THE *Vintage rose*

Winter 2023, Issue 30

THE FRIENDS OF VINTAGE ROSES

NOTE: please change your pdf view to landscape mode for optimum screen viewing.

NEWSLETTER FOR THE FRIENDS OF VINTAGE ROSES
Winter 2023, Issue 30

IN THIS ISSUE:

Featured Rose: 'Mrs. Miniver'

Over the years since the 1940s, the rose had nearly vanished, but two people searched for it, refusing to believe it had altogether disappeared. . . . *see page 3*

Vintage Roses at Rosy Knoll Food Forest

When Larry and I moved into our 1/3 acre suburban Santa Barbara home some thirty years ago, we had no idea that our backyard would turn into a permaculture-style food forest . . . *see page 5*

My Garden: A Work of Heart

It seems that I cannot stop myself from planting new roses. I see a photo, hear a romantic name or read a tantalizing description of a rose . . . *see page 9*

Eight Gardeners in Conversation

Laying aside the manuscript for his 29th book, Beverley Nichols had opened his rural English garden to a few both once and future gardeners . . . *see page 12*

La Reunion and the Bourbon Rose

When I was twenty, wanderlust took me from my home in Salt Lake City, Utah, to the farthest geographical point in the world, La Reunion, France. . . . *see page 16*

On the cover: 'Celestial' (photo by Bill Grant)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Featured Rose: 'Mrs. Miniver' 3
Vintage Roses at Rosy Knoll Food Forest 5
My Garden: A Work of Heart 9
Eight Gardeners in Conversation 12
La Reunion and the Bourbon Rose 16
New Faces for a New Year—The Curator's Report 18

FROM THE EDITOR

Clair Haig, President of Heritage Roses New Zealand writes in its August 2022 issue, "Old roses in Britain are enjoying a comeback. With the return to more naturalistic plantings that foster increasing biodiversity, wild and species roses fit perfectly into the environment. . . . Mottisfont Abbey with Graham Stuart Thomas' collection of historic roses is getting record numbers of visitors, Sissinghurst Castle's white garden started by Vita Sackville-West is still visited in ever increasing numbers, and tours run by rosarian Michael Marriot specifically to see historic roses are oversubscribed." This is cause for optimism. In this issue we suggest even more causes. A lost rose found: 'Mrs. Miniver'. Linda Buzzell's creative way of juxtaposing edibles in her garden with roses. Of course, rose petals, if not sprayed, are edible too. Then there is Pamela Temple's garden, an exuberance and riot of color and form. Mark Taylor's excitement as newly designated Bourbon curator is almost contagious. Despite drought, hurricane, flood, fires, we can glory in roses. As rosarians we have much for which to be thankful and optimistic.

above: Greer Garson as Mrs. Miniver; right: 'Mrs. Miniver' (photo by Neville Carr)

'Mrs. Miniver'

Darrell g.h. Schramm

'Mrs Miniver', whose pointed, scarlet buds open to large, semi-double but sometimes double dark red roses with some purple shading remains a dwindling treasure. The rose yields about twenty petals, which show rather scalloped edges. Expelling a strong, fruity scent, the flowers usually come in small clusters of two to five roses on a compact, upright bush.

Over the years since the 1940s, the rose had nearly vanished, but two people searched for it, refusing to believe it had altogether disappeared: the granddaughter of Jan Struther who created the fictional Mrs. Miniver, and Orlando Murrin, a former UK editor of lifestyle magazines and current editor of BBC Good Food as well as cookbook author. Unknown to them, around 2009 Lost Beauties, a rose association in Germany, had collected about four dozen old Hybrid Teas from Europa Rosarium in Sangerhausen to be propagated by the Ruf Bioland Rosenschule nursery northeast of Frankfurt. One of these was 'Mrs Miniver'. In 2014 Orlando Murrin asked Becky Hook of the French nursery La Roseraie du Désert for help. She put him in touch with a friend in Germany—probably at the Ruf nursery—who had propagated 'Mrs Miniver' plants. Murrin acquired two in 2016 and now grows the roses on his rooftop garden. Meanwhile St. Bridget Nurseries in Exeter have now also propagated this rose (along with another rose no longer sold in England, 'Judy Garland'.)

'Mrs Miniver' was bred by Marguerite Denoyel, niece of the French breeder César Chambard. He had bred the still extant, very red 'Souvenir de Claudius Denoyel' in memory of her husband who was killed in WWI. She had originally named the 'Mrs Miniver' rose 'Souvenir de Louis Simon' for a friend of hers when she released it in 1940. When Jackson & Perkins acquired the rights to sell the rose in the USA shortly after the movie created a sensation, they renamed it 'Mrs Miniver'. Marguerite Denoyel would go on to introduce another Hybrid Tea in 1943, 'Greer Garson', no longer available.

The movie *Mrs Miniver,* directed by William Wyler, according to historian Kevin Starr was "the most successful pro-British Hollywood film ever." Starring Greer Garson (who won an Oscar for her role) and Walter Pidgeon, it concerns a comfortable middle-class family in rural England during the first years of WWII. They have three children, the oldest a son recently graduated from Oxford. In an early episode, which the *Downton Abbey* series virtually copied from *Mrs. Miniver,* Lady Beldon is awarded the prize at a rose show, but when asked to announce the recipient, she declares the winner to be the local station master for a rose he had entered and named in honor of Mrs. Miniver. The rose in the film, like Greer Garson herself, took the stage. Their lives are soon shattered with blackouts and bomb raids. The son joins the Royal Air Force, and the father leaves in his boat to help the Dunkirk evacuees. Meanwhile, a downed Nazi pilot enters their home and threatens Mrs. Miniver with a gun. A daughter-in-law is killed in an air raid. Perhaps too sentimental for some viewers, it is a story of tragedy but also of fortitude and hope, a much needed story for the time. It demonstrated to many Americans that England was worth fighting, if not dying, for. It was for the United States in 1942 the top-grossing film. But Wyler, after he visited England and witnessed the destroyed buildings, the weakly nourished citizens, their shabby clothes, the unspeakable casualties among American and British pilots, sailors, and soldiers, acknowledged that his film had "only scratched the surface" of war's reality.

