



# MAISON ET JARDINS CLAUDE MONET - GIVERNY

## 2024 PRESS KIT

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# INTRODUCTION

“It was he who broke through the studio windows, who fully realised what the outdoors could add to paintings, making them quiver and vibrate with light. It was he who lightened the palette, cleared away the ochres and the tradition of darkening, and finally captured all the light on the canvas using his technique of simple shades and fragmentary colours applied with quick, successive strokes.”

(Georges Rodenbach, *L'Élite : Écrivains, Orateurs sacrés, Peintres, Sculpteurs*, Paris, Fasquelle, 1899, p. 253-257)



## **CLAUDE MONET'S GARDENS:**

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### **CLOS NORMAND AND THE WATER GARDEN**

When he moved to Giverny on 29 April 1883, Claude Monet (Paris, 14 November 1840 - Giverny, 5 December 1926) became passionate about gardening. First Clos Normand, then from 1890 the Water Garden, bore witness to his enthusiasm for plants as well as their 'staging', which brought out his extreme originality in the creation of two gardens unlike any other. By embracing the wise advice of Georges Truffaut, discussing experiences with his friends Gustave Caillebotte and Octave Mirbeau who were both skilled gardeners, devouring nursery catalogues and going around the plant exhibitions and botanic gardens, Claude Monet invented gardens that evoked his art: full of movement and with light revealing constantly quivering colours.

Gradually abandoned after the artist's death, the gardens started to be restored in 1977 and first opened to the public on 1 June 1980.

From April to October, the gardens feature an impressive succession of flowering plants. Bulbs, annuals, biennials, spring and summer perennials, water lilies, flowering bushes, rose bushes, peonies and autumn foliage and perennials: thousands of plant varieties set the pace of life in these amazing gardens. Here, visitors are invited to enjoy a unique experience, one where they can step inside the artist's imagination.

### **JAPANESE PRINTS: THE LARGE COLLECTION AMASSED BY CLAUDE MONET**

Another of Monet's passions was Japanese prints, which he started collecting in the 1870s. These are on display in the house. Among the 211 of them, visitors can see sets of prints by Utamaro, Hokusai and Hiroshige. Monet and his friends in the Impressionist movement had a real fascination for the culture and artistic expression of the Japanese Empire. The Giverny collection is also of historical interest because it has been preserved virtually intact.

## CLAUDE MONET'S PRIVATE LIFE: THE HOUSE

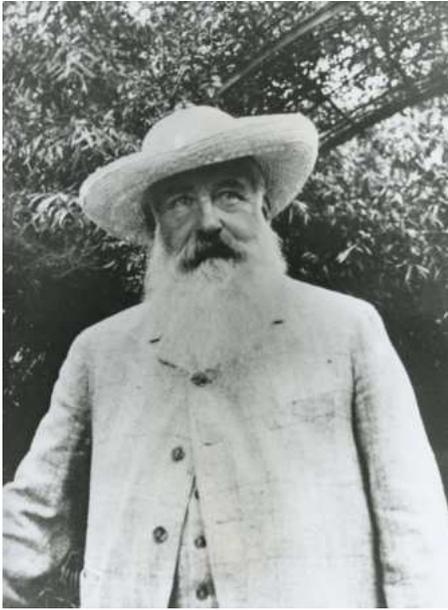
Like the gardens, the house was restored between 1977 and 1980. Visiting the house introduces you to the world in which the artist and his large family lived. Monet himself had two sons and his second wife, Alice Hoschedé, had six children. On the ground floor, beyond the little blue lounge or reading room, the door opens onto the primitive studio that was converted to a lounge when Monet set up a new studio separate from the house. Upstairs, Claude Monet's and Alice's bedrooms both connect with the washroom. And the final room upstairs is the bedroom of Blanche Hoschedé-Monet, which was opened to the public for the first time in 2014. As for Monet's bedroom, the scenographic recreation was done by Hubert le Gall who took inspiration from interiors of that era in order to most accurately recreate the personal space of the woman who lived at Giverny until her death in 1947. Back on the ground floor, visitors step into the inviting dining room, with its two shades of yellow, which is set up as it was in Monet's time as if he were expecting new guests. Covered with Rouen blue tiles, the kitchen was the hub of the home; meals served in the artist's home were exceptional and no carelessness was tolerated. As you reach the end of the visit, you will feel as if you have shared in Claude Monet's private family life.



Bequeathed to the Académie des Beaux-Arts by Michel Monet in 1966, the Giverny property was restored between 1977 and 1980 under the direction of Gérald Van der Kemp, a member of the Académie des Beaux-Arts. In addition to the budget allocated by the Académie des Beaux-Arts and by the Conseil Général de l'Eure, significant donations were received from the USA through The Versailles Foundation Inc. Claude Monet-Giverny which had previously helped the Château de Versailles. Claude Monet's house and gardens were founded in 1980.

Hugues R. Gall, a member of the Académie des Beaux-Arts and a State Councillor, was appointed to oversee t Claude Monet's house and gardens' future on 26 March 2008.

