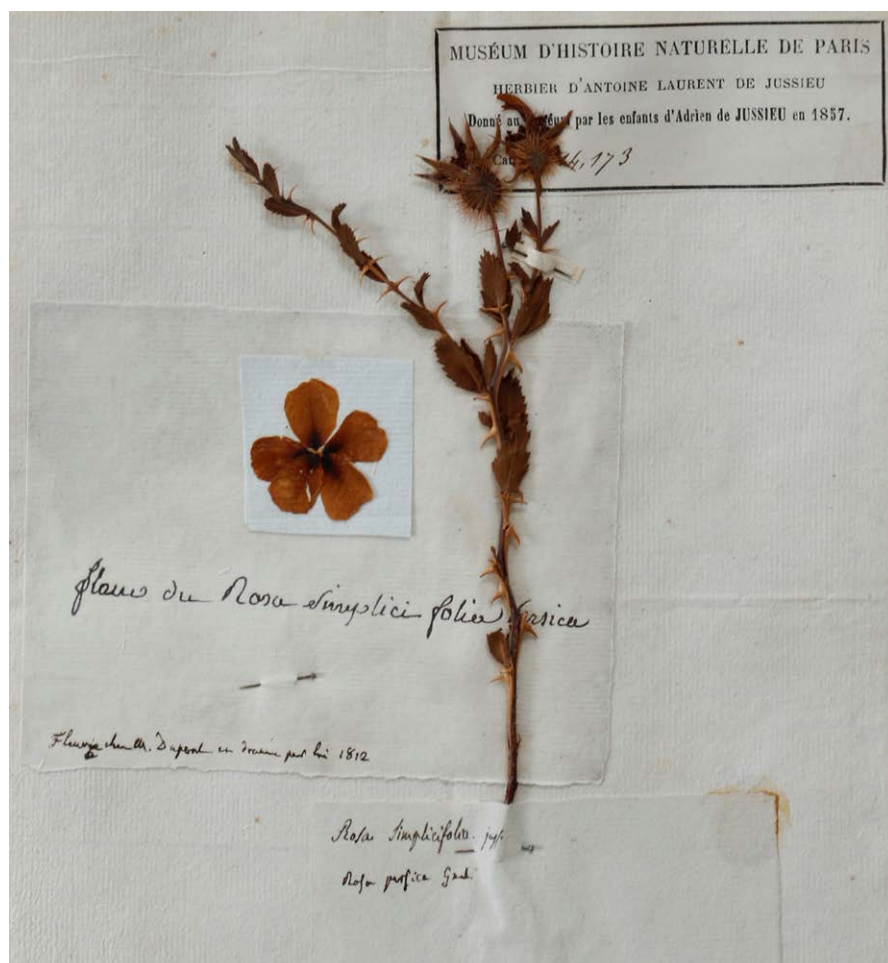
Waiting on French aristocracy took on a double meaning for Dupont, who could also wait several years to be paid by them. It meant his finances were seldom stable. This, combined with the ever-changing face of Paris, meant he was forced to move his garden several times over his lifetime.

In 1780, he secured a new second job with the Post Office and in 1782 was promoted. This was a job that offered a regular and relatively good salary. And it came with a handy perk that proved useful in helping him fulfil a later ambition.

In 1796 Dupont took up the challenge of building an *école de roses* – a scientifically classified collection of all known specimens. His role with the French post office meant he could send packages free of charge to fellow collectors in the Netherlands, England and Italy in exchange for their gifts. But he was also interested in creating new roses.

Rose breeding

Sexual reproduction in plants had been recognised since the end of the 17th century. The English physician, Nehemiah Grew, first proposed a sexual theory of plant reproduction in 1684. Thomas Fairchild’s experiments crossing Sweet William and Carnation are known to have been made as early as 1717, and Philip Miller described insect pollination by observations on tulips before 1721ⁱⁱⁱ. But even as late as 1870,



dog-rose roots and then disseminating them. He earned the respect of fellow naturalists from the Enlightenment period.

“He was also the first to attempt a scientific classification of the genus *Rosa* – a simple list of rose names, without descriptions, but a precursor to later classifications.”

Derkenne suggests that Dupont may have been the first to create roses as standards and that Kennedy probably bought some from him after seeing them at Malmaison.

The Josephine connection

In 1799 Bonaparte was appointed First Consul. For three months he and Josephine lived in the Palais du Petit Luxembourg, close to Dupont's garden. Derkenne surmises that it is likely that she visited him – as many gardening enthusiasts did – to view his unique collection.

when the English rose breeder Henry Bennett began visiting rose breeders in France, he could see little evidence that they were doing anything other than relying on the wind and insects to cross pollinate^{iv}.

A number of authors in the 20th century have claimed Dupont was an early exponent of the art of selective pollination of roses by hand.^v Derkenne hesitates to go so far.

He says: “At the time botanists were only interested in natural

varieties – the species roses. For them flowers were an object of study and scientific classification. For Dupont they were also an object of aesthetic delight. He was a pioneer who applied a scientific approach to breeding roses intentionally for the pleasure of garden owners.

“We do not know if he hand-pollinated but what we can say with certainty is that Dupont sowed rose seeds and showed a particular interest in mutations and abnormalities, fixing some of these through grafting onto

By now this was a business as well as a hobby. From 1803 we know that Josephine was ordering Dupont's roses for the Malmaison estate (though accounts show she would take at least a year to pay).

Dupont's collection continued to grow. In 1814, now 72 and forced to retire from the post office, he exchanged one set of his *école* of 537 different roses for a small state pension. Each rose was on its own roots and doubled with a specimen grafted on to dog-rose roots. They were planted at the Palais du Luxembourg. Under the

care of its director Alexandre Hardy, it became the foundation of what was then Europe's largest collection of roses. It is believed that a second *école* was later sold to Louis Claude Noisette for his own extensive collection of roses.

The herbarium

In keeping with his scientific approach to studying the genus *Rosa*, Dupont kept a rose herbarium – a collection of preserved plant specimens, pressed, dried and mounted. Little has been published about this herbarium, so it was a surprise to Derkenne when, in the spring of 2013, while studying the National Archives, he found the minutes of a meeting of the Professors' Assembly of the National Museum of Natural History.

Dated February 16, 1814, the minutes note: "M. Dupont, owner of a collection of roses, offers a herbarium of rose varieties and a plant of the *Rosa monophyla*^{vi}. M. Desfontaines is invited to thank M. Dupont on behalf of the administration."

Derkenne was astonished. He says: "I felt certain that these plates of dry specimens were still present somewhere within these venerable buildings. Nothing is lost in a museum. All we had to do was look for them. Fortunately, at the time there was a campaign to digitise the collections of the National Herbarium, which made it possible to bring together folders that were sometimes scattered in cupboards within different



1. Château de Malmaison near Paris
2. 'Manteau Pourpre' syn. 'Pontiana'
3. *Rosa × dupontii* Déségl.

Images: Vincent Derkenne and Pedro Faber/Creative Commons

“In keeping with his scientific approach to studying the genus *Rosa*, Dupont kept a rose herbarium – a collection of preserved plant specimens, pressed, dried and mounted.”

departments. It took some time but eventually the staff became enthused by the thought of the *vieil herbier de roses du Muséum*.”

On April 9, 2015, Derkenne was invited to the museum. He says: “Staff brought out three boxes of herbarium plates, all dedicated to roses, dated from the beginning of the 19th century. We looked at the plates, especially some with long handwritten notes. I could not hold back my emotion. It was the handwriting of our old friend André Dupont. There was no doubt about it. It was his collection.”

Legacy

In the years following his death Dupont was regularly cited in literature on roses. Derkenne says: “To date, I have found 73 works in which he is mentioned between 1802 and 1817, and



almost 100 over the following 20 years. The three magnificent books, *Les Roses*, by Redouté and Thory, first published in 1817, 1821 and 1824, mention Dupont 53 times. The authors dedicated a rose to him in the second volume. So, one cannot say his contribution went unnoticed, but in the course of time his memory has rather faded. I wanted to correct that.

“André Dupont was the great precursor to the important period of rose breeding that followed in France. He was an experimental gardener and a pioneer. He collected and distributed roses, he propagated them by seed, and helped popularise roses as ornamental garden plants, inspiring and helping fellow breeders and enthusiasts across Europe.”

- i. *The Rose*, by Jennifer Potter, published 2010 p. 190 and *The men and the myths of Empress Josephine’s Garden*, Darrell G.H. Schramm, *Historic Rose Journal* Spring 2020
- ii. The respected French scholar François Joyaux says that all her roses were grown in pots. Some were displayed around the grounds when in bloom, but there was never a rose garden.
- iii. Discovery of Sexuality in Plants. *Nature* 131, 392 (1933). <https://doi.org/10.1038/131392b0>
- iv. *The Makers of Heavenly Roses*, by Jack Harkness p.23 1985
- v. The first of these was Mrs Frederick Love Keays in *Old Roses*, published 1935.
- vi. *Rosa monophylla* is a synonym of *Rosa persica*

Vincent Derkenne’s book, “*André Dupont 1742-1817 – Un Palais et des Roses* is available through amazon.fr ISBN: 978-2-322-23774-6 €32.80 (hardback); an abridged paperback summary of key passages in English is also available for €3.68.



Vincent Derkenne is a historic rose lover with a passion for rediscovering the often astonishing lives and work of French gardeners of the 18th and 19th centuries.