For a time Europa-Rosarium grew 'Mrs Miniver' in its extensive collectiion, but in 2012 the gardens lost it to a freeze. The recovery now of 'Mrs Miniver' is a leaven, a motive, a model for hope—even as Britain was a hope for all of Nazi-conquered Europe during WWII—in keeping alive roses that have been special to many a gardener in the past and still are special today. ■

AN EASY WAY TO DONATE!

When making a purchase on Amazon, consider joining the Amazon Smile program. Just indicate The Friends of Vintage Roses as your charity of choice.

'Madame Berard' (photos by Linda Buzzell-Saltzman)

Vintage Roses at Rosy Knoll Food Forest

Linda Buzzell-Saltzman

When Larry and I moved into our 1/3 acre suburban Santa Barbara home some thirty years ago, we had no idea that our backyard would turn into a permaculture-style food forest with over 100 fruit trees, herbs and other edibles—including delicious edible roses whose petals adorn our salads.

After getting advice from the local permaculture guild and taking the Permaculture Design Course, we also joined the Santa Barbara Rose Society and met heritage rosarian extraordinaire Jeri Jennings, who urged us to add some of the tough older roses available from Gregg Lowery's Vintage Gardens to our food forest.

A delightful, years-long Vintage Gardens shopping expedition and cutting-swapping frenzy ensued, and we were able to plant some wonderful roses all around the informal garden wherever there was room. Wanting even more space for the roses, we bought five metal arches and a larger "rose tunnel" from garden centers and local ironsmiths.

Many of these roses settled in beautifully and enjoy our conditions, but a few others decided our garden wasn't for them. The good news was that we have clay soil that most roses seem to enjoy. And as permaculturists, we mulch heavily with a "chop and drop" technique. The bad news for the weaker roses was that we have no irrigation system and just hand water as needed, following Santa Barbara rosarian Dan Bifano's advice to watch for wilting before adding water. This rather Darwinian technique has resulted in some very strong and vigorous, drought-tolerant roses!

So who are some of our winners? Thornless 'Madame Berard' covers one of our arches with lovely peachy flushes of bloom followed by large edible hips, thriving opposite the prickly 'Mel's Heritage,' named in memory of beloved rosarian Colonel Mel Hulse of San Jose. 'Reve d'Or' covers another arch beautifully but that was our third try with her—she is happy only in this one location far from the house at the bottom of a hill where the winter rains sink down to her.

Thornless 'Mrs. Dudley Cross' is thriving as a 5 x 7 foot shrub next to our hedge, providing a stunning show of loose-necked white

above: 'Reve d'Or'; top right: 'Mrs. Dudley Cross'; center right: 'Belle Portugaise'; bottom right: 'Montecito'

blooms during spring and fall. And of course Jeri wouldn't let us forget about found rose "Grandmother's Hat," which sits next to Mrs. Cross. Nearby, 'Alliance Franco Russe' is a surprise winner for us, settling in well next to a prolific 'Hood' pear.

'Rosette Delizy,' 'Niles Cochet' and 'Blush Noisette' all surround our front patio—the latter offering lovely fragrance while we enjoy an afternoon glass of wine on a sunny day.

We love roses with some local provenance. Victorian-era found rose "Benny Lopez" unsurprisingly feels right at home in our garden, having lived in the neighborhood for over 100 years before being rescued by heritage rose lovers. 'Belle Portugaise' is another rose with local roots, as we took a cutting from a happy specimen only a block from Santa Barbara's Franceschi Park, once the home of Francesco Franceschi the Victorian-era plant importer. Belle is now about 14 feet high and full of lush, loose, pale rose blooms each spring.

Jeri warned us against planting another local gigantea hybrid, 'Montecito,' bred by Franceschi himself, but how could we resist a super-local provenance like this? And indeed, M has leapt out of the ground from a cutting, eager to take over the planet. We may be somewhat permissive with our other roses, only pruning when necessary, but with this prickly rose a stern hand is needed. We wouldn't want to be without M, though, as those huge, single white blooms are breathtakingly bee-friendly and the fat orange hips in fall are both lovely and edible.

As I'm sure everyone reading this knows, heritage roses can become something of an addiction! The history and the story are often as exciting as the rose. One example on an arch in our kitchen garden is 'Claire Jacquier,' who offers small egg-colored blooms in delicate drooping sprays in spring. We ran across Claire at the Guthrie-Bianchini House in Cambria where she was awaiting rescue after being rejected and removed from Hearst Castle during a redo of their gardens. She's thornless and takes some shade—both qualities are a plus for us as we need to be able to easily tend adjacent fruit trees without injury. Claire is now crawling into the adjacent 'Pink Lady' apple tree, searching for more real estate to conquer—just like her previous owner William Randolph Hearst always was.

Another rose with nice coastal California historical provenance is the Atmore clone of 'Lamarque' now climbing a fence at the bottom of the garden. Thanks to Jeri for that lovely, fragrant climber.

'Clementina Carbonieri' is now in her third location in our garden, finally looking like she might want to settle in and put on some size. Like many of our Tea Roses, she is sometimes a bit finicky, taking a good while to decide if she's going to put down serious roots.