# I/ BEGINNINGS



On **3 May 1883**, Claude Monet signed the lease for the Pressoir, the house he had discovered in Giverny and the place where he would pass away on 5 December 1926. Located between the Normandy and Ile-de-France regions and only three kilometres from Vernon, the village spreads out at the foot of a hill whose slopes were covered in vineyards and orchards at that time. The hill gently descends towards the Seine valley where the small River Epte also flows. The areas either side of the water are scattered with fields of cereal crops and pastures, and the river banks feature marshlands towered over by the tall poplar trees.

According to Gustave Geffroy, biographer and personal friend of the artist, Giverny became Monet's "motherland and home port as Barbizon was for Millet, Ornans for Courbet and Ville-d'Avray for Corot." It is also thanks to Geffroy's pen that the garden has been described as it was in Monet's time. And as it can be seen today by visitors:

"In any season, as soon as you step through the small gate off Giverny's main street, you feel as if you have stepped into paradise. It is a colourful,

fragrant realm of flowers. Every month is adorned with its flowers, from lilacs and irises to chrysanthemums and nasturtiums. The azaleas, hydrangeas, foxgloves, hollyhocks, forget-me-nots, violets, sumptuous flowers and more modest flowers mingle and bloom one after the other on this land which is ever ready and admirably cared for by skilled gardeners, under the unerring eye of their master. When it is the roses' turn, all the marvellous flowers with glorious names embrace you with their colours and scents. They are spaced out in the soil, in bushes, hedges and espaliers, climbing the walls or holding onto the pillars and arches of the central path. There are rare plants and more ordinary ones, which are just as beautiful, simple roses, clumps of sweetbriars, vibrant colours and paler shades, and all their round faces speak of a charming time, sing a summer harmony and make you believe in a landscape full of happiness.

[...]

But the estate holds other floral glories. To see them all, you must cross the path, climb the embankment of the Vernon to Gisors train line, cross the tracks and step inside a second garden: the Water Garden. The small River Epte used to flow through there, under a canopy of foliage, and Monet enjoyed taking his guests in a small boat along the river to the Seine. The river still flows through, but with a stop. Monet obtained the Eure Prefecture's authorisation to divert a branch of the River Epte, the Rû, and create ponds. This act gave rise to his masterpieces. After diverting the waterway into dug-out ponds, Monet designed his garden and flower beds with the willows trailing their green tresses, bamboos springing out of the ground and rhododendron flower beds lining the paths. Monet also sowed water lilies in the ponds, with their roots floating in the water over which they spread their large leaves, bursting forth with white and pink, or mauve and green flowers. Standing on the Japanese-style bridge adorned with wisteria, Monet appraises the picture he has created."

Gustave Geffroy, *Monet, sa vie, son œuvre*, 1924 (republished: Macula, 1980)

## II/ STAGES

1/ Giverny 1883 - 1926,

« Claude Monet's other artwork of light »

### **BEFORE GIVERNY**

After many long, difficult years struggling to establish his artwork, periods of poverty and crushing criticism, family dramas - his first wife Camille died in 1879 - and moving house many times (Bougival, 1869; Argenteuil, 1871; Vétheuil, 1878; Poissy, 1881), Claude Monet moved to Giverny on 29 April 1883, one day before the death of his friend Manet. The presence of water, the special atmosphere of the rural landscapes in the Seine valley, the seasonal pace of life and the proximity to Paris were motivating factors in his decision to move to this village..

### **BLENDED FAMILY**

The long house covered with pink render, the garden gently sloping down to the train tracks and, with the purchase of the land in 1890, the Water Garden all combined to form an ideal environment for creativity. His passion for plants soon emerged in an utterly unique garden focused, like his paintings, on the interplays of light and colour. The home was large enough to house his large blended family which was ahead of its time, with his partner (and in 1892 his wife) Alice Hoschedé's six children and his own two sons, Jean and Michel.

### **FRIENDS**

His closest friends happily took the train or drove from Paris to spend the day in Giverny. This tradition was well established by Gustave Geffroy, Georges Clemenceau, Camille Pissarro, Octave Mirbeau, Auguste Rodin, Auguste Renoir, Sacha Guitry, art dealer Durand-Ruel and his wife, nursery owner Georges Truffaut, Monet's Japanese friends and collectors Kojiro Matsukata and his niece Madame Kuroki who sent Monet tree peonies and rare bulbs from Japan, and even Gustave Caillebotte who travelled aboard his boat along the River Seine from Petit Gennevilliers. At 11.30am precisely, everyone gathered in the dining room where the walls, ceiling and furniture were painted in two shades of yellow, light and medium chrome, with the adjacent rooms' blue hues visible through the doorways. Ceramics and a host of prints illustrated the enthusiasm that Claude Monet shared with his impressionist artist friends for Japan.

## THE HOUSE

For celebrations, the yellow-edged dinnerware with a blue line replaced the usual Creil dinnerware in blue with Japanese patterns. Despite being quick, the meals were still extravagant. The kitchen was the second most sacred place in the home, after the studios. Entirely covered in Rouen blue tiles, it was equipped to a modern standard for that time. The array of brass pots and pans hinted at the wide range of dishes prepared in the kitchen under the guidance of Alice and Marguerite, the famous cook.

