



THE *Vintage rose*

Sept–Nov 2016, Issue 14



THE FRIENDS OF VINTAGE ROSES

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NEWSLETTER FOR THE FRIENDS OF VINTAGE ROSES

September–November 2016, Issue 14

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Curator's Report

When we travel we often see the same old roses in many gardens and are tempted to think, "What's the point?" Yet here the point is made: somewhere on Earth is the perfect place for every rose, and 'Gloire de Dijon' is happier here than perhaps anywhere else. . . . *see page 6*



Beautiful Boursaults

The Boursaults are a small group of modest climbers. They are thornless, hardy, and early flowering with a graceful arching habit. Most Boursaults date from the 19th century. They are named for . . . *see page 12*



Abecedarian

Oratam was a chieftain of the Hackensack Indians of New Jersey throughout most of the 17th century. He lived to be about ninety years old. After the New Netherland Dutch arrived as colonists, he often negotiated treaties and truces between the whites and the indigenous people. In 1666 . . . *see page 13*

On the cover: 'Duchesse de Brabant' (photo by D. Schramm)

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DIRT DAYS 2016

Below is the schedule of our volunteer days in the garden in Sebastopol. We call these 'Dirt Days' and they run the gamut from weeding to potting and mulching. Dirt Days begin at 10 am, we work until about 1 pm then break for lunch. All are welcome. Smell the fresh country air, enjoy the beauty of the roses! —*Gregg Lowery, Curator*

SEPTEMBER 25, SUNDAY (POT LUCK)
OCTOBER 9, SUNDAY

OCTOBER 22, SATURDAY
NOVEMBER 5, SATURDAY



'Duchesse de Brabant' (photo by D. Schramm)

Featured Rose: 'Duchesse de Brabant'

Darrell g.h. Schramm

The rose 'Duchesse de Brabant' was named for Marie Henriette Anne von Habsburg-Lothringen, daughter of Joseph Archduke of Austria and Palatine of Hungary. She was born in Budapest, Hungary, in 1836, sister to Joseph Karl for whom the tea rose 'Archiduc Joseph' is named. Her interests in the arts were such that she employed a master painter to teach her, and she supposedly composed an opera; at the same time she enjoyed gypsy music. As a horsewoman, she was outstanding.

As was common among royalty, her wedlock was arranged. At age sixteen or seventeen, she married the Duke of Brabant, crown prince



of Belgium but was as disinclined to the marriage as he. Indeed, she married unhappily ever after. Weeks after her wedding, she wrote a letter to her trusted art master, already grieving her unhappiness in this marriage. For forty years the couple endured a miserable relationship, he enjoying ostentatious affairs with numerous other women, much to the disapproval and even outrage of the Belgian public. She persevered. And the Belgian people called her "The Rose of Brabant."

Twelve years into this political marriage of convenience (certainly not convenient for either husband or wife), the King died, and her husband, Leopold II, inherited the throne. Three daughters and one son, who died when he was ten years old, were the products of their mutual misery. With the death of her son, the Duchess, now Queen, lost any enthusiasm for living, becoming ever more adamant, intractable, and unapproachable. In fact, she later seems to have pushed her two oldest daughters into royal marriages equally unhappy as her own.

She did not, however, surrender her equestrian pleasures. While her daughters were still small, she would take them on horseback rides (she preferred the "Magyar" style of riding astride, not sidesaddle as was common for women then), and alone she would drive a fast coach pulled by high-spirited steeds. Her other indulgence was spending long periods at spas. In 1895 she bought her own place at the town of Spa and exiled herself there for the remainder of her life.

Essentially solitary, neglected by an indifferent—even cruel—king, she died September 19, 1902. Her husband, King Leopold II, gave her only the most plain and perfunctory of funerals, refusing to allow the daughters near the casket.

It should be remembered that Leopold II around 1880 had claimed the Belgian Congo has his own property—not that of his country—the only major colony in the world owned by one, ruthless man. Its ivory and rubber brought him incredible wealth. He controlled the colony through forced labor. African women were taken hostage until their husbands and sons had collected the required amount of sap from rubber plants. If the collection fell short, the men were beaten, often to death—if they had survived exhaustion and starvation. Many of the women were raped; many starved to death. Not a nice king. Not only did the Africans war against him, but even his own soldiers mutinied.

When an American, George Washington Williams, arrived in the Congo to see the "paradise of enlightened rule" that Leopold II had falsely advertised, Williams documented the reality, as did a number of missionaries, and coined the phrase "crimes against humanity." Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown, right? Burning all his documents regarding his rapacious enterprise in 1908, Leopold gave up his claim to the Congo. Unfortunately, the legacy he left was to manifest itself again in the genocide of Rwanda in 1994.