'Gilbert Nabonnand' is another of our favorite thornless roses, providing lovely, loose, pale pink tea rose blooms but no "ouch" when we paint the window he sits in front of.

top left: 'Lamarque'; bottom left: 'Gilbert Nabonnand'; above: 'Portland from Glendora'

Another of our favorite roses is Damask-Perpetual "Portland from Glendora," which we bought from rosarian Frances Grate at the historic Cooper-Molera Adobe in Monterey over a decade ago. This lovely rose-purple rose offers the best fragrance in our garden so we cherish her, but she is not without faults. Late in the season she can get rust and travel underground (which can be a good thing when we dig up the offshoots, pot them and share them with fellow gardeners.) We never spray in our garden as it's a food forest, so we just remove the rusty leaves which are soon replaced.

And we can't forget some of the "newer" roses like 'Sally Holmes' and 'Phyllis Bide' that do so well for us here. Sally has the added benefit of growing easily from cuttings, so we're always adding more of her.

We first met Sally at Gregg's garden one October evening many years ago when those hydrangea-headed white clusters were at their peak, so of course we had to add her to our garden.

As you can imagine, with 100+ fruit trees, a sunny spot for a new rose is sometimes a challenge to find, but some of the older roses are proving to be amazingly shade tolerant. Perhaps it's the strong California sun being refracted into darker corners. 'General Gallieni' provides us with spring and fall blooms of amazing red-yellow color in spite of the shade from the deepest "forest" parts of our garden. We really should take cuttings and spread him around in a sunnier spot—but of course we haven't yet found the time.

In our research on the history of roses in Santa Barbara, we were inspired to learn more about well-known local rose hybridizer Father Schoener. At the A.C. Postel Rose Garden in front of the Mission, both 'Arrillaga' and 'Schoener's Nutkana' are now present. The latter was planted by a former Santa Barbara mayor in a ceremony celebrating the 150th anniversary of Schoener's birth. But sadly, we've had no success with either in our home garden. Roses seem to pick and choose their own favored locations, don't they?

There are many other roses in our garden that we could talk about: 'Lady Ann Kidwell,' 'Old Blush,' 'Veilchenblau,' "Thomasville Old Gold" (struggling), 'Perle d'Or' and more. But perhaps I need to mention a few who didn't thrive and are much missed. Hopefully we'll try again with 'Lady Hillingdon,' 'Marechal Niel,' "Angel's Camp Tea" (a victim of the last drought) and lovely 'Caroline Testout,' one of my husband's favorites.

Perhaps I should say a little more here about how roses are part of the "food" in our food forest. A modern rose, 'Julia Child,' started us on this journey. The divine Julia lived her final years in Santa Barbara and is a local culinary icon—as she is around the planet. How could her butter-colored petals not be tasty? My husband invented the "Julia Child Salad" in honor of Julia and her rose.

above: 'Phyllis Bide'; right: 'General Gallieni'

Not to be forgotten, rose hips are often on the menu as well. We haven't yet made jam, but we enjoy experimenting with making various rose hip teas.

Heritage roses are so rewarding, and we like to share our older roses with other local rose lovers, and often in October we hold an informal gathering in our garden where we and fellow rosarians share cuttings and rooting techniques. We hope that by spreading these wonderful, tough roses around, they will continue to be available to the local gardeners of the future.

For more photos of our garden: *https://www.facebook.com/Rosy-Knoll-Forest-Garden-332039960975956* ■

left top: 'Flora' beneath climbing 'Iceberg', 'Scepter'd Isle' (left), 'Sachsengruss' (right); left lower: 'Mannington Mauve'; above: 'Julia Child' (center), 'Pink Mermaid' (rear), 'Bubble Bath' (right) (photos by Pamela Temple)

My Garden: A Work of Heart

Pamela Temple

It seems that I cannot stop myself from planting new roses. I see a photo, hear a romantic name or read a tantalizing description of a rose that I've not planted before, and I am entranced. I believe that we love roses as we do no other flower because in varying shades of awareness, we recognize it as a symbol for the pure and beautiful mystery of life. I see a tiny, rooted cutting or a bare root rose in a bag as something that contains a rare treasure, for every rose contains this possibility of beauty. It is the nurture of this possibility to full flower to which I am dedicated. In my garden the spiritual and the earthly are as entwined as the canes of a rampant Rambler. The drive to create is very strong, and the need to nurture beauty and order is universal. One can create a world apart in a garden, a very personal world. This has been my goal. When you are entering my garden, you are entering my world. The heart is a secret garden, and at the very center of this place is a rose.

The building of the garden began in 1995 when my husband Michael and I were married, and I moved out to this secluded hillside in Northern California, Mendocino County. Michael had a vegetable garden and a small strip of flowers planted near the house. The first thing I did was to increase this space to a larger triangle. I planted two roses, a 'Climbing Cecile Brunner' and a 'Double Delight'. By the next year I had visions of a larger garden.

Over the next couple of years, we had some work done to increase the output of our springs. Continually I would plant more roses, so we were struggling to supply water to the plants by the end of the season.

left: House and studio, 'Newport Fairy' (far right); above: 'Mrs F.W. Flight' (left), 'May Queen' (right)

It was when we discovered the availability of antique roses that my garden fantasies began to run wild. I have always loved roses, but I was content to live with a dozen or so until the passion for old roses overcame me. I found the variety, history, and romance of them endlessly fascinating. Michael caught the bug as well. We would go out rose hunting for the day and come back with far too many young rose plants. Something had to be done. In 1999 we had an agricultural pond built. With this completed and thousands of gallons of water at my disposal, I knew I could realize my dreams. I could create a huge rose garden. The garden and I began to slowly move downhill towards the deer fence until it grew to around two acres. It is not my way to sit down with paper and pencil to make detailed plans. Often the lay of the land was my influence for how the beds and pathways would wind their way along. The dramatic wild hills surrounding the garden also played a big part in its conception. A great deal of formality would never do in this situation.

