

Wonderful Rose Gardens Around the World



BENGAL ROSE SOCIETY
Calcutta, INDIA



Luciano Del Bufalo, Rambler with 'The Garland' on prunus and 'Frensham'.

Valleranello, a garden near Rome, Italy

— Maresa del Bufalo

VALLERANELLO! NATURA had given the place a marvelous *cork oak* wood. Here, with the passing of time, man had arrogantly eliminated the wood and used the land for his own food purposes. For centuries Valleranello, divided into single-crop landed estates, had produced, in a bleak exchange, only wheat instead of the millenary oaks.

Background

The history of this garden begins 45 years ago with a field of wheat stubble. An inexperienced person who desires to create a garden in 20,000 sq.m. of stubble wants greenery immediately and is attracted by conifers precisely because they are evergreens. Thus *pin*es, *cedars*, *cypresses* and *fir trees*, as well as *eucalyptuses*, *mimosas* and

magnolias were the first trees to appear there after the stubble.

But with time, experience and knowledge brought the great broadleaf trees into the garden: *oak*, *maple*, *plane*, *liquidambar*, *tulip trees*, *melia* and *albizzia trees*, changing through the seasons, full of flowers in the spring and bright with colors in the autumn.

During the first 15 years, amidst the growing trees and shrubs, only four varieties of roses were planted in the garden, three of which had important names : Frensham 1946, 'Rendez-vous' and 'Monique' di Paolino 1949: the name of the fourth, of an orange-yellow color, was never discovered. There were just a few roses, because I did not like the modern tea rose hybrids, the only ones that could be found in the nurseries during those years.

How this garden was developed

Around 28 years ago, I visited Prof. Franco Fineschi's rose garden at Cavriglia. At that time, there were already 3,000 varieties of roses at Cavriglia. The view was a delight for the eye. But the true magic, that "something" that enters into you and never leaves you again, occurred when I came to encounter the "old" varieties. The charm of their colors and the full, soft forms of their flowers, their intense scents with different fragrances, and especially their soft, natural bearing are so suitable for the design of a garden. I realized that, as a garden designer, the lack of knowledge up to that moment of the old rose had been a serious omission on my part.

After that moment, which I consider an appointment with life, I have never again designed a garden where the rose was not the absolute protagonist. Thus at Valleranello, year after year, even with the difficulty of finding special varieties. I have been able to introduce around a thousand of them, both old and not so old, thus devoting the garden to the rose.

Fortunately the chemical and mechanical properties of the soil have proved to be exceptionally favorable : neutral, with abundant iron, heavy clay, was perfect for rose-growing.

Layout

So roses, roses everywhere : every tree has become a support for a large rambler, and new trees will come into the garden, chosen with a plan to plant other beautiful climbing roses.

The garden is crossed by grassy paths which unwind amidst the rose bushes. 'Moschate Rose Way' was the first important green path, with large bushes of 'Belinda', 'Mozart', 'Penelope', 'Cornelia', 'Day Break', 'Marjorie Fair', 'Kathleen', 'Erfurt', 'Pirontina', 'Prosperity', 'Felicia', 'Eva', and 'Vanity' in a succession of delicate colors and increasingly vivid pinks, up to the 'Robin Hood' musk rose, of which various specimens have been scattered around the garden in hopes of obtaining, thanks to its great procreation capacity, new roses like the first one born in the garden : 'Luciano Del Bufalo Rambler', a large rambler, the daughter of 'Robin Hood' and *multiflora*.

Luciano Del Bufalo Rambler, which by now is 18 years old, is a rose full of great qualities : flexible, lightweight branches which grow very quickly with small, solid, glossy leaves. The single flowers, simple with few petals, very similar to its parent's, are united in large hanging clusters. The color is bright, vivid pink with a small white throat.



A Collection of the gallicas and bourbons



Felicite and Perpetue on the trees



In foreground *moschata* 'Kathleen' and *rosa* 'Ibisus'.

Cherry red berries follow the flowers, lasting long into the winter. The leaves have extraordinary colors in the autumn. The plant is disease resistant. In the winter, if it were not for the berries on its thin branches, it would seem almost invisible, but in the spring it swells and becomes so covered with leaves and flowers that the tree it is climbing up, disappears.