For over 12 years he has been poring over archives in France and beyond, researching influential figures like André Dupont (1742-1817), Louis-Toussaint Charpentier (1759-1833), head gardener of the Luxembourg gardens in Paris, Julien-Alexandre Hardy (1787-1876) who succeeded him, and Philippe-Stanislas Noisette (1773-1835), whose name is associated with the origin of the Noisette roses.



B. J. Redouté

Rosa Gallica Aureliamensis.

My Encounter with Pierre- Joseph Redouté

Charles Quest-Ritson

All rose-lovers know about Pierre-Joseph Redouté (1759–1840), whose watercolour roses are still admired and loved 200 years after they were painted. He was court artist to Queen Marie Antoinette and, later, to both wives of Emperor Napoleon I, Joséphine de Beauharnais and Marie Louise of Austria. He made his career in Paris, where his artistic skills and his personal charm helped him to acquire influential patrons. The French call him ‘the Raphael of flowers’.

Redouté was born in Saint-Hubert, in the Belgian province of Luxembourg, at that time part of the Spanish Netherlands. However, his achievements will not be the subject of any of the lectures lined up for June’s forthcoming convention in Brussels. It is appropriate, nonetheless, to remember that Redouté may be counted among Belgium’s greatest flower-painters and that he was, undoubtedly, the most skilled watercolourist of them

all. His continued popularity is proof enough.

In 2010, Sothebys in London were asked to sell 52 original Redouté watercolours of roses, some of them among the best-known originals of the lithographs that remain so popular today. It was generally believed among rose-historians that the original 170 watercolours from which Redouté’s lithographs were made had all been destroyed when the Palais des Tuileries was burned to the ground during the Paris Commune in 1871. So my first surprise was to learn that any of them had survived through to 2010. Sotheby’s historical research was impeccable, and they were able to put together the whole story of how it was that these important masterpieces had escaped destruction by passing out of the collections of the French royal family much earlier in the 19th century.

Redouté’s *Les Roses* were printed in three volumes between 1817

“Redouté’s *Les Roses* were printed in three volumes between 1817 and 1824. He had hoped to retain the original watercolours for himself, but was forced to sell them in straightened circumstances in 1828.”

1



2



3



4



and 1824. He had hoped to retain the original watercolours for himself, but was forced to sell them in straightened circumstances in 1828. They were bought by the French king, Charles X, as a present for his widowed daughter-in-law, Marie Caroline, Duchesse de Berry. After the July Revolution of 1830, the duchess fled to England, taking her paintings with her, and all 170 were offered for sale in the auction house of a Mr Evans in Pall Mall, London, in March 1831. The top bid of £420 did not meet the reserve, so the paintings were withdrawn and returned to the duchess. She retained them at her house in Venice, where she lived in exile later in life, until she sold them to her sister, the Empress Teresa Cristina of Brazil, in 1854. After her death, they passed by descent to the Empress's daughter Isabel, Princess Imperial of Brazil, and her grandson Prince Pierre d'Orléans-Bragance. When he died in 1940 – or possibly after the death of his widow Princesse Élisabeth in 1951 – the paintings were sold to the 2nd Lord Hesketh, and it was his trustees who sent them to Sotheby's in 2010.

Sotheby's asked me to help them to write their catalogue by commenting on the individual paintings and setting them in the more general context of rose-growing at the time. I told them that the great expert on

“They all have a high degree of botanical accuracy and realism – the leaves, stems and prickles are always exquisite”

the period was Professor François Joyaux – I thought he was much better qualified to write about Redouté's roses than I was – but Sotheby's said that they wanted an English consultant, so I agreed to help out and duly delivered a 2,000-word essay on the background to Redouté's success as a painter of roses. I also studied the individual paintings at Sotheby's offices in London and, later, on a hi-res CD of them all. This was a fascinating exercise; the quality of the paintings was in general even higher than the well-known prints, though some were better done than others. I noticed, for example, that they all have a high degree of botanical accuracy and realism – the leaves, stems and prickles are always exquisite – but the quality of the flowers is variable; not all stamens have filaments and not all filaments lead to an anther. And sometimes the flowers lack depth. Some of the single-flowered species were quite stunningly beautiful, though not as attractive horticulturally or commercially as better-known cultivars with flowers full of petals. I also noted that all the paintings carried pin marks at their corners where they been held on a board for lithographing. And all of them were held within two immensely handsome Morocco folders embossed in gold with the royal arms of the Duchesse de Berry.

I wondered what sort of prices the watercolours would fetch, bearing in mind that the auction also listed some highly desirable printed books, including Audubon's *Birds of America* and a first folio edition of Shakespeare's plays. In the event, there seemed to be two serious bidders for Redouté's watercolours and they were joined on occasions by a third. Almost all the lots exceeded their estimates but it was noticeable that the prettier paintings went for higher prices than the more botanical single-flowered ones. Some of these were sold in pairs and it was here, relatively speaking, that a bargain might be found. The highest bid was £265,250 for 'Quatre Saisons' but the presence of a persistent under-bidder meant that the total price raised for the 52 paintings was £2.7m, against a high estimate before the auction of £1.9m – Sotheby's were thrilled. But the surprise was to learn that, in the event, all the paintings, together with the fine leather folders, had been bought by the same person. That person's identity remains a secret, but rumours on the sale-room floor suggested that he or she was neither European nor American.

After the auction, some French friends of ours mentioned that they, too, owned some of Redouté's original watercolours of roses which they showed us when we stayed with them on our way south to Provence. But they have not been tempted to sell them. They prefer, instead, to retain them and enjoy them, as indeed I had seen them, nicely framed and hung on the wall outside our bedroom.

1. *Rosa gallica* 'Versicolor'
2. *Rosa* x *l'héritierana*
3. *Rosa* 'Caryophyllea'
4. *Rosa indica* 'Fragrans'



Lens introduced 'Lens Fleur' in 2020, to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the foundation of the nursery. It is a striking and attractive multi-coloured climbing rose, bred from the Hybrid Musk 'Kathleen' [Pemberton, 1922] × 'Warm Welcome' [Warner, 1996].

Image: Ann Velle-Boudolf

Drawing on the past – the Lens Nursery

The Lens Nursery in Belgium was opened by Louis Lens senior in 1870. It has a rich tradition of breeding roses, which has continued under the energetic management of Rudy and Ann Velle. No other European breeder draws so deeply on old roses for the development of new introductions. Ann will deliver a lecture at the forthcoming WFRS heritage rose conference in Brussels. Here she shares the history of the nursery and some of its creations.



**Ann Velle-
Boudolf**

Louis Lens (1924-2001) grew up in the plant nursery belonging to his father Victor at Onze-Lieve-Vrouw-Waver, a village near Mechelen close to the main road between Brussels and Antwerp. His grandfather Louis Lens senior (1848-1923) had started it off as a tree nursery in 1870. Right from the beginning, he had a special interest in the production of roses and, by 1900, some 500,000 rose rootstocks were planted annually for the wholesale trade. Louis Lens's eldest son, Emile, joined the business in 1903, followed by Victor and Henri in 1905.

This marked a new era for the Louis Lens nurseries. By 1930, the firm extended to 100 hectares (250 acres), of which 28 hectares were dedicated to roses, with an annual turnover of 1,500,000 rose plants. The rose collection included 900 varieties. Victor started hybridizing roses and created some remarkable Hybrid Teas, such as orange-pink 'Cardinal Mercier' [1930], yellow 'Président Van Oost' [1934], elegant 'Orange Schoon' [1938] (a sport of 'Katharine Pechtold') and pure white 'Madame Louis Lens' syn. 'White Briarcliff' [1932], which became

an international best-seller. It was grown as a cut rose throughout the US and in the south of France and along the Italian Riviera for the markets of Paris and northern Europe.

By 1936, the Lens nursery had its own rose garden, open to visitors, with 45,000 roses. Hybrid Teas were the most important roses at that time but, during World War II, Victor discovered a pink sport of the Polyantha 'Orange Triumph' which he introduced in 1945 as 'Princesse Joséphine Charlotte'.

Post-war challenges

It took several years for production to get back on track after the war. It was difficult to obtain enough rootstocks and the collection had to be built up again. When Victor's son, young Louis, joined the company in 1946 he was tasked to find the lost grafting material again. He contacted old customers asking if they still had the cultivars. If so, he went to visit and collect the budwood. And thus the collection was slowly re-assembled. In the course of his searches, as well as

Hybrid Teas, Louis learned a lot about botanical and old roses and developed a preference for them. Through Kew Gardens he was able to reintroduce the roses ‘Ballerina’ and ‘The Fairy’ into the product range.

Louis was asked by his father to take over the hybridisation work – specifically to create new and fragrant Hybrid Teas. He released his first hybrid in 1954, the strongly scented pink Floribunda ‘Papillon Rose’. During his long career, from 1947 to 2000, he introduced about 170 roses. His most famous were rich red ‘Dame de Coeur’ syn. ‘Ace of Hearts’ [1958], ‘Pascali’ – inducted into the WFRS ‘Hall of Fame’ in 1991 – and the Floribunda ‘Maria Mathilda’ white, with sometimes a hint of palest pink in the centre, which he named after his wife in 1980.

In 1969, Victor passed away and Louis Lens took over the business. From then on, he was able to develop in the direction of his own choice. Louis wanted to create something different, moving away from the classic Hybrid Teas. From Baroness Gisèle de la Roche in the late 1950s he received *Rosa wichurana* var. *yakachinensis* syn. *R. luciae* subsp. *onoei* from Yakushima Island. He began crossing with this rose and *R. multiflora* var. *adenochaeta* in the mid-1960s. This led to the creation of ‘Pink Spray’ [1980], ‘White Spray’ [1980], ‘Tapis Volant’ [1982], ‘Green Snake’ [1984], and others.

