

Ring o' roses

DESIGNED WITH AN ARTIST'S EYE,
SALLY OYLER AND PATRICK GAMMELL'S
SCOTTISH WALLED GARDEN IS SWATHED
IN BILLOWING ROSES

The rose garden structure
is best seen from the top
of the west-facing hill.

The best place to see the walled garden that contemporary Scottish artist Sally Oyler shares with her husband Patrick Gammell is from the top of the west-facing cliff that rises up behind the space. From here you can clearly see how the horseshoe curve of Morham Burn has shaped the semi-circular walled garden below.

The dramatic view includes 18th-century church Morham Kirk on the far side of the garden walls and the

potting shed, to the right of the main wooden entrance door. 'If you look carefully, you can see the outline of the original 17th-century minister's manse opposite the potting shed,' says Sally. 'It was excavated recently confirming our hunch that there had always been a dwelling within the garden.' The view also takes in the central box-edged rose garden, backed with a rustic trellis from which three crisp gravel paths radiate 'like a Catherine wheel or a ring o' roses', all designed

by Sally. 'Our house replaced the original manse,' she says. 'When we bought it the walled garden had been sold to another family but, 10 years ago, we were able to buy it back.'

Built in 1827, the Georgian house perches on the top of a hill, about 300 yards from the walled garden, which is reached either down a newly built flight of wooden steps running down the steep hill behind the house, or, more gently, along the single track road that leads from the manse to the kirk. The first route takes you through a wild garden complete with a pond backed with plantings of young trees including a bank of acers, shrubs and wild roses. Left long, the grass is packed with winter and spring flowering bulbs.

Sally, renowned for her light, vibrant watercolors of animals, had her eye on the third of an acre walled garden for years before it came up for sale. 'I felt it was such a special area that it needed a simple but bold graphic shape within it.' Artistically, she was guided by her designer's eye and love of colour, patterns and texture, but, practically, she knew the garden had to be low maintenance.

'With help just one day a week, it had to be easy to take care of,' she says, adding that although her grandmother taught her to love flowers and plants, she knew very little about gardening. The garden has been tended for generations and the soil is neutral, enriched with mushroom compost for the past nine years and there is ericaceous compost on the rhododendron bank below the house and around the acers.

Her plan allows herbaceous plants and roses to take centre stage within the central lawn while beds of trees and shrubs curving round below the walls back the design. Here are newly planted maples, including *Acer griseum*, *A. palmatum* 'Deshojo', 'Osakazuki', 'Orange Dream' and 'Sango-kaku', *Cornus controversa variegata*, *Magnolia sieboldii* and varieties of scented *Philadelphus*. Sally adds that the plantings are still

RIGHT A roller, set against a background of *Rosa* 'Wedding Day', is useful for keeping the grass smooth and flat. **BELOW** A view of the church over the garden wall.



AT HOME WITH...

OWNERS Sally and Patrick Gammell and their children Rory and Tess. Sally (above) is the artist Sally Oyler

HOUSE Built in 1827, Morham Old Manse sits in a remote glen in East Lothian. The chapel is just outside the garden walls

FEATURES One-and-a-half acre walled garden at the foot of a steep ravine that falls away behind the house. Wooden steps lead down to the garden. The path leads through a shrub area with rhododendrons and there is an informal wild shrub garden on either side of the west-facing hill opposite

at the experimental stage. 'You just have to wait and see if they are going to be happy there.'

The ring o' roses in the centre of the garden is backed with wooden trellis built with connecting pointed arches. 'I didn't want a straight backed trellis,' says Sally. 'It would have blocked the light and movement and created a barrier from the remainder of the garden.' Three arched entrances, each of which is reached by a separate curved gravel path linked to the wooden garden gates, break the circle and invite you inside, where a contemporary note is introduced with a tall, graphic quartzite golden stone, topped by Sally's own sculpture of a tawny owl. 'It's a reminder that this garden is filled with the sounds of wildlife at night, including owls and other birds that come in search of mice and voles.'

The circular beds are enclosed with low box hedges with pairs of box cones marking the entrances. 'The box adds structure while containing the plants,' Sally says, recalling how, to widen her knowledge of plants, she involved Beryl MacNaughton of Macplants. 'Beryl responded with a plant list that included purple violas and a range of pink and blue

WHAT WE LOVE MOST...

'The ring o' roses, the peace and tranquillity and the idea of changing things and making them more lovely'



HOW TO...

