

R is for Rose - Reflections from a Passionate Rose Lover

By Carolyn Parker

We all know that spring is right around the corner – soon we'll be able to romp in our gardens among the boisterous blooms. Looking out the window right now, it's kind of hard to believe, with the rain and cool temperatures. Rather than belabor the fact that it's still winter, you can have nearly as good a romp through the wonderful new rose book, *R is for Rose*. I've got more than a hundred books devoted to roses, and this one by far, is the most SCRUMPTIOUS book of all. The truly voluptuous photos alone are just about good enough to eat!

R is for Rose, Reflections from a Passionate Rose Lover, was published in the U.S. in 2005. Author Carolyn Parker, a New York fashion designer and stylist turned passionate gardener and floral photographer, created both the words and pictures in this incredible book. First published in England and Australia, she in fact has her garden in Lafayette, California, so you'll find her information very applicable to our Marin gardens.

This is no ordinary coffee table book. While the 200 plus glossy pages will make you want to have it out to immerse yourself often in the images and prose, it's both informational and inspirational. Carolyn, in fact, goes through roses A to Z, focusing on a different rose for each letter of the alphabet. (She even writes out each letter imaginatively in roses.) The descriptions of the rose are included, but each of the chapters provides more than that – guidance on rose care or floral design, possibly some wonderful descriptive story or recollection regarding the particular rose. You'll find old garden roses like *Rosa foetida*, David Austin roses, modern roses, and lots of others. There are enticing and creative arrangements of roses – ways to present roses you've never seen before.

In the opening chapter entitled "The Gift of Roses", she writes,

"Roses offer many gifts: beauty, color, fragrance, presence, variety, diversity.... They inspire joy, internal communion, creativity, art, poetry, pastime, celebration, life change transformation....."

When I finally had the opportunity to grow roses, I found the blooms, no matter how small, gave me more than I gave them. Each new discovery seemed profound and miraculous. While gardening, an internal dialogue opened that prompted wishes to share my story and the wonder of roses."

What a way to draw you into this wonderful book. If you're still waiting for your roses to begin their spring fling, you may want to pick up this book, or order on-line – to enjoy until you have the real thing!

Review by Nanette Londeree, Master Rosarian