His love for ‘Ballerina’, ‘Buff Beauty’, ‘Prosperity’, ‘Moonlight’ and the

other Hybrid Musks inspired Louis in the 1970s to study Joseph Pemberton’s roses and create new Hybrid Musks. His crosses with ‘Trier’ [Kordes, 1904], *R. multiflora* var. *adenochaeta* and ‘Robin Hood’ [Pemberton, 1927], resulted in a whole series of varieties, 67 of them, coming on the market from 1979 onwards, including his composer series: four of the best, all introduced in 1984, are pink-and-white, single ‘Puccini’; darker pink-and-white, single ‘Schubert’; purple-pink, semi-double ‘Sibelius’; and lilac-pink, semi-double ‘Verdi’.

Creating new from old

Almost all Lens’s Hybrid Musks have large clusters of small, musk-scented flowers and grow typically to about 1.5m (5 ft). But the variations among them are numerous. Single, white ‘Matchball’ [1991], for example, has a strong musk scent, and it picks up a pink tinge as it ages. ‘Alden Biesen’ [1996] reaches two metres and holds its very large clusters of pink-and-marzipan-coloured flowers upright – they fade to green and are produced in great abundance, too. The simple, pink-and-white flowers of ‘Frisson Frais’ [1987] are borne on a notably bushy plant, while the single flowers of ‘Françoise Drion’ [1995] are an unusually dark pink with white centres, and Rosalita’ [1997], which flowers continually from May until the first frosts of autumn, has truly cream-coloured flowers that fade to white. Many have flowers in varying degrees of doubleness: ‘Neige d’Été’ [1991] is creamy-white and almost thornless, while pale pink ‘Bouquet Parfait’



1. ‘Tapis Volant’ [Lens, 1982]
2. ‘Sibelius’ [Lens, 1984]
3. ‘Dame de Coeur’ [Lens, 1958]
4. ‘Maria Mathilda’ [Lens, 1980]
5. *multiflora* var. *adenochaeta*

Images: Charles Quest-Ritson

“Louis wanted to create something different, moving away from the classic Hybrid Teas.”



[1989] is so double that its flowers seem to be almost artificial in their perfection of form. ‘Waterloo’ [1996] is another good double, with rather an upright habit and white flowers. And there are climbers among them, too. Two are of exceptional beauty: first, ‘Plaisanterie’ [1996] which is a cross between ‘Trier’ and ‘Mutabilis’, with clusters of flowers that open buff-coloured and turn to pink, and, second, ‘Guirlande d’Amour’ [1993], the most famous variety without doubt, whose semi-double white flowers are borne in amazing abundance. Each of these Hybrid Musks has a distinct individual character and charm – and all of them are reliably repeat-flowering.

Louis Lens’s love for wild roses led him to experiment with roses like *Rosa bracteata*, resulting in remarkable re-blooming roses. These include ‘Pink Surprise’ [1987] with fresh white flowers with a touch of pink (and pink stamens, too), ‘White Surprise’ [1987] whose white flowers have a circlet of long, greenish stamens, and ‘Jelena de Belder’ [1996] with medium-sized, white flowers that are lightly scented. Lens also created the re-blooming ‘Porcelaine de Chine’ [1996] a hybrid of *R. arvensis* whose abundance of double flowers is spectacular in dry climates, the beautiful rambling rose ‘Louis’ Rambler’ (a cross between *R. brunonii* and *R. multiflora* var. *adenochaeta* with white fragrant flowers and conspicuous hips in autumn), and ‘Pink Mystery’ (1997), which is mysterious because it is re-blooming, despite its unusual parentage, a highly original cross

“Louis Len’s love for wild roses led him to experiment with roses like *Rosa bracteata*, resulting in remarkable re-blooming roses.”

between *R. stellata* var. *mirifica* and a seedling of *R. bracteata* × *R. nutkana*.

But Louis Lens released many innovative new roses bred from other species. These include the *R. helenae* hybrids ‘Pink Robin’ [1992] and handsome ‘Red Robin’ [1992], both once-flowering but very abundant shrubs or ramblers up to 2m high. ‘Pleine de Grâce’ [1984] is even taller at 3m – a hybrid of *R. filipes* with spectacular hips in autumn. Popular ‘Dentelle de Malines’ [1986] is also a hybrid of *R. filipes*, while ‘Dentelle de Bruxelles’ [1988] was bred from the cultivar known as ‘Kiftsgate’. For ‘Dentelle de Bruges’ [1991], however, Lens went back to the early 20th-century ramblers, bred from *R. multiflora* and *R. wichurana*, as parents for a tall double-flowered shrub or short Rambler. In conclusion, therefore, Louis Lens applied remarkable innovation to the rose family and raised new varieties, most notably his old-style Hybrid Musks, completely independently of trends and fashions.

Fresh blood

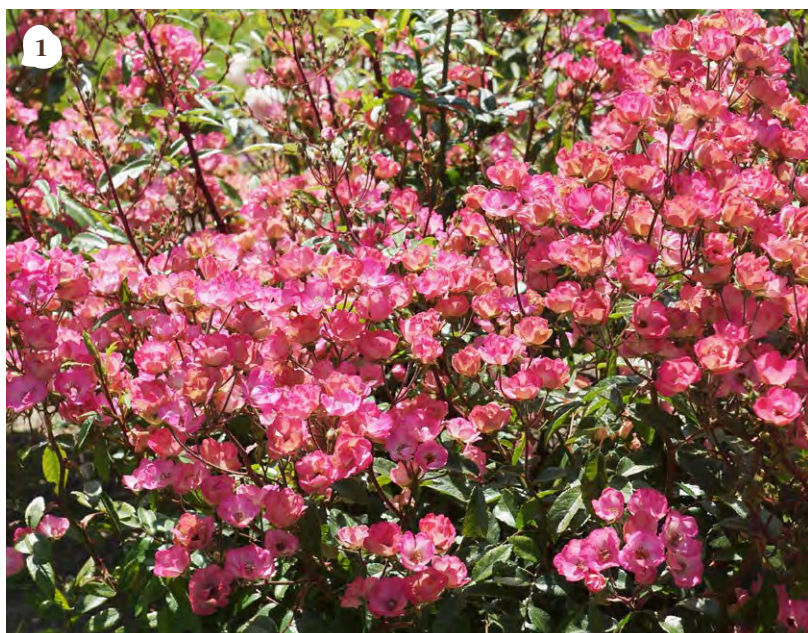
In 1984 my husband, Rudy Velle, started business as a garden and landscape architect, alongside a

small nursery of roses, at Oudenburg, inland from Ostend and the coast of Belgium. He and I fell in love with roses during a visit to the rose garden of Maurice Vergote and Mia Gevaert near Bruges. There we found a collection of old and species roses together with Louis Lens’s ‘Pink Spray’ and ‘White Spray’.

Our first catalogue consisted mainly of old roses, Hybrid Musks from Pemberton and Lambert, climbing roses, and rose species. Only a few Hybrid Teas and cluster-flowered modern roses were included. At about that time we also developed a good relationship with Louis Lens, who supplied his new roses to us.

By the end of the 1980s, the old Lens rose nursery at Onze-Lieve-Vrouw-Waver was looking for new and enterprising people to continue its tradition of breeding and growing the best garden roses. Since we shared Louis Lens’s love for Hybrid Musks, it was a natural decision for us to take over and continue his nursery. Roses became our passion and life, following in the tracks of Louis Lens. Our catalogue soon reached 800 varieties, including lesser-known wild and old roses.

I started hybridising and was especially interested in raising new Hybrid Musks. Nevertheless, Louis, Rudy and I realised that the market was not yet ready for shrubs with small, single, or semi-double flowers. Most people still wanted large, fully double roses, though they preferred a



1. 'Alden Biesen' [Lens, 1996]
2. 'Bouquet Parfait' [Lens, 1989]
3. 'Guirlande d'Amour' [Lens, 1993]
4. 'Dentelle de Malines' [Lens, 1986]
5. 'Pink Surprise' [Lens, 1987]
6. 'Pleine de Grâce' [Lens, 1984]

Images: Charles Quest-Ritson

more natural shape for rose bushes.

‘Natural’ look

In 2020 we observed a shift in customers’ preferences towards long-lasting, fragrant, and low-maintenance roses that create a ‘wow’ effect with the abundance of their blooms, reminiscent of the old-fashioned roses. Moreover, today’s customers, especially the younger generation, expect a more natural look to their roses. They want to be able to pick flowers and hips for their bouquets while also contributing to the ecosystem by attracting bees with nectar and pollen. And they like the thought that roses produce rosehips in the autumn, which attract birds to their garden.

These aspects are now very much in the spotlight, and the rose is no longer considered a demanding

“Today’s customers, especially the younger generation, expect a more natural look to their roses. They want to be able to pick flowers and hips for their bouquets while also contributing to the ecosystem by attracting bees with nectar and pollen.”

plant that must be flawless in terms of its foliage and shape. Instead, it is seen as a sustainable plant that can grow naturally and loosely, while also giving something back to Nature. For this reason, the Hybrid Musks from Lens Roses, along with rose species and their hybrids, are highly suitable and popular choices.