Sometimes I would get a vision and go out to the space and try to see how that might work. I built beds by taking the topsoil off the pathways and making terraces. Michael drove to the nearby quarry and brought rocks for retaining walls and gravel for the pathways. The wheelbarrow became part of me and still is. There is something very satisfying about hard physical labor combined with creative effort.

The roses were collected and planted without a great plan in mind. I simply loved them all and tried my best to plant them as they were collected in a way that at least did not clash. All the classes are represented. We especially love climbing roses and try to find space for as many as possible. However, there were a few plans. There is an area called "The Red Rose Circle," which contains, of course, all red roses. In another area I planted only pink and white roses and another area of white and yellow.

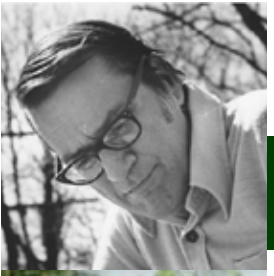
left: 'Newport Fairy' in foreground, 'Queen of the Belgians' behind; below: 'June Morn'; top right: 'Edmond Proust' (foreground); lower right: 'Aristide Briand' on arch, 'Courvoisier' (foreground)

Into all this near confusion I found it necessary to create focal points. This would be a statue, pond or formally shaped bed. Along the fence line I planted climbers and Ramblers. They have since grown large and are wonderful in the spring. I have included companion plants as much as possible in what I would call a cottage-style profusion. Over the years I have switched to more drought tolerant plants. My main wish was to build a garden that was interesting, romantic, and mysterious where you could wander for a long time, making a new discovery each time you walked through. The sheer profusion of roses made this very easy.

Around twelve years ago we began a project that changed our lives and the garden. We were asked to curate The Friends of Vintage Roses' Rambler collection. We were thrilled to foster these free and wild growers. Michael fenced in another acre or so. We brought up dozens of roses in five-gallon pots from Sebastopol and began to plant Ramblers on fences, structures and free standing. Not long after, Anne Belovich kindly offered cuttings from her magnificent Rambler collection. These were gathered, rooted and potted up to go into the ground when they grew to size. Now that they are mature, we expect a riot of blooms up hill and down dale in the spring.

Becoming curators has brought a whole new dimension to the garden and how we look at it. The preservation and care of a class of roses brings meaning to our garden.

I see the garden as a large never-ending work of art, my life's work. More than that it is a work of heart, part of me. It will continue to grow, mature, and change as life does. As life should, it contains so much more than my own vision. Everyone that I love, places that I have admired, literature, art, and the most marvelous variety of nature's gifts are all within its walls. As with every truly good work of art, you should be able to see a part of yourself when visiting there. ■



Eight Gardeners In Conversation

Darrell g.h. Schramm

Laying aside the manuscript for his 29th book, Beverley Nichols had opened his rural English garden to a few both once and future gardeners who favored roses. Living in a Surrey cottage with a thatched roof, situated in a village within a valley had its compensations. Lovers of the rustic and the antique, his guests had eagerly accepted his invitation to stroll down a garden path or two, to be followed by an outdoor luncheon.

Stopping beside the Tea rose 'Catherine Mermet', Gertrude Jekyll was the first to speak. "There can be no doubt," she began, "that on rather light soils and quite poor ones—not of course left to themselves, but moderately and reasonably improved—own root roses of the kinds classed as show roses do better than grafted." The small group gathered around the plant, admiring the soft pink of the large, very double rose.

"I would guess," remarked Mirabel Ostler, "that it holds sixty to 75 petals."

"Quite right," Graham Thomas said. "Do you grow it?"

"Oh, no. I doubt it would do well within my insouciant disarray of gardens in Shropshire. The frost, you know."

"At any rate," Gertrude continued, "there are varieties that to the rose lover are indispensable, such as 'Catherine Mermet', a kind that will do quite well in

top to bottom: Henry Mitchell, Beth Chatto-Buddhaam, Graham Stuart Thomas, Gertrude Jekyll, Beverley Nichols, Vita Sackville-West

'Catherine Mermet' (photo by Elaine Sedlack)

such soils on its own roots, whereas the same grand rose grafted is a total failure."

"Wisely spoken, Gertrude," Beverley chimed in. "Yes, you must consider your soil, its nature and quality vital to avoid heart-breaking disappointment."

"A rose indispensable to me," Vita Sackville-West declared, "is the deep red, sentimentally scented rose 'Souvenir du Docteur Jamain.'"

"I've not heard of it," responded Graham Murphy, virtuoso of garden restoration.

"It's an old Hybrid Perpetual which I am rather proud of having rescued from extinction. I found him growing against the office wall of an old nursery. No one knew what he was; no one seemed to care. No one had troubled to propagate him. So I asked if I might dig him up. It's a very old rose, but I took the risk. It survived the removal and is now flourishing in my garden along with its progeny. However, because he burns, he shouldn't be planted in a sunny place."

"I'll look for it when I visit Sissinghurst next week. Is it anything like a Hybrid Tea?"

"Heavens, no!" Graham Stuart Thomas answered. "Smaller flowers and on short lateral branches. Lithe canes."