This is not a happy story. Understandably, as Duchess and then as Queen, Marie Henriette wanted little or nothing to do with the man.

But her own citizens had been quite fond of the Queen of the Belgians. She had been a queen who was a rose, known for her kindness and generosity to the poor. And she was admired beyond her borders. In 1878 the Lyon breeder Antoine Levet (originator of 'Paul Neyron' and 'Perle des Jardins') raised a climbing hybrid tea in her honor, 'Reine Marie Henriette', a rose still available today in a few—mostly European—nurseries. Pope Leo XIII around 1893,

awarded her the Golden Rose of Virtue, a goldsmith's work of art given occasionally to an outstandingly virtuous Catholic king or queen. But earlier, in 1857, five years after her wedding to the Duke, H.B. Bernede of Bordeaux, France, named his new tea rose 'Duchesse de Brabant'. Some rosarians, however, believe the original name was 'Comtesse de Labarthe'. My heart is with the Duchess.

This still popular rose bears upright petals forming a tulip shape. Of a pearly transparency, it ranges from light pink to bright pink and even to peach pink. The petal count varies also, sometimes as few as 22, sometimes over fifty, but usually in the forties. Like most teas, the flowers bow their heads, as though heavy of heart but not submissive. The canes are rather twiggy. And while it luxuriates in heat, it resents humidity, the latter being an invitation for mildew and blackspot. It is not fond of pruning.

This is the rose that Theodore Roosevelt often wore as a bud on his lapel. And this is a rose that early California settlers favored in their yards and on their homesteads. In the 1930s when the rosarian Francis Lester and his wife sought out old roses in Gold Rush country, they encountered 'Duchess de Brabant' again and again. Neglect her, forget her, but she will survive.



Marie Henriette with her son

Another Rose Fungus

Darrell g.h. Schramm

One fungus acquired by certain roses that has not received much attention is *Cercospora* Leaf Spot. Caused by the *Cercospora rosicola* fungus, it affects numerous cultivar shrubs and ground cover roses across most of the country. The lack of detailed study of this parasite may be due to its confusion with Black Spot: both fungi exhibit dark spots which cause defoliation of rose plants severely infected. Furthermore, sprays—whether organic or not—that control Black Spot or Powdery Mildew also seem to keep *Cercospora* (sir-CO-spor-ah) in check.



The infection generally begins near the bottom of the rose bush, gradually progressing upward toward new growth. Though contaminating primarily the leaves, these dark lesions can be transmitted also to stems, pedicels, bracts, and hips. It seems to be a summer phenomenon, occurring in late June and July.

Candida, similar to spores, erupt through the leaf surface. Usually they show themselves as circular dark spots—unlike Black Spot whose edges are feathery or blurred. The marks of *Cercospora* Leaf Spot typically appear as tiny purplish spots two to four millimeters in size, though, depending on the species or cultivar, they can be as large as ten millimeters. As the disease progresses, the spots tend to enlarge. In these older lesions, the center of the spot turns tan or grey, known to plant pathologists as a "frog eye," an indication that the cells are dying.

Research thus far indicates that where Black Spot and Powdery Mildew are controlled, *Cercospora* Leaf Spot is not problematic. The

disease is, however, rampant in the Deep South. It was particularly severe in Louisiana in 2013. One study in Alabama tested 25 rose cultivars for both Black Spot and Cercospora, finding that only two roses, 'The Fairy' and 'Petite Pink Scotch', revealed severe and persistent signs of Cercospora. 'Fuchsia Meidiland' was also susceptible in both Alabama and North Carolina.

In western USA Cercospora Leaf Spot occurs as well, especially where the weather is warm and humid. In my own Northern California garden in the North Bay Area, I have observed it for the first time this year. Among at least ten of my modern roses.

Among my heritage roses, those exhibiting it are 'Baronne Prevost', 'Baptiste Lafaye', 'Blush Noisette', 'Charles Lawson', 'Etoile de Hollande', 'Gruss an Coburg', 'Ulrich Brunner', 'Sombreuil', and the mystery rose "Old Town Novato." Sad to say, 'Dr. Huey', is also now a freckled pillar. Will that mean that any rose budded on 'Dr. Huey' rootstock is susceptible?

Research thus far has concluded that four chemical brands of applications can greatly reduce the disease to only a few lower spotted leaves: Compass™ and Daconil Ultrex® when used weekly and Eagle® and Heritage® when applied bi-monthly. A few others offer somewhat less control. Annually rotating the chemical used would be wise.