1. ‘Lampion’ [Velle, 2013]
2. ‘Dinky’ [Velle, 2009]



Since 2002, Rudy and I have introduced several new hybrids of modern cluster-flowered and shrub roses, such as the deliciously fragrant and re-blooming ‘Caroline’s Heart’ [2016], dark orange-pink ‘Park Abbey Rose’ [2021] which was bred from a rose raised by David Austin in England crossed with an orange Floribunda, red ‘Milhem Pemberton’ [2018] which fades to carmine-pink, the orange Floribunda ‘Marc’s Jubilee’ [2018] which is also in the style of David Austin, and the Floribunda ‘Folle Framboise’ [2020], whose flower-power colour, mainly raspberry, turns slowly to pink. Other roses

bred by us include: ‘Lampion’ [2013], a hybrid of *R. roxburghii* with spectacular hips that are delicious to candy; ‘Jean de Bruges’ [2020], a re-blooming shrub with carnation-shaped flowers which is a cross between *R. stellata* var. *mirifica* and *R. rugosa*; and the shrubby climber ‘Gardens of Hex’ which is another descendant of *R. multiflora* var. *adenochaeta*. And, as groundcovers, we introduced ‘Snow Star’ [2008], whose glossy leaves reveal its *R. wichurana* ancestry and pink ‘Fil des Saisons’ [2003] both of which reflower well, with large clusters of single flowers and lots of rosehips.

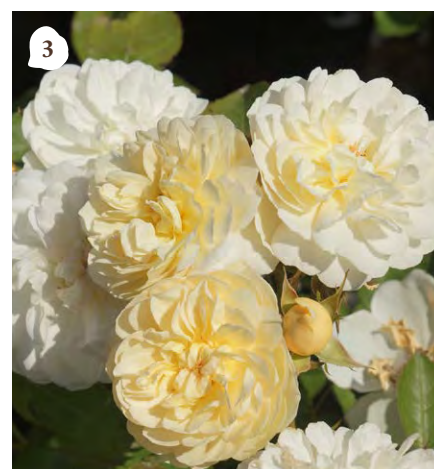
We have also introduced a further 18 new Hybrid Musks, including: double-flowered, deep fuchsia pink and thornless ‘Dinky’ [2009]; very double, light pink ‘Prince Charles de Luxembourg’ [2020] whose large clusters make an ideal cut flower; creamy, double-flowered ‘Château de Munsbach’ [2018], named for the castle in Luxembourg; light pink, double-flowered ‘Jean Stephenne’ [2006], a lusty grower; ‘La Feuillerie’ [2012], with pale yellow flowers that fade to cream; single-flowered ‘Poppy Rose’ [2014], whose dark red flowers recall the poppies of Flanders in World War I; and our latest introductions deep pink, semi-double ‘Millie Fleur’ [2022], ‘Fille du Vent’ [2022] whose graceful, single flowers open to cream and fade to white, and ‘Finn’s Rose’ [2022] with coral-pink, semi-double clusters held on long stems that make good cut flowers. And, as with all our roses, each of our recent

introductions brings something new and different to the overall spectrum of what we offer.

Nowadays, both Louis Lens’s roses and our own are recognised as a resource for contemporary rose-breeders keen to discover the mysteries and the possibilities that lie within them. In our 2500m² rose garden, you can see most of these varieties. Meanwhile we design rose gardens and advise clients on the best choices for their borders, shipping plants all over Europe and beyond. ‘Lens Roses’ remains, after 152 years, at the heart of Belgian rose-growing.

Ann Velle-Boudolf is Belgium’s leading rose-breeder. Co-owner of the historic Lens Roses, alongside partner Rudy Velle, she runs the sales department and the company’s breeding programme. Each year Ann introduces one to three new creations.

1. ‘Jean Stéphenne’ [Velle, 2005]
2. ‘Poppy Rose’ [Velle, 2014]
3. ‘La Feuillerie’ [Velle, 2012]



Images: Charles Quest-Ritson



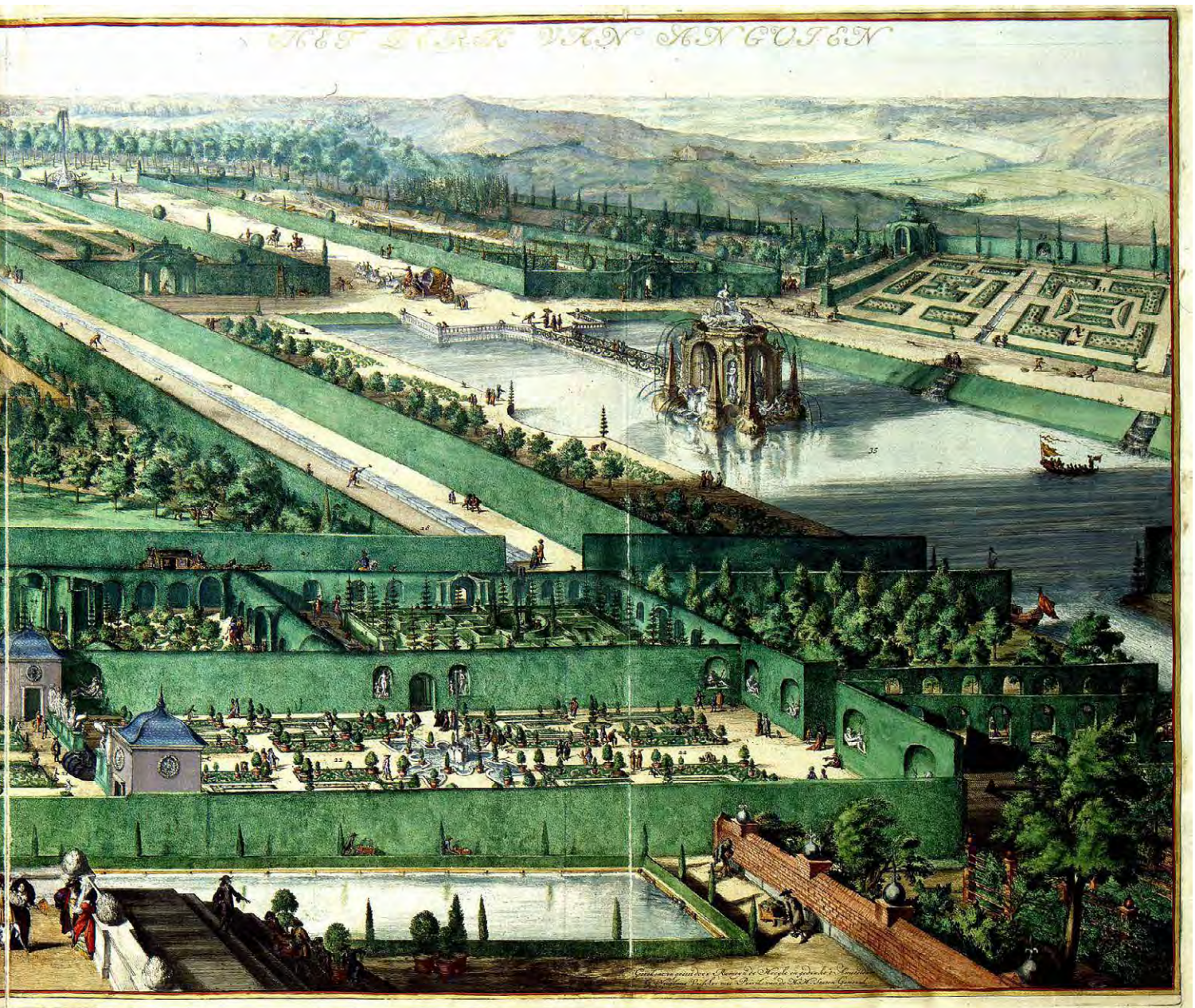
**Charles
Quest-Ritson**

Louis Parmentier [1782-1847] was one of Belgium's most distinguished rose-breeders – passionate about roses. Through his contacts with the greatest rose growers of the day, he built up a collection of European reputation at Kloosterberg in Hérinnes, some 3 km from Enghien. He also bred hundreds of new roses himself, including 'Belle Isis', 'Félicité Parmentier', 'Cardinal de Richelieu' and 'Tricolore de Flandre'. Delegates to the Heritage Rose Convention in Brussels will have the option to visit

his birthplace and see his roses at Enghien on 8 June.

The problem

When he died, he left more than 12,000 plants of 3,000 varieties. His widow, Marie-Désirée Pletincx, did not share her husband's enthusiasm for collecting roses and breeding new ones, so she hastened to put them up for sale. The auction catalogue mentions 250 varieties which had not yet received a name. Unfortunately,



however, there was no time to include descriptions of the individual roses. Most of Parmentier's seedlings were named by the people who bought them. And a fair number of Europe's 'found' roses are probably the result of Parmentier's hybridisation. So, the question is: which are the old roses that may safely be attributed to Louis Parmentier and which are not?

Auction catalogue of Parmentier's roses

This is how the auction particulars described the collection:

'This magnificent collection, unique perhaps in Belgium, consists of more than 12,000 rose plants collected from all corners of the globe by the late Mr. Louis Parmentier, a wealthy amateur and brother of the famous horticulturist of that name [Joseph Parmentier]. His considerable fortune was devoted for a quarter of a century to enriching his collection with all the novelties that the numerous contacts of the deceased could help him to acquire, often at considerable cost... This amateur collection therefore contains a large quantity of new flowers which are not on the market, as well as a very rich and special collection coming from the innumerable crossings made over the past 20 years by the deceased and composed of

855 plants of the first order, of which 800 varieties have never left his gardens. All great rose-lovers... know what efforts the deceased made to enrich his collection of new roses and to suppress seedlings of secondary merit. [Some of the seedlings are still unnamed so] the purchasers will be able to name them themselves with the complete certainty that they are magnificent flowers and indisputable novelties. The roses can be seen and visited from 20 June 1847, but it is strictly forbidden to touch the flowers... The sale will take place on the lawn of the garden where the roses are located. In the event of rain, we will meet in the garden pavilion.'