"There is nothing wrong with Hybrid Tea roses," said Henry Mitchell, "if they are well perfumed and resistant to black spot (though very few, if any, have these virtues), and there is nothing

wrong, or at least nothing utterly evil, in raising scentless roses that require weekly spraying and that can be sheltered and shielded, patted and pampered, until at last an enormous flower can be entered in a rose show. Without rose shows, and without roses that have never been outside an intensive care unit, society would suffer. Many people who are now safely occupied with the care of roses would be loose on the streets."

"All the more reason," chuckled Beth Chatto, "to indulge in old roses."

"Like 'Catherine Mermet," asserted Gertrude. "Or 'Etoile de Lyon' or 'Maman Cochet'."

"Or 'Bon Silene' or 'Mme Berkeley' or 'General Schablikine," added Henry. "I am aware that lovers of the Tea roses are not normal, and as a group probably do not read *People* or *USA Today*. Lovers of the Tea rose are not superior; we merely require superior roses. But I should add we need not consider Tea roses only. A repeat-blooming rose like 'Blaze' is hardly any rival of supremely beautiful roses like 'Silver Moon' or 'Mme Gregoire Staechelin' which bloom only once a year."

"I see it's beauty that bats your eye or husbands your heart," Beverley remarked, "and not the delight of indulgence"

"Such a wit," murmured Vita, looking at Beverley.

By now the group was overlooking a bed of Gallicas and Portlands, growing among larkspur, foxglove, Sweet William, and alyssum. "There are many beautiful modern roses," said Beth Chatto, "but I do not think I have seen any which have the quality of the old varieties. (It's a bit like comparing pure silk with man-made fibers.)." She bent her head to inhale the scent of 'Comte de Chambord'. "Sweet mystery of rose life. Some of

top row, left to right: 'Etoile de Lyon' (photo by Bill Grant), 'Maman Cochet', 'Bon Silene', 'Mme Berkeley'; above: 'General Schablikine' (photos by D. Schramm)

them have been handed down through many generations." She paused again, to touch a 'Charles de Mills'. "The petals of old roses have a texture reminiscent of ancient tussore silk or faded velvet."

"I agree,"affirmed Graham Murphy. "Although old roses are unable to compete with the wider range of colours and extended show of the modern Hybrid Teas, they are now planted where one wants a rose with vigor, often capable of resisting pests and disease. The modern colors, however, have become garish, like lit-up Las Vegas, all neon and noise. An early Hybrid Tea of 1936 that I grow is subdued and recalls the wild species roses and thus seems to be the best of both worlds. That rose is 'Ellen Willmott'."

Graham Thomas nodded. "A lovely rose indeed."

"It has more than a touch of feminine simplicity,"Beverley agreed. 'But the most feminine flower in the world is 'Duchesse d'Angoulême'—of the purest silk, she blushes in sunlight and is inclined to droop her head. You may fear she is swooning; not at all," he shook his handsome head. "It is merely her way. And a very endearing way it is."

top to bottom: 'Silver Moon', 'Compte de Chambord', 'Charles de Mills' (photos by D. Schramm)

"If you don't grow 'Duchesse d'Angoulême'," responded Henry, "I wish you fortitude and luck in finding it. Certainly rare in the States."

"When my husband and I first began to buy roses for our garden," said Mirabel, "what we didn't know, for no book had forewarned us, was the will of the rose. It isn't that we bought the wrong roses; it is just that we put them in the wrong places. The intransigence of roses is something we have had to accept, and now I know which are docile and benevolent from those which are headstrong, those that are pliant from those which are pig-headed. If we had known the mannerism of 'Celestial', with her fine pointed buds and fragile petals, clear pink and sweet-smelling, we would have made use of her lax capitulation and planted her over a low wall. 'Blairii No.2', for instance, is glorious but inflexible, sumptuous and scented, but so thorny and unrelenting that nothing can persuade it to hang over or across an arch."

top to bottom: 'Ellen Willmott', 'Duchesse d'Angouleme' (photos by D. Schramm), 'Celestial' (photo by B. Grant)

'Blairii No. 2' (photo by B. Grant)

"Ah, one of the great beauties, 'Blairii No. 2'," said Graham Thomas. "What a display we get from it, when its long shoots are allowed to hang out of their support—in this case a pyramid of rustic poles—just at the level of our noses. Mr. Blair of Stamford Hill, London, raised his roses around 1845, and they are not surpassed today in their unique early midsummer qualities. The young foliage is coppery, and I challenge anyone to pass this by at flowering time; it is a great display every year, with little pruning beyond cutting out old, spent wood. It has a delicious scent and a good well-filled shape."

"What wondrous love is this, O my soul," Henry remarked with a wink at Thomas.

"Ladies and gentlemen, soulmates, my friends, our luncheon on the patio will be served quite soon. Perhaps a few of you will help me to snip a few flowers for a vase in the spirit of Constance Spry. I myself will endeavor to replicate a bouquet she once created when I visited her. I remember it well. Poised in a vase was a group of old roses of such loveliness, such glowing richness, that the spirit of Boucher might have been tiptoeing round the room, touching up the petals with a spectral brush. The background was blocked in with the velvety purple 'Cardinal de Richelieu', which mingled with the lighter purple of 'William Lobb'. The highlights were provided by a rose that looked as if it were made of striped cherry-coloured satin called 'Camaieux', and a spectacular beauty, white with flaunting stripes, known a 'Variegata de Bologna'. I'll never forget it."

"Clearly not," agreed Gertrude. "Then do fetch us a secateurs or two, and we''ll assemble our bouquet for a vase while you do yours."

"Do let's begin with a white rose," suggested Vita.