DESIGN A RING O' ROSES

- See the design in relation to the whole garden. Sally took the unusual shape of the walled garden into consideration.
- Link a focal point to the rest of the garden. Here, two curved paths run from the garden doors with a third from a paved sitting area to create the Catherine-wheel effect.
- Consider the view. The high surrounding banks allowed an aerial view, which called for a central, dramatic focus.
- Think how the plants will look. Sally imagined the trellis covered in fragrant climbing roses with clematis rambling through. Low box-hedge circles and pyramids confine and punctuate the planting scheme.





ABOVE The outline of the ring of roses is punctuated with box edges and shapes for year-round interest.

RIGHT An old stone window set in the wall stems from the garden's previous use as a church. **BELOW** Yellow, musk scented noisette Rosa 'Alister Stella Gray' partially conceals the garden door.

BELOW RIGHT Rosa 'Gertrude Jekyll' and Clematis 'Henryi'. Bench by Henderson Outdoors.



On our doorstep... EAST LOTHIAN

Sally and Patrick Gammell recommend their favourite local haunts

VISIT... 'The secret rose garden at Tynninghame House (0131 226 3714, gardensofscotland.org) in Tynninghame, Dunbar, with its lovely wooded walks, on Sunday 19th June 2011, 1pm to 5pm'

SHOP AT... 'Judy Reid Flowers (01875 853568, judyreidflowers.co.uk) in Gullane for flowers and her workshops'

GO FOR A MEAL AT... 'Greywalls Hotel & Chez Roux Restaurant (01620 842144, greywalls.co.uk) in Gullane, or take afternoon tea on its terrace overlooking Gertrude Jekyll's fabulous rose and perennial garden'

geraniums that flower most of the summer.' These now spill over the sides of the box hedges.

Choosing the roses, Sally admits, was the best fun of all. 'Patrick wanted anything scented and I was interested in colour,' she says. With those criteria in mind the couple came up with a list that includes white Rosa 'Félicité Perpétue', 'Boule de Neige', climbing 'Iceberg' and rosette shaped 'Madame Hardy'. Apricot-coloured R. 'Buff Beauty', 'Meg' and 'Heritage' contrast with rich pink 'Queen of Denmark', 'Madame Lauriol de Barny' and the softer, salmon pink 'Albertine', combined with creamy clusters of 'Penelope'.

At the lower end of the slightly sloping garden is a raised, paved terrace that adds another semi-formal note, and creates a sitting area furnished with wooden benches. With blue Clematis 'Perle d'Azur' and roses rambling up the walls, other plants, such as valerian and lavender, were planted to attract bees, butterflies, including Red Admirals and Peacocks, and other wildlife.

'Blue tits, wrens, wagtails, sparrows, thrushes, robins and blackbirds nest in the walls and shrubs. It is important to us to attract all kinds of wildlife, particularly toads, and in some summers, I even see hummingbird hawkmoths hovering above – they look amazingly like the birds,' says Sally.

Currently designing a new landscape of colours and textures, including an arboretum of specialist trees alongside the river and weir beside the walled garden, Sally draws parallels between her gardening and painting. 'My style is a colourful and often quirky perception of the natural world, influenced by my training in graphics and textile design.'

The Old Manse, Morham, Haddington, East Lothian EH41 4LQ. For details of Sally's work, call 01620 825333, sallyoyler.com. Macplants, 01875 341179, macplants.co.uk. Henderson Outdoors, 01573 225333, hendersongf.co.uk.



FEATURE ANTOINETTE GALBRAITH PHOTOGRAPHS RAY COX



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SALLY'S BEST PERFORMERS

1 *Lonicera* 'Graham Thomas' Honeysuckle producing long-lasting white flowers, which gradually turn yellow.

2 Rosa 'Compassion' Reliable, heavily scented climbing rose. Pink flushed and apricot-coloured.

3 Rosa 'Albertine' Salmon pink rose. Prefers an open, airy position perhaps rambling over a fence rather than planted against a wall.

4 Rosa 'Buff Beauty' Apricot-coloured scented shrub rose that tolerates dry conditions against a wall.

5 Rosa 'Madame Hardy' White, rosette-shaped damask rose that tolerates slightly shady conditions to produce scented flowers.

6 Rosa 'Madame Lauriol de Barny' Double Bourbon with deep silver pink flowers. A reliable and popular choice among rose lovers.

7 Clematis 'Lincoln Star' Early, raspberry pink flowers, with paler blooms in late summer.

8 Rosa 'Queen of Denmark' Despite its thorns, this shocking pink rose is well worth growing for its scent and deep rosy flowers.

