2013: A YEAR TO CELEBRATE LE NÔTRE AT THE PALACE OF VERSAILLES

TO MARK THE 400TH ANNIVERSARY OF HIS BIRTH, THROUGHOUT 2013 THE PALACE OF VERSAILLES WILL PAY TRIBUTE TO LE NÔTRE, GARDENER TO LOUIS XIV, ARCHITECT, OUTSTANDING LANDSCAPE DESIGNER, BUT ALSO A WELL-INFORMED ART COLLECTOR, FRIEND AND CONFIANT OF THE KING WHOSE ARTISTRY CONTINUES TO PROVIDE INSPIRATION TO DESIGNERS THROUGHOUT THE WORLD.

RESTORATIONS, EXHIBITIONS AND SHOWS WILL HONOUR LE NÔTRE’S GENIUS AND HIS MASTERPIECE, THE GARDENS OF VERSAILLES.

PROGRAMME FOR 2013

Exhibitions

GIUSEPPE PENONE AT VERSAILLES
11 JUNE - 31 OCTOBER 2013
For its annual contemporary art event, the Palace of Versailles will welcome Giuseppe Penone. The artist – a leader in the Arte Povera movement – will punctuate Le Nôtre’s gardens with his sculptures of trees in which plants and minerals come together to reveal their essence.

THE KING’S HERB GARDEN
2 JULY – 29 SEPTEMBER 2013, AT THE GRAND TRIANON
The flamboyance and diversity of the species in the Trianon gardens are attributable to an ongoing passion for botany that held sway at court as from the 17th century. An exhibition will unveil the jewels of the National History Museum’s vellum collection, initiated by Louis XIV and his uncle Gaston d’Orléans, to study and preserve rare flowers. Echoing this presentation in the Cotelles gallery, the Trianon gardeners will recreate a historic flowering of its beds: dark blue hyacinths, daffodils from Provence, narcissi from Constantinople…

THE Labyrinth GROVE
SEPTEMBER 2013 - JANUARY 2014, AT THE MUNICIPAL LIBRARY OF VERSAILLES
Designed by André Le Nôtre and Charles Perrault to educate the Dauphin, the Labyrinth Grove was one of the most imposing spaces at Versailles: almost forty fountains decorated with 333 painted lead animals depicted Aesop’s fables in the heart of a maze of trellises and rockeries. Destroyed in the 18th century, this magical place will be brought back to life in an exhibition.
The grand finale of the year, the “André Le Nôtre in Perspective” exhibition. 1613-2013 dispels myths and offers a surprising new image of the man, his art and his influence. Gardener, designer, architect, engineer and hydraulics specialist, landscaper and town planner, collector, spatial magician, André Le Nôtre, a close friend of the King, transformed the dreams of princes into reality. The exhibition also explores his fascinating modernity in today’s world.

Restorations, new creation and revived heritage

The Latona fountain and parterres
January 2013 - April 2014
Fountain engineers, gardeners, sculptors, gilders… have been mobilised to restore the centrepiece of the gardens. In the middle of the Grand Perspective, visitors will discover the secrets of the water system, the art of pruning topiary and the skills and expertise of the restorers. A unique project made possible through the support of Fondation Philanthropia.

The Water Theatre Grove
January 2013 – April 2014
Landscape architect Louis Benech and artist Jean-Michel Othoniel have been invited to reinterpret the Water Theatre grove, destroyed in 1775. With curious perspectives and recurring rhythms, this evocation of Le Nôtre’s work will restore the reference points and dimensions of the disappeared grove, which will permanently re-open. Visitors will be drawn into a rhythmic walk punctuated with pauses in the shade of evergreen oaks before reaching a large clearing of light and water.

The Gilded Children Fountain
January 2013 – April 2014
At the crossroads of the garden paths and at the edge of the Water Theatre, the eight cherubs of Jules Hardouin-Mansart will retrieve their golden youth.

Return of two monumental sculptures
Perseus and Andromeda and Milo of Croton, two masterpieces of Pierre Puget, are coming back to frame the start of the Green Carpet. With casts made from the original sculptures kept at the Louvre, the gardens’ perspective will retrieve its baroque touch.

Royal perspectives and parterres
In 2013, the gardeners of Versailles will continue their work of reconstituting the spaces designed by Le Nôtre, focusing their efforts on restoring the splendour of the Versailles parterres. In partnership with the City of Versailles, the Mortemets royal paths will be restored to their historic configuration, offering a new walking circuit.
**Events and shows**

**THE GARDENS OF VERSAILLES, A SETTING FOR CELEBRATIONS**
Festivities and performances are more than just an ornament to the gardens; they have been its soul and purpose since the days of Louis XIV. In 2013, the gardens of Versailles will resonate with the music of the 17th century or “Grand Siècle”, the detonations of fireworks and water shows in the pools and fountains. Concerts, ballet, theatre and operas will crown Le Nôtre’s anniversary at Versailles in June and July.

**THE “LE NÔTRE” PRIZE FOR GARDEN BOOKS AND MAGAZINES**
To mark the “Rendez-vous aux Jardins” open gardens event organised at the Petit Trianon between 31 May and 2 June 2013, the Le Nôtre prize, chaired by Didier Decoin, will reward the best work in various categories: children, practical advice, reflections on gardening.

**THE GARDENS OF VERSAILLES, A MOBILE APP**
In spring 2013, visitors will be able to tour the gardens in the footsteps of Le Nôtre. The mobile app, produced in partnership with Orange, will reveal the King’s garden through the eyes of those who have inspired it and brought it to life: gardeners, historians, fountain engineers, writers, designers.