Ecological care would provide good air circulation so that the leaves can dry swiftly, and thin out interior branches to enhance air flow. Defoliating the lower leaves as soon as the purplish spots appear is helpful. In warm, damp weather, the candida can be splashed from leaf to leaf, promoting new infections; thus, it's best to irrigate such plants with drip system or soaker hose.

I defoliated most of my affected plants, which soon sprouted healthy leaves. Even those plants I neglected, by early September ignored the Cercospora and added clean leaves. Apparently the roses that succumbed to the fungus are strong enough to withstand it. ■



Lake Tekapo (all photos by G. Lowery unless otherwise noted)

Curator's Report: Rose Preservation Down Under—The South Island of New Zealand

In our spring newsletter I recounted the first half of an amazing journey to rose lovers and gardeners in New Zealand, a journey that I shared with Pamela and Michael Temple last November. We left off on the North Island, bound for a gathering of heritage rose lovers on the South Island where the final labeling of roses was to take place at Brandy Hill, a mother garden for Heritage Roses New Zealand's national registry of old roses. The registry is an attempt to identify all of the heritage roses that still exist in New Zealand gardens, and to duplicate and distribute those cultivars that are extremely rare.

Our winter is spring in the southern hemisphere. November is May. And many Americans travel down under to experience a land of great beauty, of native peoples and the ancestors of European



above: Central Otago from Brandy Hill; opposite: Pamela Temple among the Lupines

settlers of a kind and temperate climate in a dramatic landscape, surrounded by deep blue ocean, and blue skies streaked with long rolls of white clouds, exotic and curious wildlife and an endemic flora that is among the most beautiful in the world. I hope I can inspire you to travel there, to see all of this and make friends among the many, generous and welcoming lovers of old roses.

Arriving in Christchurch by plane, we headed for the high country, the vast arch of mountains that divides the cultivated, settled lands of the east from the rugged back country and fiords of the west, a place where trekkers and hikers love to go. At Lake Tekapo we encountered the fabled fields of wild lupines, a legacy of European gardens gone wild. Lake Tekapo stretches for miles westward toward Mt. Cook (Aeotora). The next day we followed the mountains southward towards Central Otago, an arid region populated with yet another European plant invader, *Rosa eglanteria*. For miles upon miles the dry hills are splattered with millions of plants of the Sweetbriar Rose, the ground beneath clothed with wild thyme, a hardy drought-resistant herb from the Mediterranean.

Among these hills we reached at last our destination, Brandy Hill, the home and garden of Murray and Noeleen Radka. A large group of HRNZ members had already gathered and begun the final



labeling of the roses at Brandy Hill. I had come with Pamela to compare the roses and names there with roses that we knew in our gardens in California. We came as well to share our stories of old roses in California with a welcoming crowd of old rose lovers.

At Brandy Hill we made new friends of three North Island Kiwis, Paula Lollbach, Judith Soja and Rachel Soloman, as well as reunited with our North Island hostess, Olga Yuretich. These four amazing women were to share the rest of our trip with us. Sharing the delights we witnessed could never have had the depth of meaning without them. In fact, one of the great joys of this tour was the people we met. Olga now has taken the lead as the head of Heritage Roses New Zealand, and if you go traveling down under, you'll want to look her up, if not all of these dedicated rosarians!

HRNZ members from all across the South Island had gathered after a year of systematically mapping and identifying the roses at Brandy Hill, under the brilliant guidance of artist-rosarian, Lyn Henry. For two days we joined in, tramping the steep hills and reveling in a rose garden in full spring bloom in December! A plant of *Rosa willmottiae* surprised me in conforming to the plant as I knew it, yet clearly differing in the way that differing collected forms of a wild rose will do. Always before I had only encountered a single clone of this wild Chinese rose.

Among the crowd of serious old rose lovers, the friends and family of Murray and Noeleen arrived, burdened with good food and drink, spreading tables laden with tea and cakes, reminding us that the internet may provide the means of sharing our passions with others, but nothing compares with spending a day with others pursuing our passions!

After our evening presentations Pamela, Michael and I were treated to a traditional Maori welcome from Murray Radka and his sons. It was a startling and moving ceremony that underlined the value of connections between people in the here and now, and the significance of the past and the future in that equation.

Leaving Brandy Hill was bittersweet. It is a sort of paradise for old roses, and the loving companionship of people dedicating themselves to preserving the old roses is a world we would love to live in. But the far south was our destination, and Invercargill called us. At the southern tip of the South Island, this old city seemed the heart of the traditions of gardening in New Zealand.

