

1st October 2010

Wynyard Hall Hotel announces plans for development of the 4-acre Rose Garden, one of the largest Rose Gardens ever created

Sir John Hall, former owner of Newcastle United football team and creator of Gateshead's Metro Centre, continues to make his mark in the North East. At Wynyard Hall, his home for the past 23 years, and now, in part, a Country House Hotel, he is turning his attention to the creation of a new garden. While the Hall's famous arboretum (with trees planted by the Londonderry family to honour their many celebrated house guests in the nineteenth century) will continue to be restored and rejuvenated, the former walled kitchen garden and the site of the former Italian Garden will be the location for a new and thoroughly adventurous rose garden designed by Simon Dorrell, with horticultural input from David Austin Roses Ltd.

Sir John's grandfather gardened in the mining village of Ashington in Northumberland, where he grew leeks and chrysanthemums. Sir John too was a keen gardener as a child; he bought roses from a nursery in Aberdeenshire in his early teens which he tried to propagate by budding, grafting and T-cuts – confessing, modestly, that “it never worked”.

The new garden is being designed to reflect Sir John's abiding love of roses, recalling his boyhood days, and a desire to create something “of the moment” at Wynyard. As he says himself, he wants to “establish a fitting legacy to my ownership of Wynyard” – a legacy that marks his not inconsiderable investment in time, funds and unstinting energy and his deep-felt passion for this beautiful estate.

Simon Dorrell says that “by creating a vibrant and enchanting interpretation of early 19th century neo-Classicism, combined with a contemporary sensibility for form, colour and composition, the new gardens will celebrate not only ‘the genius of the place’, but also the spirit of Wynyard's past”.

Revealing the essence of his approach to this adventurous and important commission Simon Dorrell continues, “it is best to regard the new designs as delineating a collection of interconnecting garden spaces or ‘rooms’, intimate in scale, both formal and informal in character, each with a distinctive atmosphere. Comprising a series of romantic, highly-scented, flower-filled gardens, they will be planted by David Austin to showcase the remarkable versatility of the rose. These will be interposed with quieter, contemplative, green spaces, sculptural in quality. Here the combination of topiary, specimen trees and the dappled shade they create – and the play of light on water – will create a sparkling contrast to the glorious flower gardens brimming with riotous colour”.

The new garden will cover about four acres of land, making it one of the largest rose gardens ever created. An exceptionally wide range of roses will be incorporated into the garden, including David Austin's English Roses. Old Roses (Gallicas, Damasks, Albas, Portlands, Rugosas, Hybrid Musks, Hybrid Teas and Floribundas, climbers and ramblers and the original wild species roses. All of the roses will be supplied by David Austin roses, with planting schemes devised by David Austin's leading Rosarian, Michael Marriot.



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Michael has described his and Simon Dorrell's joint approach: 'In the more informal parts of the garden, shrub and species roses will be used in borders. Some of these borders will consist purely of roses, while others will contain an exhilarating mixture of roses, perennials and other flowering shrubs. Some of the shorter, more formal English Roses, as well as Hybrid Teas and Floribundas, will be used to create magnificent formal rose gardens. Given a good design and a good choice of varieties, formal rose gardens can be one of the most impressive party's of any garden, especially as roses can potentially bear beautiful blooms with delicious fragrances over a very long flowering season. Climbing and rambling roses are excellent garden plants and here they will grow on walls, pergolas and obelisks, over buildings and into trees and, in the case of Mezquita garden, on a multitude of arches to spectacular effect. There will be ample places to relax, with seats strategically deployed around the garden, so that visitors can enjoy the full force of the roses' beauty up close and take in the heady scents of the most fragrant varieties.'

The concentration of flowering trees, roses and other shrubs, and herbaceous perennials and grasses will prove irresistible to wild life, particularly birds and insects. The planting design will ensure that the gardens will have flowers and fragrance in every month of the year, and the attendant fruits and seeds will contribute to a very attractive environment for wildlife, particularly in association with the extensive use of still and running water. The garden will make a considerable contribution to the already diverse habitats provided by the lake, streams, specimen trees, arboretum and woodland already long established in the parkland at Wynyard Hall.

Funds raised from opening the new gardens will help to finance the continuing maintenance of Wynyard's historic parkland, woodland and arboretum and by restoring the parkland's numerous architectural features, Sir John, now aged 77, aims to enliven and enhance the historic surroundings and add to its rich layers of landscape beauty for the benefit and enjoyment of generations to come.

The creation of the new garden and the arrival of visitors when it opens to the public will be a huge fillip to the local economy and a highly-charged boost to tourism in the whole area.

Talking excitedly about the project Michael Marriott says, "This will be one of the most beautiful and exciting rose gardens in the world. It will have a very difference feel to most large scale rose gardens, being a place to lose oneself in and be immersed in the glories and romance of the rose. It will also be very valuable from a practical point of view – a virtual treasure trove of ideas, with awe-inspiring planting schemes creating intoxicating contrasts of colour, form, texture and scent."

Speaking recently, Sir John said this new venture (which will also accommodate his growing collection of statuary and garden artefacts) in his final and very personal legacy to the north east of England. Passionate about trees, and the Wynyard estate, he is set to initiate a masterpiece that he hopes will be enjoyed by many thousands of people over the coming years.



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Editors Notes

- Opened as Conference & Banqueting venue in November 2007
- Managing Director Allison Antonopoulos
- Grade II listed 18th Century building, surrounded by 150 acres of private parkland
- May 2010 awarded 4 stars by the AA
- May 2010 Wellington Restaurant awarded one rosette by the AA
- September 2010 finalist in the North East Small Hotel of the Year Award
- 16 bedrooms, private Chapel, weddings, corporate, restaurant & private dining
- Dinner bed & breakfast from £90 per person, Lunch from £16 per person, Treatments from £35
- Photography available on request, please contact Angela Horley on 07590 984023
- Simon Dorrell is a landscape painter and garden designer, whose portfolio of private design commissions includes the acclaimed gardens at Hampton Court Castle in Herefordshire. The *Independent* newspaper has ranked two of his gardens among the ten best contemporary gardens in Britain and in January 2010 *BBC Gardens Illustrated magazine* said of his own garden at Bryan's Ground (www.bryansground.co.uk), "this idyllic, quintessentially English garden is filled with horticultural delights, wit and style" He is also Art Editor of the international gardening quarterly *Hortus* (www.hortus.co.uk) Telephone: 01544 260001, 07960 750743 Email: sjdartsandcrafts@hotmail.co.uk
- Michael Mariott has worked with David Austin Roses (www.davidaustinroses.com) for over 25 years, firstly as Nursery Manager, more recently as Technical Manager. During this time he has designed private rose gardens and prestigious public gardens in many different countries, and is regarded as one of the most knowledgeable rosarians in the world. Telephone: 01902 376316 Email: michaelm@davidaustinroses.co.uk



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