The gardeners set to work, conferring with each other as they did so. After a short while, Beverley spoke up again. "My friends, it's been a golden time in my garden with you. And now Miss Ding has arrived to annouce that lunch is served. Please bring your bouquet and choose a vase from those on the sideboard that will most flatter your roses." With delighted murmurings, admiring their nosegays, they sauntered to the table and a never-to-be-forgotten repast. ■

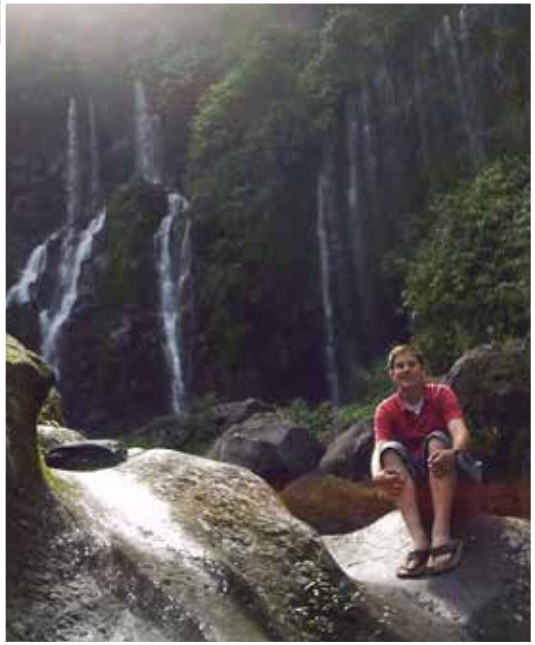
SOURCES

Chatto, Beth. *Garden Notebook*. 1988, p. 186.
Jekyll, Gertrude and Edward Mawley. *Roses for English Gardens*. 1902, p, 34.
Mitchell, Henry. *One Man's Garden*. 1992, pp. 115 & 116.
Mitchell, Henry. *The Essential Earthman*. 1981/1999. p. 132.
Murphy, Graham. *Old Roses*. 2003, p. 14.
Nichols, Beverley. *Garden Open Today*. 1963, p. 98.
Ostler, Mirabel. *A Gentle Plea for Chaos*. 1989, pp. 129-130.
Sackville-West, Vita. *Garden Book*. 1968, p. 144.

La Reunion and the Bourbon Rose

Mark Mason Taylor

When I was twenty, wanderlust took me from my home in Salt Lake City, Utah, to the farthest geographical point in the world, La Reunion, France. While I didn't know it at the time, this speck in the Indian Ocean was home to a seminal moment in rose history.



La Réunion means the "meeting" in French, and is an island of dramatic contrasts. In an area one quarter the size of Puerto Rico,

layers upon layers of pyroclastic flows have created a mountain so tall the highest peak is covered in snow. The southern half of the island is so wet it has the record for the highest recorded rainfall in the world for twelve, twenty-four, seventy-two, and ninety six hours. Yet the northwestern side is a rain-shadow desert. In the center cirques ascend and dip for miles creating pockets of savannah and highlands.

Amidst this spectacle the Bourbon rose emerged. The rose itself was a blend of contrasts, east meets west. The parents, "Quatre Saisons', a French Damask, and 'Old Blush', a China, gave its offspring unique gifts: the bold fragrance of the west and the balanced rebloom of the east. [According

top left: La Reunion lava flows; far left: waterfalls, author at age 20; above: beach in St Joseph in the south; immediate left: Cirque de Mafate desert (photos by Mark Mason Taylor)

left: 'Rosa x Bourboniana' (illustration by Redouté); above: 'Bourbon Queen' (in commerce as) (photo by M. Mason Taylor); right: 'Souvenir de St. Anne's' (photo by Marsha McLaughlin)

to the traditional story] 'Rose Edouard', as it was known, was plucked from a hedge in the field of Monsieur Edouard Perrichon in La Reunion and sent to the Chateau de Neuilly in the Parisian countryside.

In mainland France the rose became a star. Its offspring, 'Rosier de L'Ile de Bourbon', graced the plates of the famed *Les Roses* by Redouté, Empress Josephine's favorite illustrator. It quickly became the hybridizer's go-to, spawning 'Bourbon Queen', 'Souvenir de la Malmaison', 'Souvenir de Saint-Anne's', and 'Kronprinzessin Viktoria von Preussen.' Today 'Rose Edouard' has fourteen generations of descendants, including 'Evelyn', 'Flower Girl', 'Queen of Sweden', and 'Fragrant Lavender Simplicity'.

From a single seed a whole class of influential roses was born, now called the Bourbons. These OGRs are living rose royalty. And while the Bourbon class has many diverse family members, most have the same traits as the original: fragrance, vigor, rebloom, and ease in propagation. On top of that the Bourbon class has a special place in my little black heart, due to my time on La Reunion.

I'm sure you can imagine how flummoxed I was when Gregg Lowery approached me to be the new Bourbon curator. It took me a full day to process my emotions. I was overcome. This opportunity is the realization of a personal dream, to elevate and preserve the Bourbons. ■

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Hoareau, Adjaya *Les multiple origins de la rose de Bourbon*. France Info. Reunion 1. 17 July 2020. https://la1ere.francetvinfo.fr/reunion/multiples-origines-rose-bourbon-854088.html

Les Amis des Roses Octobre1929.142

Redouté, Pierre- Jospeph. "Rosa Canina x Bourboniana". *Les Roses.*

"World Meteorological Organization's World Weather and Climate Extremes Archive" *Arizona State University*. Web.

New Faces for a New Year—The Curator's Report

Gregg Lowery

How quickly a decade goes by! The Friends of Vintage Roses has reached its tenth birthday as a non-profit. And our progress forward in this past year comes from ten hard years of work, hours and hours of volunteers, and the support of our curators who make the preservation of our roses possible.