Modern research

It was another Belgian, Frans Mertens, who started to research Parmentier and his roses in the 1980s. Mertens was for many years editor of *Rosa belgica*, for which he wrote regularly. He was also a member of the jury for the Concours de Roses at Rœulx. His researches into Parmentier's roses took him to L'Hay-les-Roses in Paris and Sangerhausen in Germany at a time when access to East Germany was difficult for westerners. He also worked in the Philipp Franz von Siebold archives in Leiden and in the Adolph Otto archives



1. Parmentier memorial in Enghien rose-garden
2. 'Moïse' [Parmentier, 1828]
3. A corner of Professor François Joyaux's rose collection at Cour de Commer, Mayenne
4. 'Rose Schelfhout' [Parmentier, 1840]



Images: Charles Quest-Ritson and Cercle Royal Archéologique d'Enghien



“A fair number of Europe’s ‘found’ roses are probably the result of Parmentier’s hybridisation.”

will bring up the Mertens’s article: http://www.crae.be/article_May2014_2.asp

Mertens’s researches marked the beginning of modern research into Parmentier and his importance to the development of new roses. This research was taken up early this century by Professor François Joyaux, who turned to DNA analysis to identify roses that were indisputably bred by Parmentier. Joyaux’s energetic contribution to our knowledge of the history of early roses cannot be underestimated and it is much regretted that in recent years his interests have turned away from Roses towards Chinese numismatics. Joyaux articulated his research in *Rosa Gallica*, the learned review that was the publication of record of the Rose Society of the same name that he pioneered. Unfortunately, almost none of Joyaux’s work is available online. However, at his request in 2005, I translated one of his articles on Parmentier into English, and that translation follows.

in Switzerland. Otto was for 43 years the head gardener of a rich Swiss amateur, [Heinrich] Escher-Zollikofer, who owned a large property near Zürich. Otto’s *Cultur der Rosen* [1858] has recently been republished in facsimile.

Mertens listed a total of more than one hundred varieties of roses that could safely be attributed to Louis Parmentier. This includes a large number of roses that were named by Parmentier and given to friends or to nurserymen but which are almost certainly extinct. Mertens’ detailed conclusions were published in *Annales du Cercle Archéologique d’Enghien*, vol. XXVI, 1990, pp. 81-96. The following link





'Cardinal de Richelieu'
[Parmentier,
pre-1847]

In search of Louis Parmentier's roses



Professor François Joyaux

[translated by Charles Quest-Ritson]

Louis Parmentier (1782-1847) is not included often enough among the great breeders of the first half of the nineteenth century, probably because he was not a professional. But this Belgian amateur was one of the great breeders/hybridisers of the period, whose work merits great attention. We still have a considerable number of the roses that he bred, probably many more than generally ascribed to him.

Parmentier came from a large family in Enghien, a small town close to Brussels. There were eleven children in the family, many of whom had roses bred by Louis Parmentier named after them. Two of his older brothers became reasonably well known. One, Joseph Parmentier (1775-1852), was at the same time Mayor of Enghien from 1802-1830, steward of the Duc d'Arenberg's estates at Enghien and, of particular interest to us, a respected horticulturist. He contributed significantly to the Parc d'Enghien, now open to the public, by introducing many rare plants there. The plants he [Joseph] grew are known because he catalogued them in 1808, 1812 and 1818; we also have the catalogues such as that dated 24 July 1811 of *Collections de plantes et arbustes rares cultivées en pots*, which he sold by auction. The other brother was André Parmentier (1780-1830) who went to the United States of America and established himself as a landscape architect of some renown; it was he who started the fashion in the area around New York for 'pleasure grounds', a sort of compromise between French-style gardens in the manner of Le Nôtre and English-style landscape gardens.

Collector and breeder

As for Louis Parmentier, he spent his whole life at Enghien where he saw, while young, the successive coups of the French Revolution, the annexation of the region by the Republic and the Empire then,

later, the Revolution and Belgian Independence of 1830.

It was his rose collection that made him famous. It seems he began this during the First Empire (1804-1814) at Kloosterberg (Hérinnes, Herne), three kilometres from Enghien. Perhaps he was inspired by the example of the collection of the Empress Joséphine at Malmaison (and again, after the Empire, by the publication between 1817 and 1824 of the different sections of *Les Roses* by Redouté).

It is known that the Parmentier brothers were in contact with Malmaison. If they supplied plants, which is possible, this could have meant direct contact. Joseph's catalogue of 1808 had a supplement of 40 botanical species, all of which would certainly have interested the Empress. In any case, there was indirect contact, because it is

known that the Empress enabled the Enghien estate to buy plants from England: the département/province of Jemmappe, as part of France, had been subject to the continental blockade since 1806, like the rest of the Empire.

At Enghien, the d'Arenbergs had some difficulty importing plants from England. Joséphine made their cross-Channel purchases easier by granting Joseph Parmentier a special licence. In addition, the Empress sometimes sent roses to her cousin and god-daughter, Stéphanie de Tascher de La Pagerie, wife of Prince Prosper d'Arenberg. It was most probably the Parmentiers who received and cultivated them.

Below:
Parc d'Enghien. The formal garden next to the rose garden



Images: Charles Quest-Ritson

Louis Parmentier's collection continued to expand: at the end of his life, it consisted of 12,000 plants made up of 3,031 different varieties. But he was not just a collector; he was also a breeder. In fact, out of these 3,031 different varieties, Parmentier had bred 855 himself. Some 190 were never named and so not introduced into commerce.

When he died in April 1847, his widow dispersed some of these roses to both amateur and professional contacts – would that a list of these roses and those who acquired them were known – and the remainder were auctioned in July 1847.

What is known about Parmentier's roses?

Parmentier's roses are quite well documented from several sources. He was in contact with several amateur and professional rosarians. In three instances, these contacts resulted in publications of great use today in learning about his roses. His professional contacts included the great Ghent nurseryman

“Louis Parmentier's collection continued to expand: at the end of his life, it consisted of 12,000 plants made up of 3,031 different varieties. But he was not just a collector; he was also a breeder.”

Louis van Houtte (1810-1876), both as friend and as a supplier of roses. Van Houtte had founded the periodical *L'horticulteur belge* in 1833 and worked at the Jardin botanique de Bruxelles from 1836 to 1838 before starting his nurseries at Gentbrugge which rapidly became famous. His catalogues were impressive for their roses: the 1842 one offered over 1,000 varieties. Yet Van Houtte never bred any new varieties himself: he was content just to introduce them. It has been established that several of his introductions were in fact bred by his friend Parmentier. From this point of view, Van Houtte's 1851 catalogue is particularly interesting because he identifies some roses as coming from Parmentier's collection and some as having been bred by him (sadly, he does not identify all of them). In addition, Van Houtte included some of Parmentier's roses in the illustrated periodical he published *Flore des serres et jardins de l'Europe*: one example is 'Narcisse de Salvandy' which he bought at the sale in 1847.

Parmentier also helped amateur rosarians to develop their collections. Several published details of their acquisitions. A good example is Escher-Zollikofer (d. 1854) a Swiss from the Zurich region. His gardener was Adolf Otto, who published a book on rose growing in 1858: *Der Rosenzüchter oder Die Cultur der Rosen*. Escher-Zollikofer and Otto were in regular contact with Parmentier: one of the interesting points about Otto's book is that it



Images: Charles Quest-Ritson



1. 'Belle Isis' [Parmentier, 1845]
2. 'Bella Doria' [Parmentier, 1847]
3. 'Capitaine Williams' [1843] probably bred by Parmentier
4. 'D'Aguesseau' [1836] probably bred by Parmentier



identifies precisely over one hundred roses as bred by Parmentier. Another example is that of Clément Deltenre, an Enghien lawyer, who made a collection of roses at the start of the 1840s with Parmentier's help. This collection was sold at auction when Deltenre died in 1864, and the auction catalogue is valuable in tracing Parmentier roses: *Catalogue de la belle et grande collection de rosiers d'origine belge, française et anglaise formée par M. Clément Deltenre, avocat à Enghien* (Enghien, Spinet, 1864). The catalogue states: 'In this collection there are magnificent roses which have never been introduced into commerce, seedlings of his compatriot the late M Louis Parmentier, the distinguished and famous amateur [breeder].'

However, the main reason that Parmentier's collection and the roses he bred are known is the detailed catalogue prepared for the auction of his own roses organised by his widow: *Catalogue de la riche collection de rosiers formée par feu M. Louis Parmentier, d'Enghien, et dont la vente aura lieu à Enghien (Belgique), le Jeudi 24 juin 1847, à dix heures du matin, par le ministère du Notaire Choppinet, d'Enghien* (Enghien, Spinet, 30 p.).

Parmentier's collection

Excluding the roses that he bred himself, Parmentier's collection as such, in 1847, consisted of 2,176 varieties. But in total, it had exceeded 3,403 varieties. It seems that Parmentier numbered all

“Louis van Houtte's catalogues were impressive for their roses: the 1842 one offered over 1,000 varieties.”

the additions to his collection: hence the figure of 3,403 which appears in the sale catalogue. But from time to time he deleted (or lost) a particular variety and its number remained unallocated. This is what the catalogue says: 'All rose lovers who have contacts in Belgium know the emphasis the deceased placed on embellishing his collection with new roses and removing from his gardens those of secondary merit. The missing numbers in the first part of the catalogue belonged to plants in the latter category.' In total, 1,227 varieties were thus eliminated (or lost) over time.