We wound the paved roads among the hills, always hugging to the left along the road, ever amazed and delighted by the beauty of wild clump grasses and streams choked with wild New Zealand plants, the masses of Californian shrubby yellow lupins, the small settlements of sheep herders and farmers in this dry climate, suddenly were thrilled to burst upon the moist and verdant hills and plains of the South.

We arrived on a mild and muggy afternoon at the Queen's Botanical Gardens in the center of Invercargill. Covering a massive expanse of the city center, it was a tour-de-force of English gardening, a place where rhododendrons and roses flourished in a climate ideal for their needs. Buried in a wild corner we discovered 'The Stumpery', a Victorian fad garden, now forgotten, but glorious in the fusion of plants and art; a dense display of stumps, trunks and branches of trees assembled with artistry and joy.

Further, near the center of the gardens lay the Jesse Calder Heritage Rose Garden. Few rose gardens in England today are so perfectly cared for, nor are the plants so happy. 'Gloire de Dijon' thrived high on a pergola, offering the greatest sight of Dijon's flowers that I had ever beheld. When we travel we often see the same old roses in many gardens and are tempted to think, "What's the point?" Yet here the point is made: somewhere on Earth is the perfect place for every rose, and 'Gloire de Dijon' is happier here than perhaps anywhere else. Thank the Maori gods for welcoming this glorious rose! It is worth a trip to a very far corner of the world for anyone who loves it!

We breathed deeply, we spoke again to an enthusiastic group of rose lovers, we spent one divine evening in the home and garden of Joyce Robins, whose B&B, Tudor Park, is an old rose lover's dream, where one of my favorite roses grows, the Hybrid Rugosa, 'Thusnelda'. We crept quietly away early the next morning to wend our way to Dunedin, the most beautiful city in New Zealand.

The drive northward, rambling among the sheep-speckled hills, on a pale sunny morning was dream-like, but on our way we held



top: 'Gloire de Dijon' (at Jesse Calder Garden); above: 'Thusnelda' (photo by J. Robins)



top: Maple Glen reflecting pool; above: Joyce Robins garden; opposite: 'Mousseaux du Japon'

a final prize for our tour of the Southland: Maple Glen, perhaps the greatest garden in New Zealand. It lies on a hillside in the undulating folds of a river where it houses one of the great rare plant collections in the world. It sits quietly among thousands of acres of sheep pasture. Black swans hurl themselves from the river inlets to drive you away, but you are already enfolded in the serene beauty and fear them not. Plants and water, reflections of beauty stop you still. And in the garden, only one rose grows. I will

not tell you which it is, for you must go there and seek it out!

Dunedin is the Scottish city of New Zealand—it embodies the old world European settlements of this ancient group of islands. Little has changed since the 19th century, and, sadly, change

has altered this old world elsewhere. High on a hill overlooking the brilliant harbor, the serene Otago Peninsula and the city, the Victorian Dunedin North Cemetery commands a view of the living world. The light of this rose-rich resting place drew us to Dunedin.



Like California's Old City Cemetery in Sacramento, the 'Old Northern' has been revered and cared for by a new generation of old rose lovers, whose enthusiasm to preserve memories of an earlier age, led them to plant the hundreds of foundlings from old places on the South Island and to enrich this cemetery with roses lost with the toll of time.

Throughout our journey a few treasures to be met drew us onward. The Dunedin cemetery was one. Another was the visit and tour, that coincided with ours, by Japan's Yuki Mikanagi, whose speaking tour of New Zealand culminated in a presentation at Dunedin. Yuki, a respected botanist and curator of the Chiba Institute near Sakura, Japan, came to share her story of wild and old rose discoveries around the world. The evening of our arrival we joined a happy audience in the Dunedin city library to learn from Yuki. The following morning, to our delight, Yuki arranged to spend with us in the Northern Cemetery. The thousands of roses were beyond our ability to investigate as we might have wished. But in four hours we found a rich feast of discoveries including the beautiful 'Mousseaux du Japon', a moss hybrid, bred in France, unfamiliar to Yuki, once a treasured rose in the Friends' collection, now lost.

Yuki departed the next morning, but I looked forward to a special tour she had planned for me in Japan in May. Pamela still treasures the rare found rose that Yuki discovered on a trip to China a few



above: "Outtram's Jeffe Jackson"; opposite top: Moeraki Boulders; opposite bottom: *Rosa prattii*

years back; a China rose, remontant and pink that climbs and blooms continuously. It is known as "Yuki's Dream".