## GARDENS

After the meal, Monet traditionally lead his guests to the garden. From spring to autumn, they could enjoy the spectacle of an abundant garden in constant motion, changing from week to week with successive blooms. Strolling along the central path and taking care not to step on the nasturtiums that Monet enjoyed allowing to creep along the ground, visitors could see 38 'paint box' flower beds on the left and, beyond the lawn on the right, the flower beds of monochrome perennials. While his design used straight lines like a picture frame, the profusion of flowers and foliage along with the combination of different plant varieties acted as an indistinct whole, changing with the time of day and weather, and only light could trigger the immediacy sought by the artist. After crossing the train tracks, visitors were absolutely delighted to discover the Water Garden. The little Japanese bridge covered in wisteria filling the early summer air with fragrance, the weeping willows, the generous leaves of the floating petasites topped with the bamboo's wood, the azaleas and the irises all formed an ideal backdrop for the water lilies. Towards the end of his life, the water lilies' floral corolla constantly enticed Monet to push the boundaries of water and air, the bright and the invisible. He never ceased to be obsessed with water and wrote about it to Geffroy on 22 June 1890: "I am again trying to capture those things that are impossible to capture: water with grass rippling in the background... It is admirable to see, but it can make you crazy trying to do that. Well! I always throw myself into doing things like this!" It was there, in his Water Garden, that he put together his pictorial legacy: the huge water lily painting, *'Les Grandes Décorations de Nymphéas'*, exhibited at the Orangerie Museum in Paris.



## 2/ Giverny 1926 - 1977 : A long absence

### **CLAUDE MONET'S DEATH**

Monet died at Giverny on 5 December 1926. His coffin was carried to the cemetery by his gardeners during the simple funeral he had wanted and which was attended by his family, some villagers, Georges Clemenceau and a few artist friends. His eldest son, Jean, had died in 1914 so his younger son Michel inherited the property, the paintings there and the large collection of Japanese prints amassed by Claude Monet. Michel Monet preferred to go on safari in Africa and the family home did not appeal to him. Instead, he built a house some 30 kilometres from Giverny.

### **BLANCHE HOSCHEDÉ-MONET**

Only Blanche Hoschedé-Monet, the daughter of Alice Monet and her first husband, and the widow of Jean, maintained the property in the artist's spirit, with the help of Head Gardener Lebret. However, with the death of Blanche in 1947, and subsequently of Mr Lebret, a helper was tasked with minimal maintenance of the garden. In Monet's time, seven gardeners had been employed full time year-round. Nature gradually took over and eventually erased all memory of the artist.

### **BEQUEST TO THE ACADEMIE DES BEAUX-ARTS**

In 1966, at the age of 88, Michel Monet died in a car accident. With no direct heir, he left the property and what remained of the collections at Giverny to the Académie des Beaux-Arts in his will. Jacques Carlu, a member of the Académie des Beaux-Arts and architect of the Palais de Chaillot, lacked the funding to undertake a proper restoration project. He had the roof redone, protected the already quite damaged prints and moved what remained of the collection of paintings to the Marmottan Museum, where he was the director.

### **GÉRALD VAN DER KEMP**

When Jacques Carlu passed away in 1977, the Académie des Beaux-Arts asked Gérald Van der Kemp, one of its members who was basking in the glory of his successful restoration work at Versailles, to help save Giverny. His account reported the scale of the task: "The buildings [...] were dilapidated, most of the wood panels and parquet were rotten, the furniture was broken and covered in mould, and plants grew up through the floorboards in the large studio." The garden was desolated: the Clos Normand was overrun by brambles and weeds, including the formidable perennial Maximilian sunflower (*Helianthus Maximiliani*), numerous trees were dead, the glasshouses had no glass, and the plant stands and trellises were completely rusted. The Water Garden was in a pitiful state, the Japanese bridge was rotting in black, asphyxiated water, and the banks of the pond were invaded by tunnels dug by the muskrats proliferating in the area and making all planting impossible.

### 3/ Giverny 1977-2012 :

Revival and welcoming the world



#### SPONSORSHIP

Firstly, sponsors had to be found to bolster the budgets allocated by the Académie des Beaux-Arts and Conseil Général de l'Eure. Most of the funds came from the United States of America through *The Versailles Foundation Inc. Claude Monet-Giverny*, which Gérald Van der Kemp and his wife Florence had set up to help the Château de Versailles. Across the Atlantic, Monet's fame was such that generous donations came pouring in.

#### WORK

Monumental work took place over three years. The house and studios were restored and the furniture replaced. The precious Japanese prints were also carefully restored and once again hung on the walls. Directed by Gérald Van der Kemp, who had spent four years taking evening classes at the Ecole d'Horticulture de Versailles, and Gilbert Vahé, a young gardener

who graduated from the same school, the gardens regained their identity. The dead trees were felled, the flower beds were completely dug over, the paths were remapped, and an identical replica of the Japanese bridge was built while keeping the wisteria that Monet had planted. The pond's banks were strengthened with rat-proof sheet piles, and a well was dug to provide fresh water in which the water lilies could blossom. The plant list, garden maps, and numerous photos provided by Jean Marie Toulgouat - including two autochrome series - taken during Monet's time were used to guide the choice of flower beds and layouts.