Ten curators on our tenth anniversary now help us in conserving a whole lot of roses. From Florida to the northwest corner of Washington, from San Diego County to Salt Lake City to Silver Spring, Mississippi, we are making progress.

Here in Sebastopol we raised several hundred plants for these curators in 2022, and the collections are growing. We have struck a crucial benchmark by inaugurating duplicate collections for three groups of roses; Pernetiana Hybrid Teas, English roses and Damask Perpetuals. Along with these the second duplication of Floribunda roses in the hands of John Bagnasco and CCRS has given us a road forward to building a community of passionate rose lovers who now will begin sharing with one another for the real work of preservation to move ahead to younger generations.

I'd like to introduce you to our new curators with a few words from each. We will follow up with more from each of them about their collections, their gardens and their favorite roses in coming issues of *The Vintage Rose*.

On our information page at the end of this newsletter, I'll round up the complete crew of curators. If you have questions for any of them, write to our editor, Darrell, so he can include their responses in the Spring issue.

Old European Roses — Albas, Centifolias, Damasks, Eglantines, Gallicas, Hybrid Bourbons, Hybrid Chinas, Mosses, Species (European), Spinosissimas and Hybrid Musk roses

Erin Benzakein, Skaggit Valley, Washington

Early on in my flower growing journey I had the good fortune of meeting Anne Belovich who welcomed me a number of times into her magical rose garden. Every time I stepped onto her property, it felt like being transported into another world and I always dreamed that someday I would be able to create a garden as beautiful as hers.

While I have been growing and collecting heirloom roses for nearly 20 years now, it had always been a very casual hobby. But after Anne passed away, I went looking for more information about rose preservation, and that's how I met Gregg and came to learn about the curator program through The Friends of Vintage Roses. Only then did I fully understand what's at stake for the future of old roses and just how fragile they really are.

After much deliberation we decided that we would adopt all of the old European classes which seem the most at risk and also well-suited for our climate. My hope is that we can not only preserve these varieties for future generations but also help shine a spotlight on them and ultimately get more of these historic treasures planted in gardens all over the world.

—Erin Benzakein

Bourbon Roses and Hybrid Bourbons (shared with Erin)
Gene Boerner-bred roses (Rose breeder collection)
Mark Mason Taylor, Salt Lake City, Utah

(See Mark's complete article earlier in this issue)

BOURBONS

My love for Bourbons goes back to my love for La Reunion, France, an island in the Indian Ocean where I lived during the formative years of my life. The island, formerly known as the "Ile de Boubon" is about the same size as Maui, and it's where the Bourbons were bred, way back when the French enclosed their sugar cane fields with rosebushes. And it was in a field there that the first recorded rose cross happened. Its parents, a China rose and Damask, brought the best of both worlds together, extraordinary fragrance with the Eastern reblooming gene. Empress Josephine's garden at Malmaison was chock full of this special class. Many of the Bourbons were given the names of members of French government and their wives to curry favor for Josephine's commoner Corsican husband, Napoleon Bonaparte.

Today I grow Bourbons in the furthest point on Earth from La Reunion: Salt Lake City, Utah. Great choices to add to your garden are 'Zephirine Drouhin' (the most famous Bourbon), 'Souvenir de Malmaison' (the flagship of the class), and my favorite, the translucent and delicate 'Pierre Oger.'

It's a great honor to be named curator for this fundamental class in rose history.

GENE BOERNER COLLECTION

Gene Boerner is one of the most important rose breeders you've never heard of. Although the Floribundas had been around since in 1907, it really wasn't until Gene came along that this class became king. Known as "Papa Floribunda," his cultivars took home an astounding fourteen AARS awards.

- 'Katherine T Marshall' (1944)
- 'Diamond Jubilee' (1948)
- 'Fashion' (1950)
- 'Vogue' (1952)
- 'Ma Perkins' (1953)
- 'Jiminy Cricket' (1955)
- 'White Bouquet' (1957)
- 'Gold Cup' (1958)
- 'Ivory Fashion' (1959)
- 'Saratoga' (1964)
- 'Apricot Nectar' (1966)
- 'Gay Princess' (1967)
- 'Gene Boerner' (1969)
- 'First Prize' (1970)

top: 'Gene Boerner', Fl; above: 'Souvenir de la Malmaison', B; (photos by Mark Taylor)

I first encountered the work of Gene Boerner with his namesake rose. Constantly coated in pink blossoms, it's one of the rare cultivars I consider to be truly everblooming. But being the fragrance ho I am, this mild-scented glamazon was on my hit list for three years. But every time someone came to my garden, it was Gene they pointed to in awe. Not my 8-inch 'Chicago Peace,' not the ambrosia perfume of 'Francis Meilland,' it was 'Gene'. Papa Floribunda's roses are a must have and any rosarian without at least one of Mr. Boerner's creations is missing out.

—Mark Mason Taylor

Hybrid Perpetual roses
Damask Perpetual roses (Portlands) (second curator)
Ralph Tran, Ramona, California

I have been an avid gardener for over three decades, starting at the age of 10. My first real experience with gardening started with an innocent trip to the farmer's market with my mom when I was in the 5th grade. I asked for a potted orchid plant (a Cymbidium) and a bunch of cut roses (a Hybrid Tea). I was able to keep that orchid plant alive and it is thriving to this day. That bunch of roses actually produced several rooted cuttings, a plant of which I still have today as well. That single potted plant and bunch of roses over the decades has turned into a collection of about 25,000 orchids and hundreds of rose bushes. I have always been fascinated with plant propagation. No matter how many times I have rooted a cutting, it still feels magical when checking in on cuttings to find that they are starting to show signs of root and growth.