Two gardens awaited us, and a vision of wild New Zealand. Our nights in New Zealand were hosted by Linley and Ally Campbell. Linley grew up on the Otago Peninsula. There she took us one evening to see the Blue Penguins, a tiny species of Penguin with deep blue

plumage who struggle ashore to nest at night, avoiding the hungry killer whales. The cold, wet, windy viewing was a thrill, but unexpectedly we arrived in time to see the twilight aerial gamboling of New Zealand's great Albatross, the largest in the world, careening quietly in the updraft where land and sea collide.

At Linley's we awoke to a calm and enchanted meeting of garden and pasture; her ribbon of garden up drive and around the farm house melded softly into sheep pasture, a vision of the balance held for generations between beauty and industry.

It was Fran Rawling's garden that called to me. I had spent more than a day in it some years before—a garden that had enchanted me more than any I had seen in this land down-under. Wylde Willow Garden it is called, a riparian lowland rich with old roses. Like Pamela Temple's garden, it captures mystery and imagination. It strives to be the safe haven for old and found roses that is so much needed in our world. One lovely old foundling HP in Fran's garden left me curious and impressed: "Outtram's Jeffe Jackson". Fran

served as president of HRNZ when I was invited to speak earlier at the conference in Dunedin; her leadership continues to bring people together over old rose preservation.

We regretted leaving Dunedin—and parting from such fine friends as Fran, Linley, Fiona Hyland, Shirley Smith and the delightful Ann Williams who took us to see her garden, packed to overflowing with a grand collection of old roses and perennials. But ahead lay Timaru, along the coast road north, and the species rose collection which I had longed to visit, as well as the Trevor Griffiths garden, a memorial garden that strives to display a large number of the old roses collected by the gentle nurseryman, known to many from his three books written in the 1980s, including *A Celebration of Old Roses*.

Stopping along the shore to visit the Moeraki Boulders, huge spherical rocks lying in a soft sandy beach, we headed north to the Timaru Botanic garden. Daphne Whitfort-Smith, our hostess, a woman with the energy and determination to see that the two great rose gardens of that city came to be and continue to thrive, met us and swept us in to discover rare species that none of us had known before. I fell



deeply for the maroon stamens and pearl white petals of *Rosa prattii*, a wild rose from Western China.

The following day we walked from Daphne's tumbling old rose garden to the Trevor Griffiths Garden. You reach it over a high bridge spanning a railway where the view down is dizzying and revealing—the garden from a bird's eye perspective spreads its bounty of roses



in full glory. It is a fitting tribute to the great New Zealand collector of heritage roses. The group who help to tend it is justly proud. Some roses remain fixed in memory: the finest example of the old found Damask, 'Omar Khayyam', and an exquisite butter yellow Rambler that Pamela and I had never seen,



'François Posson', arching over a curved pergola and leaping at the blue southern sky.

At length we headed north again to Christchurch, spent a sublime afternoon in the garden of Sally Allison, and wandered Christchurch's great botanic garden and collection of wild roses. Our final days were shared with Joan Taylor, the nurserywoman who supplies Mottisfont Abbey in England with perennials to keep the Graham Thomas plantings alive. Joan organized the conference at Mottisfont sponsored by the Heritage Rose Foundation in 2015. She is an old friend to us, and her keen love of gardens made our last days a special treat.

I hope that this ramble through New Zealand encourages many of you to travel there. It is a beautiful world and filled to the brim with old roses, and those who truly care for them!

—Gregg Lowery

opposite top:
'Omar Khayyam';
opposite bottom: Timaru;
right: 'François Posson'





opposite: 'Amadis'; above: 'Blush Boursault' (photos by P. Temple)

Beautiful Boursaults

Pamela Temple

The Boursaults are a small group of modest climbers. They are thornless, hardy, and early flowering with a graceful arching habit. Most Boursaults date from the 19th century. They are named for Jean-Francois Boursault a French actor, revolutionary, politician, founder of the Societe Royal D'Horticulture de France in 1827, botanist, and amateur rose breeder.

Possibly the first Boursault was the result of the first union of *R. chinensis* with a European rose. This rose was known for several years as *R. boursaultii*, or popularly as 'Boursault Rose'. The original plant was sent to the garden of Boursault. There it was observed by Thory who published the name *R. l'heritierana* in Redoute's *Les Roses*. Named after L'Hertier (1746–1800), he wrote, "To whom Redoute dedicates this modest monument in tribute to his patronage and tuition at the start of his career." Thory dubbed it as

"obviously" a hybrid of *R. alpina* and *R. indica* and believed it was raised from seeds of the latter by Vilmorin. Roy Shepherd in *The History of the Rose* states that this rose was produced by a French nurseryman named Cugnot in 1810 and that it appeared to be a hybrid of *R. chinensis* and *R. pendulina*. Lately chromosome research suggests that the cross is *R. chinensis* and *R. blanda*.