Gilbert Vahé's memories evoke a difficult beginning where everything was yet to be determined. Friends donated many seeds but what could they be planted in? It was decided that polystyrene containers would be gathered from the region's fish mongers. There was no money for stakes so Gilbert Vahé replaced them with concrete rods; once painted green, the illusion was complete. To recreate the flower bed colours, they called on the memories of André Devillers. He was the former assistant of Georges Truffaut after the First World War and visited Giverny during Monet's time. In 1976, a complete list of the plants ordered by Monet from the Truffaut nurseries was ready to be sent when a fire destroyed all the archives! Luckily, there was an exhaustive description compiled by Georges Truffaut for an article in the 1924 *Jardinage* journal. The family's memories also helped identify some plants such as a list of irises, and which plants Monet liked or disliked, recorded in a chapter of the book *Claude Monet: Ce mal connu* written by Jean-Pierre Hoschedé, Claude Monet's adoptive son. The Japanese Princess Matsukata, who had sent plants to Giverny in her youth, also provided valuable assistance. Some cultivars had disappeared from nursery catalogues so were replaced by others that were similar. And as the garden was intended to welcome visitors, the paths were widened, concreted and edged in brick.

## **PUBLIC OPENING**

On 1 June 1980, Maison et Jardins Claude Monet was founded and the property opened its doors to the public. It rapidly became a popular destination for increasing numbers of visitors from around the world. It is the second most popular tourist destination in Normandy, after Mont Saint-Michel, with some 500,000 enthusiasts visiting every year between late March and early November to pay tribute to Claude Monet.

## **HUGUES R. GALL**

Since 2008, Hugues R. Gall, a member of the Académie des Beaux-Arts and a State Councillor, has held the position of Director at Maison et Jardins Claude Monet - Giverny. He distinguished himself with the revamp of Palais Garnier, both in terms of lyrics and choreography (1969-1980). He was the General Director of the Grand Théâtre de Genève (1980-1995) then Director of the Opéra National de Paris (1995-2004). Under his leadership, the Opéra National de Paris fulfilled its public service function in an exemplary manner. From October 2004 to March 2010, Hugues Gall was the President of the IFCIC (Institute for Financing Cinema and Cultural Industries). Since 2008 he has been a board member of the Order of the Legion of Honour and, since 2009, a member of the CESE (Environmental, Social and Economic Council).

Since his election as director of Maison et Jardins Claude Monet - Giverny, Hugues R. Gall has introduced a series of restorations: the studio/lounge in 2011, Claude Monet's bedroom and washroom in 2013 and Blanche Hoschedé-Monet's bedroom in 2014. He has also taken a number of measures to make visiting easier and smoother: print-your-own tickets, the Fondation being open seven days a week ...

## **THE DIGITAL ERA**

Maison et Jardins Claude Monet - Giverny has expanded its online presence and visitors the world over can now get daily updates. Whether anecdotes about the site, images, or a peek behind the scenes at the gardeners' work, you can discover and follow the Maison et Jardins Claude Monet - Giverny's entire world, both public and private, through its monthly newsletter and social network accounts: Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and Vimeo. The website has been completely overhauled and improved in order to make browsing easier, enable future visitors to find all the information they need on the gardens, house and Claude Monet in only a few clicks, and offer print-at-home tickets.

## III/ HOUSE

Maison et Jardins Claude Monet - Giverny invites each visitor to step into the master of the house's private life and, as his friends of yesteryear did, discover the outstanding collection of Japanese prints, gush as Monet did over the incredible wealth of blooms in Clos Normand, experience the pure emotion of seeing the Water Garden, and enjoy a timeless moment bathed in the special light that Monet so cleverly captured in his paintings.

### 1/ The house, as if Monet still lived there

Imagine the house bustling with a stampede of eight children, Claude Monet's trips between his first studio and his beloved garden, the feverish atmosphere in the kitchen from early morning when the vegetables arrived fresh from the kitchen garden owned by the artist in the village, people coming home from the market and arrivals of friends from Paris.

The house evolved as Claude Monet redeveloped it. In the garden, a long wooden deck was built in order to remove the flights of stone steps leading to the ground floor rooms, which were raised on that side in relation to the garden.

#### **GROUND FLOOR : BLUE LOUNGE, PANTRY & STUDIO/LOUNGE**

The first room after you step inside is the reading room, which is still known as the little blue lounge because of the two shades of blue dominating the room. It joins onto the pantry where people took off their coats and hats and where precious foodstuffs were stored such as tea, olive oil and all sorts of spices. Next is the first studio. This is where Monet worked until 1899, when he moved his easels and frames to a building separate from the house. This room then became an inviting lounge, where lengthy discussions took place while sipping coffee and sitting in comfortable English-style wicker chairs and couches surrounded by familiar items, photographs and the artist's own paintings (now reproductions).

**This room was restored in 2011 under the scientific direction of Sylvie Patin and using photographs from 1915/1920:**



By analysing the photos and meticulously researching the history of Claude Monet's paintings, the ones on display at Giverny at that time could be accurately identified. Some sixty paintings were chosen to be copied (great care has been taken to inform visitors of each original painting's current location in order to encourage them to see or rediscover Monet's originals). Those reproductions are now displayed on picture rails in the studio/lounge and hung close together in order to recreate the atmosphere of yesteryear while being mindful of historical accuracy. Rather than using photographic reproductions of his artworks and lose the true medium of painting, it was decided to commission Galerie Troubetzkoy to

create identical replicas of the artworks. Each was created using a specific technique. The photographic pigments of the original artwork were printed onto a canvas that was then painted to match the print.