In addition to my love of gardening, I have always been fascinated by the fact that there are plant cultivars that have withstood the test of time and survived decades, even centuries. A large portion of my private orchid and rose collection is devoted to classic cultivars, dating back to the mid 1800s. This curatorship is a venture that I feel such pride in being able to be a part of as preservation and propagation have always been a central interest in my gardening life.

—Ralph Tran

English roses (Austins—shared with Pamela)
Trang Bui, Sebastopol, California

My love of old garden roses began with an email to Jill Perry, the curator of the San Jose Heritage Rose Garden. I emailed her asking for information on acquiring 'Oyster Pearl', a rose no longer commercially available. At the time, the San Jose Heritage occasionally held nursery sales and I wanted to know if 'Oyster Pearl' would ever be sold. She replied that the garden could use more volunteers, and I agreed to come in.

Since then, I've become a regular volunteer at the Rose Garden, which I've come to appreciate as one of the most important public spaces in San Jose. I have always loved roses, in particular Hybrid Teas and the classic long stem roses of floral shops, but the Heritage Rose garden exposed me to roses of the past, their history and diaspora, and their impact on our culture. And when my husband and I purchased a five acre, former working apple orchard in Sebastopol, I discovered the Friends of Vintage Roses and more old garden roses I simply couldn't live without.

'William Morris' (photo by T. Bui)

When Gregg asked me to be a curator for the David Austin roses, I accepted on the spot. I love David Austin Roses roses for their old fashion blooms and

left to right: 'Ancient Mariner', 'Chaucer', 'Alnwick' (photos by T. Bui)

fragrance and had about 70 DAs growing in my garden that I've purchased through the years. It's an honor to be entrusted with the care and conservation of this class of roses and I look forward to being a part of Gregg's mission to save and share rare and remarkable roses with others.

—Trang Bui

Pernetiana roses (shared with John Bagnasco)

Beth Hana, Los Molinos, California

My journey of collecting roses started over 30 years ago. It started with a single rose bush found on our lot space in the mobile home park we moved into when my husband got out of the Navy in 1989. I knew very little about roses, and proceeded to accidentally kill it before it bloomed. But then I decided I had to find out everything about them, and get one to replace it.

I had absolutely no idea just how many colors, types and names there were. I researched any and all books and catalogs I could find. It became an obsession. And then one day, when I discovered the gorgeous brown climber called 'Butterscotch' at the old Home Club store, it became my goal to acquire as many unusual or obscure roses as I could find. By the time we were able to buy our first house, I had around 800 potted plants that we had to move there, including hundreds of minis.

'Souvenir de Marcelle Balage', HT (photo by B. Hana)

I eventually got up to over 1800 roses, up until the Camp Fire blew through Paradise and wiped out our home and everything we had, including over half of the roses. We moved the survivors to our new location in Los Molinos, and I have since added hundreds more, trying to replace many of the ones I lost, and adding new ones. Many of the rarer roses in my original collection came from Vintage Gardens. I was sad when it closed. But now I am honored to become one of the co-curators of the lovely Pernetiana roses for Gregg and The Friends of Vintage Roses.

—Beth Hana

Chinas, Teas and Noisette roses

Cydney and Art Wade, Archer, Florida

Cyd and Art Wade have been adopting some of the rare roses in these collections for the past several years and are now taking on the full collections. This year we will begin propagating roses they need to add to their collection. ■

MISSION STATEMENT

The Friends of Vintage Roses exists to preserve and enhance the unique and extensive collection of historic roses it has inherited, 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.

YOUR DONATIONS

Hi, this is Gregg Lowery asking you to join our Guardians of the Rose—supporters who make monthly donations of $10 per month. As you know we are building a community of ardent rose conservationists. With hours of volunteer work we root several thousand roses each year from our mother collection. From these we can provide our curators with plants to preserve. The extra plants we produce are made available to the public to purchase in one of our sales each year. Guardians are given a head start in placing orders: Guardians are next to Curators in keeping our mission on track. Join us! Take the leap and become a part of our Time Capsule of Roses, sending beauty into the future! Thank you!

OFFICERS AND MEMBERS OF THE BOARD

Gregg Lowery, Curator & President
Darrell g.h. Schramm, Editor-in-Chief
Joan Olson, Layout Design Editor & Secretary
Steve Dunatov, Business Manager
Pamela Temple, Facebook Editor
Andrea Donahue, Treasurer
Susan Feichtmeir, Fundraiser
Trang Bui, Volunteer Coordinator
Jody Doss, Volunteer Coordinator

ROSE COLLECTIONS CURATORS

John Bagnasco, Hybrid Teas, Pernetianas & Floribundas
Erin Benzakein, Old European roses & Hybrid Musk Roses
Trang Bui, English roses
Sue Bunte, Floribundas
Susan Feichtmeir, Modern Shrubs & Polyanthas
Beth Hana, Pernetianas
Julie Matlin, Damask Perpetuals (Portlands)
Mark Mason Taylor, Bourbons & Gene Boerner Hybrids
Pamela Temple, Ramblers & English roses
Ralph Tran, Hybrid Perpetuals & Damask Perpetuals (Portlands)
Cydney and Art Wade, Chinas, Teas & Noisettes

CONTACT INFORMATION

General questions: *info@thefriendsofvintageroses.org*
Re: the rose collection: *curator@thefriendsofvintageroses.org*
Re: donations: *treasurer@thefriendsofvintageroses.org*
Volunteering: *volunteercoordinator@thefriendsofvintageroses.org*
Newsletter editor: *schrammd@sonic.net*