

MOSTLY ROSES

If you think of Heaven and the way the roses may grow there, I think of the huge amazing roses that grow freely in the gardens of Seamus Johnston at Mostly Roses in Newlands.

For those lucky enough to have visited this amazing garden you know that you drive south through the town of Donnybrook on the South Western Highway and as you drive towards Kirup you come around a bend and there to the left across a fence laden with roses and as you gaze over a damn and there sitting in a paddock on the side of the hill blooms dozens and dozens of rambling roses. You drive a little further to a road leading to the left and a short time later you come across the gardens. There are many oohs and ahhs as people gaze at the huge roses growing on the tall structures at the entrance of the property. The sign MOSTLY ROSES is almost hidden by a rambling single red rose, Bloomfield Courage. As you walk past the sign to the left are large farm sheds and roses grow high along these sheds.

Seamus meets us and is happy to show us around his garden providing all the information about the gardens, answering questions and always with secateurs in hand often cutting a rose to hand to you to take in the fragrance as he leads you through the gardens.

At the entrance of the main gardens you walk through an arch with a huge Veilenblau to the left and a deep red rose to the right. This then beckons you on with paths to the left and right and the huge area of roses is outstanding. The top section holds a lot of modern roses with "Eyes for You" in different colours on the left side. These areas are lawned and as you wander further to the left your eyes gaze at enormous rambling roses of Wedding Day and Multiflora and others cascading and tumbling to the ground. I just can't wait to move on further down the garden to the old heritage rose sections. These roses are more than I can dare to imagine my garden and 99% of them aren't but the joy they bring to see them here in this garden is enough. Because Newlands is a colder area than Perth they are able to grow a lot of species roses such as Mosses, Gallicas etc that just do not do so well here in Perth. There before my eyes is Honorine De Brabant, William Lobb, Mme Louis Leveque, Henri Martin, Louis XIV, la France, Nozomi and the list goes on. On this visit I did notice the beautiful bush of Mme Knorr and many others and enquired if they were available but sadly not, however Seamus did contact me earlier in the year to say he did have a small Mme Knorr if I would like it. I didn't have to be asked twice and I went down and collected it a few weeks ago and it is growing and flowering well in my garden now. It also has an amazing fragrance.

The lovely thing about receiving roses from another garden is that you see the rose growing in the original garden and it gives you joy to remember where you received it from.

As you wander through the gardens there are sections of huge Tea roses and Lady Hillingdon and many others were putting on a wonderful show. There are rows and rows of rambling roses and a massive seedling from Rose Marsh and the rose has been named after Rose.

I could spend many hours wandering and dreaming in the garden but we only had less than two hours and we then meet under the trees close to the entrance to thank Seamus for his hospitality and present him with a delicious fruit cake Gay had baked and a platter of cheeses and biscuits for him to enjoy later in the day.

Seamus is happy for Heritage Rose members to visit his gardens although he is not open to the general public at this stage and he looks forward to us returning and visiting the gardens again.

There is no fee to enter his gardens at the moment however once Spring returns he is going to charge an entry fee to try and cover some of the costs of maintaining the garden as he is no longer recovering any costs as he is not selling roses. If you are planning to visit at any stage please call Seamus first. His number is on the website.

If travelling south it is worth the time to stop in during the flowering season.