The catalogue of this collection is far from systematic. Sometimes only the name of the variety appears; occasionally a colour is given and in a few very rare instances the class of the rose and/or the breeder. As might be expected, it includes a number of roses that are still in cultivation, but many more now extinct, as well as some which appear never to have been listed or were perhaps bred by amateurs (No 1547, 'L'Aimable de Monsieur T'; No 2603, 'Bengale de Mr Delaage', for example). Despite these imperfections, the catalogue is of real importance in the history of roses in the first half of the

nineteenth century. All classes of roses are represented, but the Gallicas hold centre stage, as in all collections of the period.

Definite Parmentier roses

This same catalogue also lists the roses bred by Parmentier that were in his collection at his death in 1847. These number 855, of which 190 are unnamed. This is a highly important number. It exceeds the number of roses bred by Vibert (around 600) who is considered the most productive of nineteenth-century breeders. But it is also a figure that needs to be set in context. It probably includes a very high percentage of varieties that were seedlings of little interest and would not have survived the more rigorous selection needed to be put into commerce. Gallica roses produce new varieties from seedlings with great ease, often very similar to one another.

The catalogue hardly ever gives any other information than the name: in a few very rare cases there are indications of class or colour: Bourbon, Moss, Perpetual etc.. As might be expected, several are named after the d'Arenberg family: 'Princesse Le Louise d'Arenberg', 'Prince Pierre d'Arenberg', 'Duchesse d'Arenberg', 'Princesse Marie d'Arenberg' and so on. Others are called after the Parmentier family itself: 'Julie Parmentier', 'Sophie Parmentier', 'Rose Louis Parmentier' and so on. Many mention the town of Enghien: 'Pourpre d'Enghien', 'L'Orpheline d'Enghien', 'Pucelle d'Enghien' etc.

The list includes a number of roses which always have been, or should be, attributed to Louis Parmentier. In most cases the roses still in cultivation are Gallicas: 'Belle Doria' [pre-1847], 'Belle Isis' [1845], 'Belle Villageoise' [pre-1847], 'Désirée Parmentier' [pre-1841], 'Dumortier' [pre-1843], 'Emile Verachter' [pre-1847], 'Félicité Parmentier' [pre-1841], 'Hippolyte' (an Alba) [pre-1842], 'Narcisse de Salvandy' [pre-1847], 'Rose Schelfhout' [pre-1847], 'Van Artevelde' [pre-1847]. Three Gallicas should be added to this list which are not in Parmentier's catalogue, but which have been established as being bred by him: 'Cardinal de Richelieu' (pre-1847), which is specifically attributed to Parmentier in the Van Houtte catalogue of 1851, p.11; 'Louise' (pre-1847), also specifically attributed to Parmentier in the Van Houtte catalogue of 1851, p.14; 'Tricolore de Flandre' (pre-1846), which does not appear in the Parmentier catalogue, but it is attributed to him in Otto's book. It was bought by Van Houtte, but he does not show the breeder. (*Flore*, Oct. 1846).

“The main reason that Parmentier's collection and the roses he bred are known is the detailed catalogue prepared for the auction of his own roses organised by his widow.”

Probable/ Possible Parmentier roses

To this list should be added varieties still in cultivation, mainly Gallicas, that were most likely bred by Parmentier, though such attribution does raise a few questions. These include:

'Capitaine Williams' (pre-1843) – Not in the Parmentier catalogue or Otto's book, but the earliest mention found is in Van Houtte's catalogue of 1843. The case for attributing this variety to Parmentier is somewhat weak.

'Chapelain d'Arenberg' (pre-1847) – Given its name, this variety was probably bred by Parmentier. Against that, it is in neither the Parmentier catalogue nor Otto's book. [Such conjecture has its limits: 'Princesse Charles d'Arenberg, a Hybrid Perpetual still in cultivation, was definitely bred by Soupert et Notting in 1877.]

'Château de Namur' (pre-1842) – This variety is in neither the Parmentier catalogue nor Otto's book. Nevertheless, its name suggests a Parmentier rose, as does the fact that the only two catalogues which mention it are those of Van Houtte (1842) and Verschaffelt (1847, p. 101) the other large horticulturist in Ghent.

'Hector' (pre-1847) – This variety does not appear under this name in the Parmentier catalogue, but there is a 'Hector Parmentier' (No 0854) which is probably the same. There is also

Otto's description ('bright pink with purple shading') which matches the rose grown under the name 'Hector' fairly well.

'Honorine de Brabant' –

Neither the date nor the breeder of this Bourbon rose is known: it is not in the Parmentier catalogue, nor in Otto's book. Only its name suggests a possible rose by Parmentier since there is a 'Léopold Duc de Brabant' (No 0475) and a 'Marie de Brabant' (No 0492).

'Moïse' (1828) – This variety is not in the Parmentier catalogue, but Van Houtte attributes a variety of this name (very bright red) to Parmentier (1851 Van Houtte catalogue p.15). However, Mieliez (from Esquermes, near Lille in France) also bred a Gallica rose called 'Moïse' (bright cherry red) which leaves room for ambiguity as to the breeder of the rose now grown under this name.

'Prince Frédéric' (pre-1846)

– This variety is not included among the list of roses Parmentier bred, but it is in the general collection (No. 353). Otto lists it, but without attribution. It is more likely that it equates to 'Frédéric de Mérode' listed among Parmentier's own roses (No 0338). This is a difficult one to solve.

'Van Huyssum' (pre-1841) – This is a much more contentious case.

“The catalogue hardly ever gives any other information than the name: in a few very rare cases there are indications of class or colour... As might be expected, several are named after the d'Arenberg family... Others are called after the Parmentier family itself...”

This variety is included in neither the Parmentier catalogue nor Otto's book. Against this, several later sources attribute it to Parmentier, for example Simon et Cochet, *Nomenclature de tous les noms de roses*, Ed. 1906, No 10609. It is probably the same rose that appears in Verdier's catalogue in 1841, No 408, as a China hybrid under the name of 'Vanhuissou' (!).

'Victor Parmentier' (pre-1847)

– This is likewise not included in the catalogue, but probably corresponds to the variety called 'Rose Victor' (No 0423). In any case, given its name, it is highly likely to be a rose bred by Parmentier.

Below:
'Hector' [Parmentier, 1830]

'Victor Parmentier'
[Parmentier, 1847
- probably]



Images: Charles Quest-Ritson

Below:
'Anaïs Ségalas' [1837]
probably bred by Parmentier

'Mme Rose Chéri' [Laffay,
1850]. This moss rose could
perhaps have been bred by
Parmentier but introduced
by Laffay.



Images: Charles Quest-Ritson

Erroneous attributions

In the Parmentier sale catalogue, there are varieties shown as having been bred by him, but which have been claimed by other breeders. Conversely, there are varieties credited to other breeders but which may well have been bred by Parmentier. This the case with:

'Anaïs Ségalas' (1837) – This is listed among Parmentier's roses (No 0528), but in France, Vibert claimed it as one of his, dating from 1837 (his 1841 catalogue, No 109). Are there two different varieties? Or, did Vibert, who received Parmentier's sale catalogue, having got the rose, present it as his own?

'Comte de Montalembert' (1852) – This, too, is included among Parmentier's roses (No 0596), but there is a 'Montalembert' attributed to Robert et Moreau in 1852. Is this not also a purchase made by Vibert, introduced by his successors, Robert et Moreau?

'D'Aguesseau' (1836) – This rose is also found among Parmentier's roses (No 0624) and claimed by Vibert (his 1836 catalogue, No 609). The same hypothesis applies.

'Gonsalve' (1835) – In his 1836 catalogue, Vibert presents this variety as one of his introductions for 1835. In fact, it is not impossible that this rose corresponds to the rose bred by Parmentier which he called 'Gonsalve de Cordoue' (No 0790 in the catalogue). It is found under the latter name in Oudin's catalogue of 1844 (p. 3).

'Madame Crudener' – There is a 'Madame Crudener' among Parmentier's roses (No 0777). Has this any connection with the Portland rose 'Julie Krudner', attributed to Laffay, 1847, the same year as the Parmentier sale? Certainly, Van Houtte has the latter attribution (1851 catalogue, p.3).

'Marie de Bourgogne' (Moss) – This variety is generally attributed to Robert, 1853, because it is included in what he grew at the Comice agricole de Maine et Loire in this year (*Travaux*, p.22). In fact, it is described as having been bred by 'the association' in the catalogue of Robert et Moreau for 1858 (No 375). It is not in the Parmentier catalogue, but Otto attributes it to him. Moreover, it was named for Marie de Bourgogne, sovereign of the Low Countries, who was born at Brussels in 1457 and died at Bruges in 1482, which suggests a Belgian rather than a French rose.

Delepierre's book *Vie de Marie de Bourgogne* had been published in Brussels in 1841. It is quite likely that this variety was bred by Parmentier, not Robert, and acquired at the 1847 auction by his predecessor Vibert. There are other roses bred by Parmentier but introduced by Robert, such as 'Blanche de Parmentier' (Hybrid Perpetual, Robert 1856, now extinct). Strangely, Van Houtte places 'Marie de Bourgogne' among the Albas (1851 catalogue, p.5).

'Œillet flamand' (1845) – Vibert shows this as one of his own roses

(1845 catalogue, No 738). But why Flemish? Could it not really be a Parmentier rose, introduced by Vibert in 1845? However, Van Houtte does give Vibert as the breeder in his 1851 catalogue (p.19).