**The recreation of the studio/lounge was entrusted to Hubert le Gall** and reused 80% of the existing furniture. In photos from that time, the furniture was upholstered with a floral fabric similar to the Nouvelle France model still produced by Georges Le Manach, a company creating and manufacturing upholstery fabric since 1829. So the choice was made to use that fabric with its cornflower and rose patterns which beautifully echoed Claude Monet's illustrations and garden. Each object and piece of furniture in the photos was meticulously studied. Hubert le Gall was able to redesign a chaise longue and have a bronze lamp reproduced which was identical to that used in 1920. In order for the paintings' display to be as faithful as possible to that of Monet's time, a thorough search was launched for copper patina frames of that era from antique dealers. Hubert le Gall happily talks about his work as being as "unobtrusive as possible" yet also a "burst of radiance and freshness" for the studio/lounge that once again became Claude Monet's private space.

## **UPSTAIRS: PRIVATE APARTMENTS**

A staircase leads upstairs to a hallway with doors to the private rooms. First is Monet's bedroom, where the 18<sup>th</sup> century cylinder desk still stands along with a chest of drawers. Paulette Howard-Johnston, the daughter of artist Paul Helleu, shares her memory of Monet's bedroom: "... all the walls were covered with paintings. I counted eleven Cézannes and four Manets! By Renoir: the two portraits of Claude and Mrs Monet, Mrs Monet reading Le Figaro, an Algerian woman, the Kasbah, and two nude studies. One Degas, some Jongkinds, a Corot, portraits of Monet by Sargent..." Out of his bedroom window, Monet could inhale the delicious scents released by his favourite climbing rose, the Mermaid Rose, interwoven with the Virginia creepers covering the wall. Monet went to bed early, by 9pm at the latest, and rose at dawn. He went to his bathroom where he voluntarily had a cold wash in the tub. In 2013, following the work completed on the studio/lounge in 2011, restoration work was started under the scientific direction of Sylvie Patin and the artistic direction of Hubert le Gall.

Continue your visit in Alice's bedroom and washroom, which opens onto a tiny room intended for sewing. Speaking of which, damask tablecloths sewn together lined the walls of the two bedrooms.



## **BLANCHE HOSCHEDÉ-MONET'S BEDROOM RESTORATION AND PUBLIC OPENING IN 2014**

On the same floor, the bedroom of Claude Monet's 'blue angel' was also restored in 2014 and opened to the public for the first time. The reserved, modest Blanche Hoschedé-Monet, Claude Monet's step-daughter, daughter-in-law and student, appears to have played an essential role in supporting the artist's work and life.

There were no photographs or written records to help recreate this room. Using deduction, it is quite likely that this bedroom - like other rooms in the house - featured pitch pine furniture along with some items of Louis-Philippe furniture inherited by the Hoschedé family, specifically a chest of drawers with feet in the shape of lion paws. The fireplace had gone but was rebuilt using the same template as for the one in Alice's bedroom: a simple, quite classic fireplace in black marble and white ceramic tiles. On the wall hangs an oil on canvas painting, 'Haystack in snow' signed by Blanche Hoschedé. As there were no documents or accounts, Hubert le Gall decided to research the interiors of artists' houses in Monet's time. A photo taken at Giverny showing Monet with Edouard Vuillard led him to take inspiration from the paintings of interiors produced by the latter. This choice determined the selection of a Japanese-inspired floral wallpaper, floral curtains and light net curtains for maintaining the occupants' privacy. Here, the scenographer's role, as Hubert le Gall recounts, was to **create an image that matched the tastes of that period, without interference from modern tastes.**

(Cf 2014 Press Kit)

## **GROUND FLOOR : DINING ROOM AND KITCHEN**

After walking down the new staircase in the centre of the house, visitors will see the dining room on their left which has been recreated down to the finest detail. No Monet paintings on the walls, but instead a multitude of Japanese prints. This is where he ate a solid breakfast, often in the company of his step-daughter and daughter-in-law Blanche, before heading off to paint either in the countryside or on his studio-boat anchored near the Water Garden, on the Island of Nettle. The final room, the kitchen, also seems ready to relive the excited atmosphere that reigned at mealtimes. Nothing has changed since Monet passed away: the huge cooker with multiple hobs, the brass utensils shining brightly... Simply close your eyes to be transported to an imaginary meal with Claude Monet.



## 2/ The outstanding, unique collection of prints

### TRENDING: AN APPETITE FOR JAPAN



When the World's Fair was held in Paris in 1867, Claude Monet was 27 years old. It is highly likely that Japan's first official participation in this type of event left a lasting impression on him. The large display of everyday Japanese items was in sharp contrast to the eclecticism dominating the European decorative arts. Simple shapes, decorations reduced to a single line, materials such as ceramics worked with in a pure way, and some hundred modern prints triggered a genuine passion for the Land of the Rising Sun. Lacking inspiration, artists and designers of that time created their own interpretation of this new formal, pictorial language and, eleven years later, the 1878 World's Fair was one of victorious 'Japanism'. Critic Ernest Chesneau wrote in *Le Monde Illustré*: "It is no longer a fashion, it is infatuation and insanity." Trustworthy accounts are lacking for the story of how Claude Monet's collection began, which cannot escape the carefully maintained legends created when passions are involved. But even Ernest Chesneau alludes, in his report on the 1878 World's Fair, to Degas' and Monet's print collections. He substantiates the version of the artist discovering his first prints in Holland during a trip to Zaandam in 1871. From 1878, large collections were amassed and added to during exhibitions such as the retrospective organised by Louis Gonse in 1883 at the George Petit gallery. Seven years later, the Ecole des Beaux-Arts devoted an entire exhibition to Japanese prints from 1860. In addition to these events, there was also the exhibition of Utamaro and Hiroshige's work at the Durand-Ruel gallery.



