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## GRAHAMSTOWN FLOWER FESTIVAL PRESS RELEASE

### **Rose book launch for flower festival**

More than two years in the planning and making, the latest book to hit bookshelves that will be of interest to rose cultivators, *Veld, Vlei & Rose Gardens*, edited by Jacqueline Kalley and rose legend Sheenagh Harris, will be launched at the Grahamstown Flower Festival next month.

The coffee table book has been published by Johannesburg-based Otterley Press and printed by Craft Print in Singapore.

Adding a Grahamstown flavour to the book is an inclusion on prolific rose grower Vernon Marais, whose collection of over 4000 bushes graces his smallholding on the outskirts of town.

Kalley said from Johannesburg this week that *Veld, Vlei & Rose Gardens* showcases a selection of rose gardens from across South Africa, described through the eyes of their owners.

“The stories provide an intimate account of their gardening endeavours in sometimes challenging conditions to produce the spectacular gardens featured in this beautifully illustrated book,” said Kalley.

The publication of the book is timely since the Federation of Rose Societies of South Africa (ROSA) will host the 16<sup>th</sup> World Federation of Rose Societies’ triennial rose convention in Johannesburg in October 2012.

The Arequipa rose garden of Vernon Marais is on a property hidden from the road by trees and lush vegetation, situated at the northern entrance to the fertile Belmont Valley region outside Grahamstown.

On the sprawling property, Marais has planted in excess of four thousand rose bushes over the years. His collection includes hundreds of varieties, and he has developed a passion for heritage roses.

The well-laid out property with its flowing lawns and endless beds of roses regularly attracts visitors from across the country and from abroad.

Marais says the name Arequipa is Peruvian for “here we’ll stay”, and he chuckles as he says: “And I’m not likely to be moving anytime soon.” The name came to him after his second visit to Peru some years ago.

Early last year Marais was informed that it was the intention to have the book published by the end of 2011.

Harris said, much to the delight of Grahamstown's prolific rose grower, the publishers wanted to include his garden of roses along with twenty-five others.

The section dealing with Marais's roses was written, photographs taken, and the batch submitted to the publishers.

The months passed as the publishers went about the myriad tasks involved in the production of a comprehensive work on roses and their gardens spread across the length and breadth of South Africa.

Then, earlier this month, the Grahamstown Flower Festival organisers were informed that the publishers wished to launch the book at the festival.

Chairman of the festival organising committee, Sharon Richner, is elated at the news. "There is so much happening over the flower festival weekend, and this is a bonus."

The Arequipa rose estate of Vernon Marais is included under "Collectors Gardens" on the opening pages, along with three other gardens. Twenty gardens are featured in "Town Gardens", and a further 17 under "Country Gardens".

The Arequipa text was written by Sid Penney, and the photographs taken by Stephen Penney, both of Grahamstown.