For these reasons it lives happily in Germany in the public rose-garden of Baden Baden; in Rome's rose-garden it boldly climbs the only almond tree left; and it is climbing somewhere at Islamabad (Pakistan) and in many parts of Italy.

From 'Moschate Rose Way' we reach 'Bourbonians Piazza' where, in a large central meadow covered with *pink oenothera speciosa*, we find 'Gypsy Boy', 'Queen of Bourbon', 'Reine Victoria', 'Honorine de Brabant', 'Madame Isaac Pereire', 'Luise Odler', 'Madame Pierre Oger', and 'Madame Lauriol de Barny'.

Two large ever-flowering 'Clair Matin' rose bushes stand as sentinels at the sides of a fascinating group of *gallica* roses.

Around thirty varieties planted very close together seem to form a single bouquet with a thousand shades of pink : from the pale refinedness of the *duchesses* of 'Montebello' and 'D' Angouleme', to the more intense, almost red, pink of the *officinalis* or 'Charles de Mils', and the mauve pink of 'Belle de Crecy', the velvety simplicity of the very old 'Violacea', 'Tuscany', 'Presidente de Seze', 'Anais Segalas', 'Belle Isis', the special thin variegation of 'Camaleux', and many, many other beauties.

The *gallica* rose, like many old roses, bloom just once but for a long period, and their vivid, sometimes gaudy colors are accompanied by a large opaque, dark green, rough and almost leathery leaf.

The blooming of the group of *alba* roses, situated all around a small clearing, is a moment of great value. The magnificent white or, at most, pale pink flowers of these large bushes open up amidst the green leaves tinged with blue that are characteristic of the species : 'Alba maxima', 'Alba semipiena', 'Celestial', 'Maiden's Blush', 'Amelia', 'Chloris', 'Felicity Parmentier', and

'Koeneghin Von Danimark' - the most color-laden of all, so much so that it led Stelvio Coggiatti to exclaim, "In my opinion it can't be an alba!".

Just a short distance away : *damask, portland, centifolia*, and other roses grow, intertwine, bloom and, most of all, give off their fragrances.

Those like me who seek the charm of old roses could not escape that of the English rose hybrids produced by David Austin - like the old ones, but reblooming! Meraviglioso! Not all of them are as strong and floriferous as they are said to be, but the vigor of 'Graham Thomas', 'Leander Hero', 'Abraham Darby', and rosa 'David Austin', all with beautiful flowers and delicate colors, is undisputed.

For the red roses, I would like to mention one of those born most recently : 'Chianti', my favorite, even if Austin, in his direct crossing between modern and very old roses, was not able to produce reflorescence. The name is perfect, because the color and the substance of its flowers make you want to drink them, just like that ruby-colored wine.

In the house at Valleranello there are no walls suitable for climbing roses. This is the reason behind the need for symbiosis between trees and climbing roses.

For the roses to climb up, I have chosen trees in the *Rosaceae* family, such as *pear, apple, cherry, flowering apple, and flowering cherry*, but with the growing number of roses, every deciduous tree has received a tenant, acquiring a second "blossoming" in exchange.

But two particular unions, which arouse much admiration, produce flowers at the same time. The first tree is 'Liriodendron tulipifera', with the *noisette rose* 'Claire Jacquier'; the second tree is the 'Melia azedarach', and its rose is 'Paul's Himalayan Musk'.

The flower of the *liriodendro* has the shape of tulip, as its name says, and delicate colors from yellow to green with a beautiful orange fret at the base. The flowers of the rose are extremely numerous, covering the rose plant and the *liriodendro* completely, but the sparse flowers of the latter peek out in a harmonious combination amidst the dense rose clusters of similar color - light yellow with a darker yellow, almost orange, center.

The flowers of the *melia* and the *multiflora* rose, on the other hand, correspond totally in size and lilac-pink coloring, and their scents combine to produce a very special fragrance. Fans of this combination call it "Paradise", because of the sensation of blessedness one feels while looking at this extraordinary embrace.

I arrived at this rose garden - which is held in great consideration by experts and enchants the profane, slowly, without realizing it, for my pleasure alone, and for this reason I didn't realize the wonderful thing that was taking place. But after a few years, during the period of the May blooming, I began to find it harder and harder to enjoy such beauty all by myself. So, in May, I opened the garden to the Roman public, not knowing that I would have shortly opened it to the world. This makes me very happy.



Callistemon and Frensham, in background modern roses bed.