‘Orpheline de Juillet’ – This is generally attributed to Vibert, who perhaps gave it this name after a decree of 1831 which said that all the children orphaned as a result of the riots in Paris in July 1830 would be brought up at the nation’s expense. Against this, there is no proof that this rose was bred by Parmentier. But it should be noted that July 1830 was also the month of the Belgian Revolution and he did have a rose called ‘Orpheline d’Enghien’ (No 015, extinct) which is close to ‘Orpheline de Juillet’.

‘Rose Chéri’ (not ‘rose chérie’) – There is a rose of this name bred by Parmentier, No 0292 in his catalogue. And there is a moss rose called ‘Madame Rose Chéri’ generally attributed to Laffay, 1850. Could this have been bought by Laffay at the Parmentier sale in 1847?

There are some disturbing connections which raise doubts as to whether several old rose varieties, currently attributed to other breeders are in fact roses bred by Parmentier. It has also to be said that the majority of the cases noted above concern varieties previously attributed to Vibert or to his successors, Robert et Moreau.

DNA to the rescue?

It is common, in current studies of old roses, to find people saying that perhaps DNA analysis will clarify attributions. It is, of course, too much to expect DNA analysis to resolve every problem of identification among old roses. Nevertheless, it can help us towards certain conclusions. This has been done for the Parmentier roses. The material for this came from my collection of Gallica roses at the Roseraie de La Cour de Commer (Mayenne, France). This is a national collection of about 300 varieties. And, surprising as it may seem, the DNA analysis of the varieties of such a collection may provide definite indications as to the breeder of an ‘orphaned’ rose.

Joyaux garden at Cour de Commer

Thanks to Philippe Heizmann, Director of Research at the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 281 varieties from the collection were analysed to produce Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) data. The resulting electrophoregrams enabled a Principal Components Analysis (PCA) map to be produced. This shows the position of each variety and the genetic distance separating it from the others. On this map I marked out an area containing the varieties which are definitely known to have been bred by Parmentier. The assumption is that Parmentier, like most breeders of the period, worked with a restricted number of varieties so that on a PCA map, his roses

should be reasonably close to one another and confirm the genetic similarities between relatives.

Eleven roses known to have been bred by Parmentier mark out this zone: ‘Belle Doria’, ‘Belle Isis’, ‘Belle Villageoise’, ‘Cardinal de Richelieu’, ‘Désirée Parmentier’, ‘Dumortier’, ‘Hippolyte’, ‘Narcisse de Salvandy’, ‘Rose Schelfhout’, ‘Tricolore de Flandre’ and ‘Van Artevelde’. In addition, the positions of twelve other roses probably or possibly by Parmentier should be considered: ‘Anaïs Ségalas’, ‘Capitaine Williams’, ‘Château de Namur’, ‘Comte de Montalembert’, ‘D’Aguesseau’, ‘Gonsalve’, ‘Hector’, ‘Moïse’, ‘Œillet flamand’, ‘Orpheline de Juillet’, ‘Prince Frédéric’ and ‘Victor Parmentier’.

The PCA map shows that nine of the twelve in the probable/possible list fall within or lie very close to the Parmentier zone. DNA analysis therefore strengthens the hypothesis that these are indeed Parmentier roses. It should be emphasised that this conclusion has not been reached solely by their proximity to the zone – plenty of other varieties from different breeders are in the same position – but from bringing together both historical and genetic information. On the other hand, the varieties ‘Gonsalve’, ‘Prince Frédéric’ and, especially, ‘Orpheline de Juillet’ are further removed: DNA analysis adds nothing new in these cases.

An evaluation

Having considered all the different historic and genetic elements, I

suggest the following conclusions for each variety still in cultivation which might be attributed to Parmentier. All are Gallicas, except for 'Honorine de Brabant' (Bourbon), 'Julie Krudner' (Portland), 'Marie de Bourgogne' (Moss) and 'Madame Rose Chéri' (Moss).

Definite: 'Belle Doria', 'Belle Isis', 'Belle Villageoise', 'Cardinal de Richelieu', 'Désirée Parmentier', 'Dumortier', 'Hippolyte', 'Narcisse de Salvandy', 'Rose Schelfhout', 'Tricolore de Flandre', 'Van Artevelde'.

Probable: 'Anaïs Ségalas', 'Capitaine Williams', 'Château de Namur', 'Comte de Montalembert', 'D'Aguesseau', 'Hector', 'Moïse', 'Œillet flamand', 'Victor Parmentier'.

Possible: 'Gonsalve', 'Orpheline de Juillet', 'Prince Frédéric'.

Not tested: 'Chapelain d'Arenberg', 'Honorine de Brabant', 'Julie Krudner', 'Louise', 'Madame Rose Chéri', 'Marie de Bourgogne', 'Van Huyssum'.

In addition to these conclusions, which are far from definitive, the DNA analysis also suggests aspects of Parmentier's approach to breeding. The PCA map shows that he intended to introduce the remontant gene of China roses into the Gallicas. The position of 'Old Blush' is shown on the map in the north-east sector. It is clear that some of his roses are separate from the bulk of the Gallicas concentrated in the western sector and closer to 'Old Blush'. This is

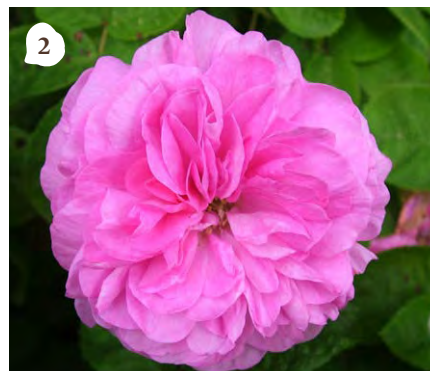
true of three roses in particular, definitely bred by Parmentier – 'Belle Doria', 'Dumortier' and 'Cardinal de Richelieu' – as well as one of the 'probables', 'Œillet flamand'. In this he was more successful than Vibert since only 11 per cent of Vibert's Gallicas fall in the eastern sector compared with 50 per cent of the definite and probable Parmentier roses.

Verdict

Parmentier was not only a prolific breeder – 855 roses – but also a talented one who deserves greater

recognition than he has hitherto received. More of his roses would seem to be still grown today than any other amateur nineteenth-century breeder.

1. 'Van Artevelde' [Parmentier, 1847]
2. 'Dumortier' [Parmentier, 1843]
3. 'Œillet flamand' [Vibert, 1845 but probably bred by Parmentier]



Images: Charles Quest-Ritson

Book review

Historical Roses in the Europa-Rosarium Sangerhausen

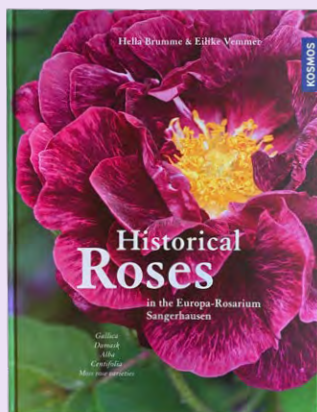
by Hella Brumme and Eilike Vemmer

Review by Martin Stott

Historical Roses in the Europa-Rosarium Sangerhausen
by Hella Brumme and Eilike Vemmer

Pp160; €30 plus postage

To buy the book, e-mail nordlandrose@t-online.de, including the delivery address. The publisher will determine the shipping costs and send a paypal link with the payment amount.



The Europe-Rosarium Sangerhausen in Germany can trace its roots back to 1903 and is today the world's most important rose collection – it holds approximately 8,700 varieties.

Authors Hella Brumme and Eilike Vemmer have spent decades studying roses. Brumme has worked at the rosarium for 34 years and was its director from 1999 to 2006. In this book the pair distil their meticulous scientific observations of the 349 Gallica, Damask, Alba, Centifolia and Moss rose varieties within the historic collection at Sangerhausen.

The book was first published in German in 2020 but has now been reproduced in English to widen its appeal. It opens with a brief history of the development of the rose – from 4,000 years ago to today. And then quickly gets to the detail.

Brumme and Vemmer will make you look far more closely at your roses. Gallicas are erect and dense; Damasks have a loose, “disorderly” growth; Albas are generally taller with a long arching shape, and so on. Gallica leaves are often coarse and dull green; Damasks’ are fresh green and “lightly bubbly”; Albas typically have bluish grey green foliage.

We are also encouraged to look at the calyx, sepals, peduncles and prickles. The flowers and hips add to the mounting list of clues available to the knowledgeable observer seeking to identify the type of rose in front of them. Photographic illustrations helpfully show the differences across each group.

This large amount of useful detail is clearly presented in just 28 pages. And then what follows is an inventory of flowers in the garden across each of these groups. Every rose is beautifully photographed. Under the name, breeder and date of creation, brief notes describe the growth habit, flowers and, where available, the background to the name.

Poor translations can often undermine the pleasure of reading – and therefore the value – of texts like this, but Helga Brichet, Past President of the World Federation of Rose Societies, has done an outstanding job. And the production values from publisher Kosmos are high.

The general text and notes on individual roses are concise and precise, making the book a valuable reference work for any collector of historic roses who wants to be able to appreciate in more detail the roses in their garden.



Kasteel Coloma and Coloma Rose Garden sit in in Coloma park, Sint-Pieters-Leeuw, Belgium. The park was created in 1995 and has over 3,000 rose varieties from 25 different countries.

