

Media Release

EMARGO: 2.00 pm, Sunday, October 16, 2005

Ruston's Roses named as home of National Rose Collection of Australia

Ruston's Roses at Renmark, one of the biggest, most diverse and important collections of Roses in the world, was today named as the home of the National Rose Collection of Australia.

Today's naming by Mr Tony Stalwood, president of the National Rose Society of Australia, coincided with the opening of a new tourist centre and motor museum on the property.

Originally a fruit orchard, the property today it is one of the Riverland's premier tourist destinations attracting more than 8000 visitors from around the world each year.

The brainchild and passion of internationally recognised rosarian Mr David Ruston, the property has for many years been a mecca for rose and garden lovers from around the world.

Begun by David Ruston as a display garden the property has evolved into a commercial enterprise and is now the largest outdoor cut rose garden in Australia.

Mr Stalwood said today that the "rose world" was deeply indebted to David Ruston and his contribution to the propagation and preservation of roses in Australia.

"Ruston roses is widely recognized as one of the five rose gardens of the world", Mr Stalwood said.

"The fact that you can visit a property like Ruston Roses and see species of roses that do not exist in other parts of the world is testament to the knowledge and foresight of someone like David Ruston.

"The good news for rose lovers from around the world is the fact that his niece Anne and her husband Richard have decided to purchase the property and

invest heavily to ensure its future and protect the rare roses that inhabit the property”, Mr Stalwood said.

Each year the property supplies more than 40,000 dozen roses (480,000 stems) to florists in Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane and Perth as well as some 400,000 buds of grafting wood to Australia’s nursery industry.

The Riverland’s unique climate is a major contributor to the prolific production strong full headed blooms harvested from the garden.

The germination of the idea for Ruston’s Rose Garden started in 1924 when David Ruston’s father planted an area of roses around the family home - a few of these varieties have survived such as Mme Jules Bouche, Lady Hillingdon, Rosa Laevigata and Constance, a Hybrid Tea planted because it shared its name with David’s Grandmother.

The Lombardy Poplars and Norfolk Island Pine and a Lemon Scented Gum which still shade the house today date back to this period.

By the middle of the 1970s the 11 hectare (27 acre) orchard had been completely converted to roses within a garden setting, augmented by a large collection of trees and shrubs and hundreds of varieties of iris, daylillies, watsonias, criniums, agapanthus and clivias.

There are now more than 40,000 rose bushes of more than 3,000 varieties, making the collection one of the biggest, most diverse and important in the world. World-renowned rose breeder Peter Beales described the garden as “if not the best, then by far the most interesting rose garden I have ever visited”.

The dry climate of South Australia’s Riverland region is the secret as to why the magnificent and distinctive scents of the roses, so often lost when they are grown indoors, are retained. This feature is not lost on the hundreds of wrens and other birds which inhabit the property.

Most of the varieties on the property produce six flushes of blooms each year, starting with the spectacular spring flush at the end of September. With modern horticultural practices, the roses are kept blooming until well into winter to following year, giving a nine-month season.

With such a wide range of rose varieties, each variety can be picked at its best ... some are magnificent in spring, some thrive in the heat of summer, and others are at their best in the cooler months of autumn.

Each year the collection is expanded with new plantings and now includes modern garden roses such as hybrid teas, floribundas, miniatures and ground covers; old garden roses including gallicas, damasks, centifolias, mosses,

bourbons, teas, noisettes, hybrid perpetuals, musks and rugosas; as well as a number of species roses.

In more recent times, considerable planting of David Austin roses have been undertaken, making Ruston's Roses the largest cut flower grower of these popular roses in Australia.

Today, the roses spread farther than the eye can see Only 5 km from the centre of Renmark, Ruston's Rose Garden is open to the public from October to June inclusive and is pleased to support Renmark Rose Week in October each year.

The property is also the home for a collection of historic racing and vintage cars including a replica of the Rev John Flynn's 1924 Dodge.

For further information please phone – 088 5866191 or 0418820209