

Establishing a large country garden was always on my 'wish list', so when we finally made the hinterland of Noosa Qld our home, creating a garden was a priority. As with most garden making, there were numerous unseen obstacles, not the least of which was drought and limited water, surprising to us given the area's high annual rainfall. We hadn't realised our property was in a 'rain shadow'. To compensate, we made the dam larger with the hope that this would help water 5 acres of gardens. The dam subsequently ran dry during prolonged drought.

The sub-tropical climate and vagaries of drought, and occasionally flood, was a challenging climate in which to grow some of the usual modern Hybrid Teas on offer through local nurseries and chain stores. After some research, I discovered and came to love the Heritage Teas which mostly thrived in this climate. Old favourites, like **Safrano**, **Comtesse de Labarthe** and **Mrs B R Cant** (below) took the wet and dry in their stride. These and many of the other Teas like Safrano's offspring, **Isabella Sprunt**, grew into sizeable shrubs that bloomed almost continuously.



The garden continued to expand, but there was something missing. With fond childhood memories of my own grandfather's garden, I wanted to pass on a similar legacy to our grandchildren. But the challenges of distance and eventually border closures and lock-down highlighted how much we missed our expanding family.

So the decision was made to move to the Hunter Valley region in NSW, to be closer to family and for more regular visits with grandchildren.

A move from 5 acres to half an acre meant we had to leave most of our collection of Heritage Tea roses behind; the likes of Safrano (below) were far too large to move. I took cuttings, but as my strike rate was usually poor in this sub-tropical climate, I didn't have a lot of faith in my hurried process.



Fortunately, local members of HRiA (Brisbane) came to my rescue, visiting the garden and taking numerous cuttings to grow on in their own gardens. It's lovely to know that some of the roses I'd collected over the years continue to be cared for by knowledgeable rose lovers.

I looked forward to the prospect of creating a new, although smaller garden, in a climate known for its vineyards and where roses also flourished. In the weeks before moving, I was able to pot up a few of our rarer Heritage roses to make the move with us. Some of these old roses had struggled to thrive in a sub-tropical climate and so were not too large to dig up and relocate.

One of these is Tea rose, **Carlsruhe Cemetery Maria Bruhne** (see below), a renamed old rose (ROR) found on the graveside of her name-sake.

Said to be the original **Sombreuil** rose, famous for its connection to the French Revolution, she is a prized rose in my collection of Teas. I was nervous about relocating her but could not risk just taking cuttings and hoping for the best. I've since tried to take cuttings unsuccessfully, so I'm pleased we potted her up and



moved her to our new garden. She is doing much better here in our Hunter Valley garden, recovering after her little adventure on the removalist truck!



Another of the Tea roses we brought with us is **Sylvia Hannah**. She was given to me by a member of the Brisbane HRiA. She also came with us to our new garden and is thriving, growing rapidly in size and blooming consistently with sweetly tea-scented, bright pink blooms. I love her so much that I have taken more cuttings so that I can place her around the garden. Her long stems make great cut flowers for bouquets and arrangements.

And what flower arranger could have a Heritage rose garden without the classically shaped, lemon Tea rose, **Alexander Hill Gray** (below). This handsome chap recovered quickly after being dug up, potted and moving with us to NSW. I am hoping to plant Tea rose **Perle des Jardins** nearby to keep him company. This is one of the treasures I left behind, not because it was too large to move but there's a limit to how many roses you can move with.

A classic, lemon bloom of **Alexander Hill Gray**.



Other roses that we brought with us included Moss roses, **Soupert et Notting** and **Alfred de Dalmas**. They are slightly remontant, tough roses, relocating well despite struggling in our previous garden.

I have since added to these by planting roses I could not have dreamt of growing in the sub-tropics, such as the Damask roses, **Ispahan** and **Kazanlik**; Gallica, **Duchesse De Montebello**; Alba, **Koenigen van Danmark**; Moss, **Salet** and Centifolia, **Fantin-Latour**. These are all in trial mode and will be selectively added to.

So, the journey continues, with our half acre corner of the Hunter Valley beginning as a blank canvas and slowly taking shape with approximately 100 roses and still counting.

I have gone vertical to accommodate more roses, with some favourites that I had to leave behind, like the lovely Noisettes, **Lamarque** and **Madame Alfred Carrière**, the delicious climbing Bourbon, **Souvenir de la Malmaison**, and climbing Tea, **Lady Hillingdon** to name a few. I had to leave behind many climbers and ramblers, such as the gorgeous once blooming confectionary pink, **May Queen**, Alister Clark's **Milkmaid** that smells like a vanilla milkshake, the giant **Rosa Laevigata** (below) and many more.



**May Queen** in full bloom.

There's not room to list the roses left behind, but I'm happy that some were saved, like **Milkmaid** who is now residing at the lovely property of Laurel Sommerfeld, an expert Rosarian and rose breeder. I believe Milkmaid now also has a daughter!

In this new garden, as in our old garden, I'm hoping to create new places in the garden for children to run and hide in, just as I hid behind huge shrubs of hydrangea and azalea in my grandfather's garden as a child.

There are lessons learnt from the previous garden though, such as not planting a huge, rose like Rosa Laevigata that quickly overwhelmed a favourite hiding place with prickly growth!

Now that we're closer, I'm pleased to say that our grandchildren visit regularly, and definitely associate their grandparents with birthdays and cupcakes, cattle dogs (now in retirement) and a pigeon loft, nearby horses to visit (not ours!), as well as lots of rambling old roses.

Despite the sadness of leaving behind a beloved garden that contained some treasures, the reality of life often intervenes and it's reassuring to discover that a garden in all its various formats can be relocated and reinvented!



**Rosa Laevigata** in splendid full bloom. A favourite spot to hide under, until the thorny growth became too overwhelming!



On reflection, I realise how blessed I am that we haven't had to flee a war zone or bunker down and eke out an existence selling clematis seeds, like brave Alla Olkhovska. Her interview with Floret is inspiring and puts our interstate move into stark context. See the interview here [The {Farmer} & the Florist Interview: Alla Olkhovska - Floret Flowers](#).

Wherever you garden, and however you garden, I hope you enjoy it and take some time out to pause for a moment and smell the roses.