In our collection there are a mere six Boursaults. There appear to be two more available in Europe. Other Boursault are not in commerce. Here are our beautiful Boursaults:

'L'heritieranea', the first Boursault, has small purple/mauve flowers with a white center and white streaks. They are produced in clusters with 15 to 20 petals and no fragrance. There is no repeat bloom. This rose is described as tall and arching, but our own plant has never grown over four feet.

'Blush Boursault' has delicate, fragrant blooms of very soft blushing pink produced, as all the Boursaults, very early in the season. The slim canes are easily trained to a support where they will grow

to perhaps eight feet. In Northern California 'Blush Boursault' has some re-bloom.

'Morletii' is probably the most vigorous of the Boursaults, producing many canes up to ten feet tall. The deep pink blooms come in small clusters in the spring with a scattered re-bloom. It has attractive fall foliage. The breeder of 'Morletii' is unknown. It was discovered by Morlet in France 1883.

'Madame de Sancy de Parabere, bred by Bonnet in 1874, has the largest blooms among the Boursaults, with particularly large guard petals of soft pink and a mass of smaller, more deeply colored inner petals. Like 'Blush Boursault' it is easy to train, growing to eight feet.

'Amadis' was bred by Laffay in 1829. The blooms are a lovely deep plum-purple, shaded with crimson, with some white marking inside. They come in small clusters in the spring on tall, arching, thornless canes with maroon-colored stems.

'Weissrote Madame Sancy de Parabere' is the blush sport of 'Madame de Sancy'. Its color is very mutable, ranging from nearly the same as its parent to nearly white, with streaks of pink.

Two more Boursaults are unavailable in the U.S: 'L'Orleanaise' was bred by Vigner on in 1899. It climbs to eight feet and bears light pink blooms with a darker center. 'Boursault Pliene', bred by Cartier pre-1829, has pink, very double blooms and is a modest climber.

Boursaults are rare, delicate, subtle beauties with unique attributes. They deserve to be more widely grown. ■

Addendum

I wish to commend Pamela Temple on her enthusiasm for Boursault Roses. It stands as a stark contrast to William Robinson and one of his cohorts who in 1898 considered the Boursault roses "charming" but an "almost useless" and "a worthless group." Wrote Robinson, "It is one of the group of roses not worth keeping up." Thank you, Pamela, for promulgating the love of these particular roses.

—The Editor



'Lowell Thomas' (photo by K King)

Pernetianas In Our Collection: An Abecedarian

Darrell g.h. Schramm

PART II

Is L for love, lust, or Lawrence of Arabia? It's for Lowell Thomas. It was 1918 when Lowell Thomas, a lecturer and journalist at Princeton University, arrived in Jerusalem as a war correspondent. There he met T. E. Lawrence, the "uncrowned king of Arabia." By early 1919 Lowell Thomas had filmed a documentary of Lawrence fighting with the Turks entitled *With Lawrence in Arabia*. The film quickly became a sell-out in New York. When Thomas took the show to England, it played to full houses throughout the summer. By the end of the season, Lawrence of Arabia had become one of the most celebrated English war heroes. In 1924, capitalizing on this success, Thomas published his book *Lawrence of Arabia*.

Thomas went on to become perhaps the most famous voice and personality of radio broadcasting in the English-speaking world. He lived until 1981. But in the meantime a rose was dedicated to him.



'Miss Rowena Thom' (photo by K. King)

Its long-pointed bud becomes a large, very double rose of canary yellow—a “glowing flower”—on a long stem of an upright, compact bush growing to about three and a half feet high.

On 6 October 1943, Robert Pyle, president of the Conard-Pyle Nursery that grew the thrilling Pernetiana/Hybrid Tea, introduced the rose to ten million listeners of “America’s News Voice of the Air, the radio broadcast of Lowell Thomas. (I remember it as simply “Lowell Thomas and the News.”) Mr. Pyle handed a huge bouquet of yellow roses to Mr. Thomas with the words, “Rose growers seek for new roses a popular name, and this we have given your name.” “Huh,” was Mr. Thomas’ reply, “I don’t know how to express my thanks, but I think it would have been more appropriate to name the thorns after me, not the rose—but I am touched.”

