



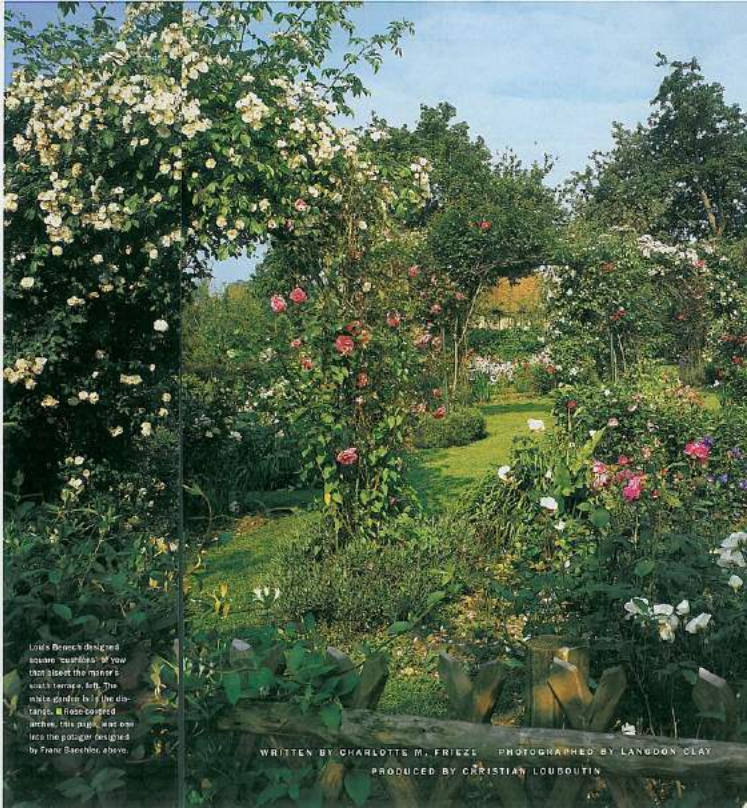
LA VIE EN ROSE

LANDSCAPE DESIGNER LOUIS BENECH HAS PRESERVED

THE RURAL MOOD AND ABUNDANT ROSES OF LA VALETIERE,

AN OLD NORMAN MANOR NEAR DEAUVILLE, WHILE

ADDING SOME HORTICULTURAL SURPRISES OF HIS OWN



Louis Benech designed square "cushions" of yew that abut the manor's south terrace. **Left**, The white garden by the distaff. **M** rose-covered arches, this page, was once the gazebo designed by Fran Baehrou, above.

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OR FRENCH GARDEN designer Louis Benech, arriving at La Vilette in 1994 was like visiting an old friend. Having known both the place and the former gardener, Franz Bacchler, he instinctively knew what to do.

Benech has preserved the traditional farm atmosphere of this centuries-old Norman manor located near Deauville. With its views of the apple orchards from the house, the land feels rural, untouched.

Benech also retained Bacchler's rose-filled potager, where arches laden with roses mark the paths through the vegetable garden. "Bacchler was a wonderful, sweet gardener," says Benech. "I honor his memory in continuing to build the garden."

The herb garden, above, is planted in squares of yellow varietals, including "Dumbbells" oregano, "Donna Valley" thyme, and green sage, including hyssop, dill, and thyme.

The owners have a fine collection of fruit, including the handsome rooster, right. The Malheur pink rose "Eden" climbs the south-facing wall beyond.





"Once a poplar grows
the pond, this path
is now edged with
Penstemon japonicus
and a brilliant-colored
"false meadow" of
yellow *Primula* and
many *Malva*.
Most his *Malva* and
P. sibirica and *Alcea*
gracilis. It is sur-
rounded with tall
spires. The dark
edges *Primula japon-*
ica, "Miller's Crinum,"
left, *ambrosia* bear
bluish with the lighter
Penstemon sibiricus
in the distance.





BENECH HAS SHAPED THE POND SO THAT IT APPEARS SQUARE FROM A DISTANCE

Benech's innovations began with the square "cushions" of yew he used to link the manor house with the restored *porrar* or apple-pressing house. He continued the square theme in the herb garden adjacent to the kitchen. Herbs with golden foliage fill five squares, while four are solid green. Medicinals and other herbs, such as celeriac and fennel, form the border.

Further from the manor, Benech has created other horticultural surprises. He established new views by harnessing natural springs to create ponds that reflect the sky and beguile the mind.

Using false perspective, he narrowed a rectangular pond toward a native field maple (*Acer campense*) that serves as a focal point. A set of steps formed of graduated hedges of *Cornus alba* 'Aurea' rises

beyond a pair of *Abax incana* 'Aurea' toward a bench. Together, the *Cornus* steps, *Abax*, and pond conspire to force the perspective, making the maple appear more distant.

The tricks don't stop there. With the ease of a magician, Benech has shaped the pond so that it appears square when viewed from the maple.

Looking back on the changes that he has made to his old friend's work, Benech views them as a friendly difference of opinion and a fruitful collaboration. The results are an unmissed success. **✪**

Magnolia alba and deep blue delphiniums, above, cascade beneath the branches of a pear tree in the potager, to which Benech has added since the death of the former gardener, Peter Bannister. © Benech harnessed the water of the natural springs to form ponds, such as the innovative shaped pond, right, that seduces guests at the entrance to the manor.