### CLAUDE MONET'S CHOICES

Today, Claude Monet's collection features 46 prints by Kitagawa Utamaro (1753-1806), 23 by Katsushika Hokusai (1760-1849) and 48 by Utagawa Hiroshige (1797-1858), totalling 117 of the 211 on display, with another 32 in storage.

Three masterpieces are amongst the artworks by those three artists. *Applying Make-up*, by the first artist, is displayed in the dining room. *The Great Wave Off Kanagawa*, by the second, is also there. *Sudden Shower Over Shin-Ohashi Bridge and Atake*, by the third, is in the entrance hall by the Blue Lounge.

Claude Monet's print collection undoubtedly benefited from the advice of two of his Japanese friends who often visited Giverny: merchant Tadamasu Hayashi, with whom he exchanged two paintings for prints by Utamaro and Eishi; and collector Kojiro Matsukata, who bought 25 paintings from him and whose entire print collection is now housed at the Tokyo National Museum. Monet was a member of the circle of collectors who regularly met at Samuel Bing's house to discover the latest print deliveries. He often visited Théodore Duret, who lived in Japan for many years, and Raymond Koechlin, a collector. Monet's passion for Japan also showed through in his garden in the plants sent to him by his friends, including some irises, peonies and lilies, as well as in the fashion for chrysanthemums, ornamental plum trees, hydrangeas and other azaleas from Japan with more intense colours and hues than those of Western flora, most of which were woodland plants with special radiance.



# IV/ GARDENS: CONSTANTLY ASTONISHING !

## 1/ THE GARDEN THROUGH THE SEASONS

What would Claude Monet feel if he saw his gardens today? Perhaps he might feel that they had been awaiting his return unchanged. He would see a dozen gardeners working on the same tasks as those of his time and, depending on the season, he would see his beloved plants combined according to their colours. He would go to his Water Garden, step onto the Japanese bridge and relive the thrill of seeing the same light interplays that had so fascinated him.

### WINTER SPENT PREPARING FOR SPRING

The path is lined with limes, other trees and bushes including the Japanese flowering crab-apple (*Malus Floribunda*) and two yews planted by Monet. Metal frames for climbing plants raise their vertical silhouettes above the paths marking out the various flower beds, justifying their nickname: 'graves'. Only the roses, peonies, irises and perennials, including the *Aubrieta* gently lining the flower beds, remain.



**In December**, the gardeners start their work. The soil is dug over, and the bulbs and spring flowering rhizomes are planted: crown imperial (*Fritillaria imperialis*), flower beds of foxtail lilies (*Eremurus*) and tulips of all kinds. Each planting hole gets its quota of manure to nourish roots and improve the soil's texture. Once the tulips are planted, it is the turn of the smaller bulbs: anemones, triteleia and the vigorous Dutch iris (*I. xiphium*). Planting is completed between mid-December and Christmas, unless the weather acts up.

**January** is the time for transplanting biennials. This is a month with its own set of concerns about unexpected weather and diseases. No fewer than 180,000 plants (annuals, biennials and perennials) that have been sown in the glasshouses and grown in the adjoining fields will be pinched for optimal flowering, monopolising four to six weeks of the gardeners' time: pansies (*Viola*), silenes (*Silena*), myosotis, Canterbury bells (*Campanula medium*), gillyflowers and wallflowers (*Erysimum cheiri*).

**In February** : it is time to prune the roses set to bloom in August. In the Water Garden, work starts on the water lilies. Mostly sourced from Latour-Marliac, the same specialist nursery that Monet used, they are cut by the gardeners aboard a boat in preparation for frosts that could dramatically snap the stems. The Japanese flowering crab-apple starts to unfurl its first leaves.

## SPRING : INFORMAL, EXUBERANT GARDENS

**In March**, the crimson aubrieta blooms. This is rapidly followed by a pink explosion of wild apple tree blossoms near the kitchen, under which the gillyflowers (*Erysinum cheiri*) burst forth with their primrose colours soon after.

**April** sees the gardens open to the public while the cherry and apple trees compete with pink mosaic clouds of blooms evoking Japan. Some of the ornamental plum trees were gifted by the Japanese Ambassador in 1990. Colourful highlights of fragrant white narcissus and daffodils create a splash at the foot of the trees. The gardeners are busy trimming branches. Now it is the climbing roses' turn to be severely pruned as the staking of the climbing plants starts. In the flower beds, the perennials from the nursery are transplanted according to their flowering periods. This work takes place across three months, with the more delicate varieties such as the cornflowers only being replanted in June. If there is a late frost, some transplanted plants will freeze in the ground! The science of gardening is used in conjunction with the methods implemented by Gilbert Vahé to make the plants hardier. The big summer daisies (*Leucanthemum x superbum*) are the first to emerge with their white manes surrounding their golden faces, along with Canterbury bells (*Campanula medium*) featuring spikes of blue, white and pink bell-shaped flowers and clumps of common foxgloves (*Digitalis purpurea*). The flower beds are weeded by hand every day until autumn.