M is the center of the alphabet. ‘Miss Rowena Thom’, a Pernetiana of 1927 or 28, a clear pink blending to soft sunset gold at the base of the petals that show somewhat scalloped edges, now takes center stage, though dimly lit. Vigorous, profuse, and healthy, its huge flowers are almost too heavy for their stems. It grows over six feet tall



'Narzisse' (photo by M. Hartley)

Who was Rowena Thom? I don’t know. But Frank Howard, who bred the rose, must have liked, appreciated, or even revered her to have named his rose for her. He seems to have believed in the rose and in her, yet today who knows either of them? Someone somewhere, perhaps. But both have essentially vanished. And yet, as Bill Grant once wrote in *Pacific Horticulture*, “There’s a glimmer in all this disappearance and loss.” Some of that glimmer shines through from the preservation efforts of Gregg Lowery and The Friends of Vintage Roses.

‘Narzisse’, a late Pernetiana bred by Max Krause before 1937 and introduced five years later, is a strongly scented rose of 20–25 petals, under three feet tall, and of a pale or buff yellow with apricot shading. High-centered with reflexed petals, ‘Narzisse’ is a rose of longevity and endurance.

The rose name refers, of course, to the handsome Greek lad Narcissus who fell in love with himself on seeing his reflection in a still pool—one might interpret this as a young male falling in love with a male of his fantasy. Unwilling to leave the reflection, he expired, so the gods in pity metamorphosed him into the narcissus flower. The actual rose



'Oratum' (photo by B. Loubert)

reflects the story in that its parentage is the rose 'Golden Rapture' mated with 'Golden Glory', as though the Golden were enraptured with each other.

O. A rare rose, 'Oratum' is a Pernetiana and Damask hybrid ('Souvenir de Claudius Pernet' x *R. damascena*). Bred before 1937, the rose displays coppery pink colors with pale yellow undertones, not unlike the colors of 'Archiduc Joseph'. A modern day Damask, it is a once-bloomer of five to six feet in height. The medium-sized blooms are especially remarkable: the flowers often appear like huge, peach-colored ruffles or, with their widely reflexed outer petals and curled inner petals, like a flouncy cushion. It can be viewed in the gardens of Carla Fineschi in Italy, Kessel Wilhelmshohe in Germany, Roseraie de L'Hay in France, Europa-rosarium in Sangerhausen, Germany, and, of course, online.

Bred by Martin R. Jacobus of New Jersey, 'Oratum' with its unusual name is historically connected to the early colonists of America. Oratum was a chieftain of the Hackensack Indians of New Jersey



'President Plumecocq' (photo by D. Schramm)

throughout most of the 17th century. He lived to be about ninety years old. After the New Netherland Dutch arrived as colonists, he often negotiated treaties and truces between the whites and the indigenous people. In 1666 he even negotiated the sale of land which would become Greater Newark, New Jersey. Roses can help us remember our history and therefore define who we are—or are not.

'President Plumecocq', introduced in 1931, shifts and varies its shades of saffron, coralline, and gold. In summer its buds promise a pink flower that opens first into a pink and soft yellow blend. Yet I've seen its buds a chartreuse yellow. It's also been described as "coppery buff" with an "overflow of salmon" whose inner petals glow "like fiery apricot."

The rose is named for Marceau Plumecocq who in 1920 founded the Society of Horticulture and Working gardens in France. Both he and his wife Zelia were popular, much respected and admired. A dahlia was named 'Docteur Plumecocq', and both Louis Lens and Gaujard named respective Hybrid Teas 'Mme Plumecocq'. In 1954



'Rev. F. Page-Roberts' (photo by G. Lowery)

Zelia Plumecocq became the president of the society while Marceau Plumecocq stepped down to organize a national horticulture exhibition in Nantes, France, known as Floralties, which since has continued to be a major event every three years.

Of 'Rev. F. Page-Roberts' Bobbink & Atkins declared in their 1932 catalogue that the rose was nearly a classic, "but it will never become a common rose," for it was simply too lovely. The coppery buds open into double flowers of golden yellow "stained outside with red." The large rich blooms are not fond of hot climates but in autumn present a lavish growth of flowers, all with a striking fragrance.

Known as one of the old school rosarians, the Reverend F. Page-Roberts came to roses rather late.

At Scole in Norfolk, England, he began growing Tea roses and soon won several awards at the old Crystal Palace shows. Moving as Rector to Halstead in Kent, he continued his rose growing, where he was known to have budded more than 1000 roses each year. He served as President of the National Rose Society in 1909 and 1910 and won the Dean Hole Memorial Medal in 1919. The rose named for him appeared in 1921. He died about five years later.



'Sunburst' (from a 1913 nursery catalogue)

'Sunburst' is another yellow rose, one suffused with orange at the center—but somewhat variable in the summer. It reveals large, shapely and fragrant blooms of about twenty petals. The fall bloom is especially fine when the colors are more a rich cadmium yellow with an orange-yellow centers.

