

CREATION OF THE PERFUMER'S GARDEN AT THE ESTATE OF TRIANON

In collaboration with Maison Francis Kurkdjian - Opening in Spring 2023

Versailles, 16 June 2022
Press release

Thanks to patron Maison Francis Kurkdjian, the Palace of Versailles is bringing its *Perfumer's Garden* to life. This new garden at the Châteauneuf Orangery in the heart of the Trianon estate will be home to hundreds of different perfume-making plants, in keeping with the spirit of the 17th-century Trianon gardens. It will also help build awareness of the history of fragrance at the court of Versailles.

Aerial view of the Châteauneuf Orangery
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THE PERFUMER'S GARDEN

Set alongside the Châteauneuf Orangery, the *Perfumer's Garden* – “Le Jardin du Parfumeur” in French – was created with the support of patron Maison Francis Kurkdjian, and will bring together hundreds of flowering species: traditional plants (rose, jasmine), essences that exude unexpected aromas (chocolate, apple), odorous species, and “mute” or silent flowers, such as hyacinth, peony, and violet, which release no extract that can be used in perfumery, despite having a clearly identifiable smell. As a result, perfumers are forced to replicate their scents synthetically.

A labour of love crafted from the exceptional synergy between the Trianon gardeners and Francis Kurkdjian, this new garden will open its gates in Spring 2023. A number of tours and workshops will be rolled out for the general public, families, school groups, students, and associations.

Planting has started to ensure optimal flowering for 2023. The Japanese cherry blossoms, for example, are already in place, lining a long walkway that flutters in shades of pink, connecting the garden across from the Orangery to the more intimate “secret” garden. This will serve as a bucolic, fascinating tour for visitors seeking to explore Versailles in a different light.

VERSAILLES: SCENTS AND SENSIBILITY

In the 17th century, just as Louis XIV had commissioned work on the Trianon de Porcelaine — replaced by the Trianon de Marbre in 1687 — flowers were in fashion, and the Trianon gardens were flooded with heady, fragrant floral plants: jasmine, tuberose, and hyacinth. Awash with spell-binding scent, the gardens were set up with a nursery system that ensured they bloomed all year round.

Alongside this, fragrance was taking off at the court of Versailles, with the palace becoming the cradle of perfume-making craft and artistry from the late 17th century on.

The master perfumers here strove to provide sovereigns and courtiers alike with ever more sophisticated products, from fragrances and sachets to scented gloves and fans. In the 18th century, cosmetics boomed in step with the rise of the personal hygiene movement. Perfumery as an art and trade was in vogue, drawing in specialists in ever greater numbers, including Claude-François Prévost, perfumer to Queen Marie-Antoinette.

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MAISON FRANCIS KURKDJIAN AND THE PALACE OF VERSAILLES

From the age of twenty-four, Francis Kurkdjian's life path has been intricately bound with the Palace of Versailles. A graduate of Versailles' perfumery school, years later he went on to concoct a replica of Marie-Antoinette's fragrance *Sillage de la Reine*, drawing on archive documents for inspiration.

From the moment he first met Marc Chaya in 2003, he spoke of his vision: returning to the whimsy of the Sun King's lavish parties, for which the pools and fountains in Versailles' gardens were scented. In 2006, the pair put their heads together to ensure Francis Kurkdjian was able to design and make the "Soleil de Minuit" olfactory installation for 2006's Versailles Off festival, where orange blossom scent sprang from the Orangery parterre, the pool's water tinged a flaming, sunset tangerine.

For the Grandes Eaux Nocturnes in 2007 and 2008, Francis Kurkdjian brought to life an olfactory experience in the heart of the Palace of Versailles' gardens: sixteen bubble machines surrounding visitors in thousands of bubbles scented with strawberry, pear and melon — Louis XIV's favourite fruits. Francis Kurkdjian also created the "Chutt... d'Eau" and "Le Roi Danse" olfactory installations, set up in the Grove of the Three Fountains and the Ballroom Grove, respectively.

In 2009, Francis Kurkdjian and Marc Chaya launched Maison Francis Kurkdjian, which is now part of the LVMH group. Together, they map out sensual, generous, multi-faceted olfactory experiences where freedom of expression reigns supreme, working hand in hand in a new embodiment of the French art of living and craftsmanship.

In 2022, Maison Francis Kurkdjian became the proud patron of the Perfumer's Garden project, thereby continuing its commitment to supporting the Palace of Versailles.



Francis Kurkdjian, Catherine Pégard, Marc Chaya, Alain Baraton
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