**May** : common and noble perennials coexist peacefully. Annual honesty (*Lunaria*) and sweet rocket (*Hesperis matronalis*) are transplanted with the irises. The stakes are driven into the ground for climbing plants such as clematis (*Clematis*), climbing roses and honeysuckles (*Lonicera*), and hoops put in for common garden peonies (*Paeonia lactiflora*). Jean-Marie Avisard prepares plants in pots that will stand in the house, including orchids from a glasshouse that is an exact replica of the one that stood in Monet's time. The winter plants are flowering, along with the irises. In the Water Garden, light reigns supreme. Early spring buds give way to young willow shoots, the pond has been freed of the algae filling it, the water lilies have been split and are blooming in clear water surrounded by trees that have been trimmed to create light and shadow interplays. In this garden with its acidic soil, unlike the alkaline soil of the Clos Normand, rhododendrons, azaleas, Japanese maples (*Acer japonica*) and guelder roses (*Viburnum opulus*) create an ideal haven for the carpet of pansies, gillyflowers, sweet-scented bedstraw (*Asperula odorata*) and tulips (*T. Keukenhof*).

In both gardens, as soon as a flower wilts, it is removed. Most bulbs are removed and replaced with rustic and semi-rustic annuals that have been grown in the glasshouse, including snapdragons (*Antirrhinum majus*), tobacco plants (*Nicotiana*) and more.



## SUMMER FLORAL SYMPHONY

**Early June** is popular with those who love blue and mauve gardens. Blue, crimson and mauve irises reign in the two gardens, carpeting the ground and growing as borders. The blues are often planted in semi-shade to make them stand out more. Other flowers sit alongside the irises, including the lavender blue bells of the fast-growing *Phacelia tanacetifolia*. On the banks of the Water Garden pond, irises burst forth in groups separated by marsh marigolds (*Caltha palustris*), large yellow buttercups (*Ranunculus*) and purple loosestrifes (*Lythrum*).



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The season continues with flamboyant reds and vibrant pinks. Planted in the ground, Oriental poppies (*Papaver orientalis*) launch a delightful show along with the dazzling peonies. The climbing roses burst forth with surreal, exuberant blooms! These include humble and wild roses such as the eglantine (*R. eglanteria*), botanic roses such as the burnet rose (*R. pimpinellifolia*), outstanding acquisitions such as the English Paul's Scarlet Climber, and Monet's favourite *R. Mermaid* which he planted under his bedroom window. This is the time when the six arches over the central path literally groan under a profusion of roses. Underneath, hundreds of flowers along the path's edges emerge and ribbons of rampant nasturtiums stream towards the house. In the Water Garden, the Japanese bridge almost disappears under the wisteria that falls in splendid, fragrant cascades of mauve (*Wisteria floribunda* 'Multijuga' and *W. sinensis*) and white flowers (*W. f. 'Alba'* and *W. s. 'Alba'*). A bit further, along the banks, the rhododendrons and kalmias continue to bloom. The water lilies start to flower and continue until September.

**In July**, new blooms emerge including a host of hollyhocks (*Alcea*), larkspur (*Delphinium*) and spider flowers (*Cleome*), with their heady scents. The bigger plants with long stems are supported with stakes and stand tall in the flower beds. The China asters (*Callistephus chinensis*) make their entrance in the garden, marking the end of the planting of annuals. These are carefully watched to ensure they do not take over the garden.

**August** sees the garden at its peak. Every four years, the irises are removed and only the healthy parts of the rhizomes are kept and replanted. The flower beds are sterilised to prevent the spread of white grubs that devour leaves and other slugs. During this month, the gardeners' eyes are riveted to the barometer as any rainstorms would cut down tall stems and tear flowers to pieces. In the Water Garden, the wisteria are pruned to encourage a second flowering. The ferns and large bamboos bathe the area in coolness while recreating the illusion of a Japanese landscape.



## AUTUMN BRINGS TRANQUILITY AND CHARM

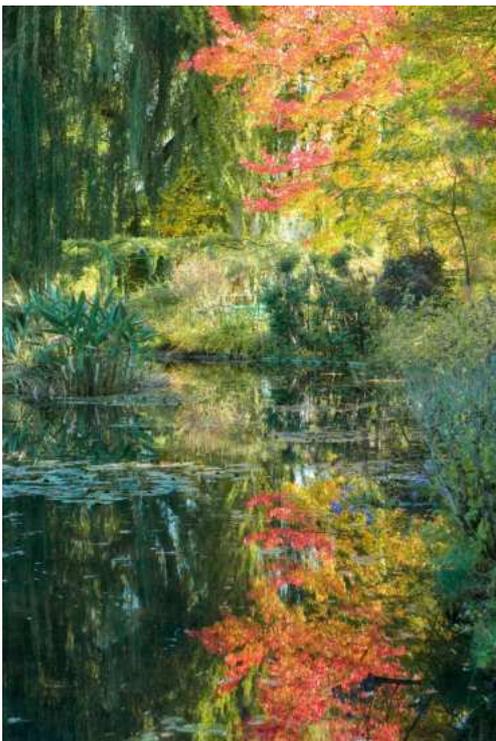
**In September and October**, the first sunflowers unfurl their generous round faces in the warm air. The flower beds are usurped by cactus dahlias with their long, thin ray florets. Their brilliance is balanced by clouds of asters. All sorts of rudbeckias and helianthus join in, while the cosmos pour forth in shades of pink and white. In preparation for fickle weather, the asters, sunflowers and dahlias are staked in June to help them withstand sudden rain. Red and orange dominate the central path, particularly