Image: Johan Allard/Creative Commons

Kasteel Coloma: The Rose Garden

Brigid Quest-Ritson

Coloma is an ancient moated fortress that was converted into an elegant stately home in the 16th century. It sits in a 15-hectare park, spaciouly planted with fine trees, in the small town of Sint-Pieters-Leeuw, a few kilometres south-west of Brussels. You approach it along a magnificent double avenue of plane trees, *Platanus × hispanica*. I strongly advise delegates to the Heritage Roses Convention to visit its collection of roses.

Coloma's rose garden rejoices in more than 3,000 species and cultivars introduced by breeders from 28 countries. More are added every year. And herein lies the collection's interest for rose-lovers. Sections are designed to show off the roses raised in such countries as Israel, Romania and South Africa, about which most of us know very little. These individual gardens try to convey something of the character of the nations whose

“Coloma's rose garden rejoices in more than 3,000 species and cultivars introduced by breeders from 28 countries. More are added every year.”

roses they display – vines have been planted, for example, as an introduction to the roses from France, while the United Kingdom is reached across a wavy lawn that represents the seas around that island nation. The roses of France, Germany and the United Kingdom are particularly well represented, but Coloma also has the largest collections in Europe of roses from Australia and New Zealand. Many are varieties that have never been introduced commercially outside the country where they were raised. A visit to Coloma gives you

the opportunity to learn about the rose-breeding traditions of countries that you may never be able to visit in person.

These are largely modern roses – the oldest are Hybrid Teas from the 19th century and the collection is right up to date with Floribundas, 'English', Groundcover and post-Modern roses. Coloma also has a garden dedicated to old roses – 700 different Gallicas, Damasks, Ramblers and so on. In the cool climate of north-west Europe, these come into flower before the hard-pruned modern roses; they should be at the high point of their beauty at the time of the delegates' visit. The collection of old roses is comprehensive, too – you will find many that are available in your own country and many that are not.

In a different part of the park, behind the castle, there is a large collection of modern Japanese

“It should be said that the rose garden at Coloma – so beautifully designed and so well maintained – was developed as an expression of Flemish national pride.”

roses that is well worth visiting, and a small exhibit of Chinese roses. Near the entrance to the rose collection is a garden of particular interest where only roses of Flemish origin are displayed. Here is an excellent show of roses bred by the Lens family and by Ann and Rudy Velle, but many more from such breeders as Delforge and DvP (Departement voor Plantengenetica) whose work is

little known abroad. You might suppose that breeders with a small home market would work hard to sell their roses abroad but it is very difficult for them to compete in countries where well-established breeders like Kordes, Meilland and Austin are so strong. The result is that only by visiting a garden such as Coloma’s can one get a fair idea of how high is the quality of what breeders from smaller countries are producing.

Right:
'Reinaerdiana'
[Delforge, 1974] is
typical of 1970s
Floribundas. It still
grows at Kasteel
Coloma but is no
longer sold by any
rose-nurseries



Below:
'Alister Stella Gray'
[Gray, 1894] grows well
at Coloma. It is one of
the few British-raised
Noisette climbers.



It should be said that the rose garden at Coloma – so beautifully designed and so well maintained – was developed as an expression of Flemish national pride. Belgium is not always such a united nation as monolingual countries. The French-speaking Walloons and Dutch-speaking Flemings are liable to disagree over public, political and cultural issues. When I first went to Coloma in 2001, the year after it opened for the first time, Charles and I were writing an international book about roses. The curator impressed upon us the importance of emphasising that the garden was an expression of Flemish excellence. We have returned to Coloma many times since then, sometimes more than once a year, and it never ceases to impress me. All rosarians love to see well-grown roses, whether ancient or modern. At Coloma there are never disappointments. The wide range of cultivars, the thoughtful layout, the immaculate standards of maintenance and the vigorous, healthy growth of the individual roses all combine to raise the spirits and lead to an absorbing, instructive and enjoyable visit.

Images: Charles Quest-Ritson

WFRS Piaget Fund report

In 2012 the Swiss luxury watch manufacturer, Piaget Manufacture made a donation of £20,000 (GBP) to the World Federation of Rose Societies (WFRS). At the 2015 World Convention in Lyon, WFRS named Mr Yves Piaget as Patron of the WFRS, in recognition of his support for the rose and for the WFRS. A full report was presented to Piaget Manufacture and to Mr Yves Piaget in June 2022.

The Europa-Rosarium in Sangerhausen, Germany – 8,600 rose species and varieties can be found here and 80,000 rose bushes in total.

Image: Charles Quest-Ritson



Henriette de Briey

Fund objectives

The objective of the WFRS Piaget Fund, in agreement with Piaget Manufacture, is to support projects for non-commercial purposes relating specifically to the conservation of and/or research regarding the rose.

Award procedure and criteria

Grants are made after an application from a member country of the WFRS. Applications are submitted to the Promotion Committee for assessment, then presented to the executive committee of the WFRS for approval. Successful projects must meet certain criteria, including:

- Compliance with the wishes expressed by Yves Piaget, i.e. research and conservation of the genus *Rosa*
- Value to the WFRS
- A detailed financial plan with a realistic budget and details of other funding bodies involved
- A financial contribution from the national rose society of the country submitting the file, to guarantee the undertaking and monitor performance
- A realistic schedule for implementation
- A presentation of the expected results.

No grant may be made for a proposal that does not serve the objectives of Piaget Manufacture and the WFRS.

Expressly excluded are: projects presented for personal purposes; book translations; any research project that presents a financial

risk; projects that do not relate to the genus *Rosa*.

Projects to date

Two projects – at Sangerhausen and Meise – have received a grant from the WFRS Piaget Fund and both were in line with the above criteria. Other applications have been refused, either because they did not comply with the budget requirements or because they were beyond the scope of the Fund.

The Europa Rosarium at Sangerhausen (Germany)

This is a living museum that illustrates the process of evolution from the wild rose to the modern rose. Created in 1903, it is a collection of roses, unique in Europe, that has been steadily enriched over time. It is accessed through a database that lists and manages the roses in the collection. The database had however become obsolete and very difficult to maintain because the programming software was no longer supported by the computer designer. And there was a real risk of losing the data. It was therefore necessary to start converting the data to a new, modern and secure database.

A fundraising appeal was launched and the conversion project got underway in 2016 with the support of the German Rose Society's Foundation "Europa-Rosarium" for 50,000 euros and the Piaget Fund of the WFRS for £5,000.

To date, in 2023, some 8730 varieties and species of roses have been uploaded to the new database, every

one of them fully described, after checking their botanical characteristics, with photos and propagation procedures for their conservation. In parallel, a database accessible on the Internet has been set up with the support of European Union funds: www.europa-rosarium.de/datenbank. The database provides an invaluable service for friends of the rose around the world because it makes it possible to find reliable information, all the plants having been scrupulously checked botanically.

The Crépin Collection, Meise Botanical Garden (Belgium)

François Crépin (1830 -1903), founder of the Botanical Society of Belgium in 1862, was an expert on the genus *Rosa*. During his life, he collected 43,000 specimens from all over the world, which today amounts to the largest herbarium of roses in the world.

Although the collection is well preserved, it nevertheless presented



Images: Charles Quest-Ritson and Herbiér Crépin

two major problems: [1] the specimens in the herbarium were treated with mercury, which was a common practice in the 19th century to protect them from insects, but which today poses a serious problem in terms of health regulations because it is extremely toxic. [2] the 43,000 specimens are very fragile, which makes handling the herbarium extremely awkward. Because of these two problems, it became imperative to digitise the specimens in order to make them visible and accessible to researchers and to the general public.

The botanical garden was looking for funding to provide modern technical solutions to problems of digitisation and DNA research involving a few samples from the herbarium. In 2017 the WFRS Piaget Fund allocated £7,500 to the project. The National Royal Belgian Society of Friends of the Rose contributed 2,500 euros. These two subsidies enabled the Botanical Garden to convince the Belgian government authorities

to allocate them an additional 20,000 euros.

The results

The 43,000 specimens were digitised in high resolution and loaded onto a local server at Meise Botanical Garden. A copy was sent to the herbarium's archives. François Crépin's hand-written labels – often difficult to read – were also transcribed by rose-growers and amateur volunteers.

Of those 43,000 digitised specimens, some 8,000 images with their associated labels are so far accessible to users on www.botanicalcollections.be. The rest will be made available over time. Images may be downloaded free of charge for non-commercial purposes, provided Meise Botanical Garden is credited.

The first DNA research carried out on a sample specimen brought exceptionally promising and conclusive results that will enhance

the scientific interest of this herbarium. In September 2019, Yves Piaget was invited at the Botanical Garden of Meise to visit the parts of the collection not accessible to the public

During the 15th International Heritage Rose Conference to be held in Brussels from 5 to 10 June 2023, participants will be able to discover the work undertaken and the associated results, largely thanks to the Piaget Fund.

Conclusion

The two projects that benefited from the WFRS Piaget Fund met the objectives and criteria defined earlier in this report. The WFRS must ensure that the available balance of £7,500 is allocated to a similar project that will prove as fruitful for rose-lovers.

Henriette de Briey is Immediate Past President of the WFRS and Chairman of the Promotion Committee



1. Meise Botanical Garden 'Balat' Greenhouse in Belgium
2. Specimens at the Meise Botanical Garden. Both François Crépin's Belgian herbarium and the unique *Herbier des Roses* are in it's collection
3. Yves Piaget [Meilland, 1985] at Coloma





The WFRS will be sponsored in 2022-2023 by Felco

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“Brigid and I have pruned thousands – hundreds of thousands – of roses over many years and are happy to confirm that Felco's secateurs are by far the best that we have used.”

Charles Quest-Ritson