The story behind 'Sunburst' follows: When the American rose breeder E. Gurney Hill was visiting the renowned Pernet-Ducher around 1912, he spotted a yellow rose not yet on the market that captivated him, and he almost immediately offered to buy it. Pernet-Ducher asked what Hill was willing to pay. "Five hundred dollars," the latter replied without hesitation. Pernet-Ducher refused to accept that much and finally agreed to 1500 francs (\$292.50 at the time). Hill then allowed the great breeder to reserve European rights to the rose while he himself would market it in the U.S.



'The Doctor' (photo by B. Grant)

Ironically, in the the end, Pernet-Ducher earned more from sales than did Hill.

T? The English described it as “lozenge pink overshot with a velvety sheen.” I refer to the wonderfully scented, enormous rose called ‘The Doctor’. Horace McFarland considered the flowers “without question, the most glorious pink rose we have ever seen.” Quite likely he was influenced by his perhaps erroneous belief that the rose was named for him. Breeder Jack Harkness considered ‘The Doctor’ in some respects “as the climax of the type of pink Hybrid Tea ushered in during the 1890s.” According to Norman Young, it has been known to exceed “150 flowering days in a season.”

Jack Harkness in 1985, *Botanica's Roses* (1998), and the *ARS American Encyclopedia of Roses* (2003) maintain the rose was named for Dr. J. H. Nicolas, rose hybridist, authority, and author, who was affectionally called The Doctor. J. Horace McFarland in two *ARS* annuals and in one edition of *Roses of the World in Color* claimed the rose was named



'Violinista Costa' (photo by D. Schramm)

for him; however, he eliminated that claim in the third edition of that book. Until we know from any records that Frank Howard, breeder of the rose, may have kept or that Dreer Nurseries, growers and marketers of the rose, may have kept, for whom the rose was named we may never know.

The rose ‘Violinista Costa’ won a Gold Medal at Barcelona in 1936, the year it was introduced. It was an ugly year for a beautiful rose, the year the Spanish Civil War ensued, a war Franco would not have won without the aid—manpower, munitions, and dive-bomber airplanes—of both Hitler and Mussolini, and Texaco’s supply of gasoline and oil. Through most of that war, Francisco Costa (1891–1959) performed in concert as often as he could on his violin in Barcelona, lending some beauty to a devastating and fearful time. For over a generation he was known throughout Europe as a consummate violinist. The famous Spanish composer Turina said he was the most inspired and Bohemian of Spanish violinists.



'Willowmere' (photo by J. Reitter)

The rose is colored a smokey vermillion. Large and luscious, it grows on short, thorny stems on a low, stout bush of shiny leaves. It's the kind of rose one expects to see pinned above the ear of a Spanish flamenco dancer, a treasure one returns to view again and again.

'Willowmere', a rose bred by Pernet-Ducher in 1913, is another pink rose, one with a yellowish glow from the center, a strong grower, a fine rose with continual flowering. Erect and branching, its foliage may need attention at times. It was named for the estate on Long Island of one of the breeder's greatest admirers, the rose lovers Admiral Aaron and Mrs. Ward who did much to raise funds for the allies of WWI when the U.S. was still determined to remain neutral.

Finally, a dark rose among the Pernetianas enters this abecedarian: 'Zulu Queen'. A short plant with large flowers, its reverse petals exhibit a shiny crimson, its interior petals a dark velvet crimson. It



'Zulu Queen' (photo by C. Orent)

is essentially maroon, and fragrant. Though like 'Crimson Glory', it is darker but a stingy bloomer. 'Willowmere' stirs in its blood. And although the rose was not issued until 1939, one would hope the breeder Wilhelm Kordes named it not in stereotype but in respect of an African personage. Indeed, it may have been named for Queen Silomo or Queen Zihlazile, one of the two wives of the last (1888) free and uncolonized Zulu leaders King Dinizulu.

In addition to their descriptions and history, these Pernetianas show us a rare but lingering presence for those still fond of them, whether in private or public gardens and the occasional nursery. They show us not what might have been but what—ever so shakily—continues to be.

Note: This is the second part of a two-part article. See Issue 13 for Part I.

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The Friends of Vintage Roses exists to preserve and enhance the unique and extensive collection of historic roses developed by Gregg Lowery and Phillip Robinson, to establish the collection in a garden, and to share the collection with other public rose preservation efforts, all for the purpose of educating the public about the importance of the rose to human history, cultures, technology, and science.

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R. foetida persiana (photo by G. Lowery)

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