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with the Jet dahlias, purple asters and carpets of nasturtiums. In the flower beds, the asters paint themselves in every colour: blue for *A. novae-angliae* and white for *A. laevis* against a background of crimson-blue *Solanum rantonnetii*, mauve flowers and Indigo sage. At the bottom of the garden, firethorns (*Pyracantha*) planted along the railings are sprinkled with yellow and orange berries, like little lanterns. As the season progresses, the days become shorter and the light gradually fades. The foliage becomes a blaze of colour, including the Virginia creepers covering the house. This spectacle is particularly dazzling in the Water Garden where the trees and bushes dress in golden hues, led by the American sweetgums (*Liquidambar styraciflua*).

**On 1 November**, the gates shut behind the final visitors.



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## JEAN-MARIE AVISARD'S CHALLENGE : RESPECTING THE MONET SPIRIT !



**Jean-Marie Avisard, the man with the green fingers who has been working at Maison et Jardins Claude Monet - Giverny for 30 years, took over from Gilbert Vahé as head gardener on 1 April 2018. Get to know this fifty-something who is as humble as he is seasoned...**

“I felt capable of bringing something new to the garden. But when I applied, I didn't really expect to get the position!” The brief conversation about his promotion was quickly concluded: “Without the team, nothing can be done,” asserts Jean-Marie Avisard. “I'm not alone! Everyone's effort must be recognised.” This true team-player confesses he has “always worked the land.” “Actually, it was my childhood dream,” explains this gardener born in Pont-Audemer. Having lived in Corneville and honed his gardening skills at Château de Tournebut (Aubevoye), he started work at Fondation Monet in 1988. “After two years as a seasonal worker, I was given a permanent position. And when Gilbert Vahé divided up the work, I was appointed to manage the

Water Garden.” Working under the long-time head gardener responsible for the restoration, the now 53-year-old local soaked up the “state of mind of this place.” “This is such a special garden that it takes years of experience to understand it!” And breaking that chain of knowledge is out of the question. “I will restructure the team a little bit, so the older ones can train those who will take their place.”

But do not imagine for a moment that Jean-Marie Avisard will upset the apple cart. “That's not the way to do it! Our priority? Working with my assistant Rémi Lecoutre to reintroduce more plants.” Their unwavering course of action?

Respecting the ‘Monet spirit’. “Thanks to photos and personal accounts, we know where each thing was. But I believe this artist's garden should not stagnate. I believe that Monet created a garden of favourites. If he wanted a collection or a new plant, he tried it! I'm sure that if he were alive today, new plants would appeal to Monet.”

Jean-Marie Avisard, Head Gardener

# V/ APPENDICES

## **BOOKSTORE & GIFT SHOP**

The Maison et Jardins Claude Monet - Giverny bookstore and gift shop is located in the huge 300 m<sup>2</sup> water lilies studio. A range of 2,300 items relating to Claude Monet's work and gardens are available for visitors to purchase.

These items have been chosen to cater to our visitors' expectations and to suit all budgets. This is where you can find the biggest range of products relating to Claude Monet's work. Items include postcards, books, Giverny cider, posters, Daum rose vases, sets of Champagne flutes by Caroline Andro, official Claude Monet tableware by Compagnie des Porcelaines de Limoges, and more. Everyone can buy a souvenir of Giverny and Claude Monet's world, garden and lifestyle to keep or to gift.

Since 2015, the store has also offered online sales with over 40 products available : [www.claude-monet-giverny.fr](http://www.claude-monet-giverny.fr).

## **RESTAURANT LES NYMPHÉAS**

The Les Nymphéas restaurant is located opposite Claude Monet's house and gardens, just across the road! The manager, Joël Poupat, took over on 1 April 2008.

Locals and tourists from around the world can head there to enjoy the ice creams sold by this ice cream maker with many years of experience, who has been in Giverny since Maison et Jardins Claude Monet opened.

Make your Giverny experience last longer by dining at the restaurant, located in what was a farmhouse in Monet's time. It features a country atmosphere, outdoor eating areas and flowers, serving traditional French cuisine, specialities from Normandy, salads, a range of hot and cold dishes and a set menu.

Enjoy a wonderful break at any time of the day in its tea rooms and outside on its flower-filled deck or patio. For those in a hurry, sandwiches and drinks are also available.

Restaurant Les Nymphéas  
109 rue Claude Monet - 27620 Giverny  
Tel: +33 (0)2 32 21 20 31  
[www.restaurantnymphéasgiverny.com](http://www.restaurantnymphéasgiverny.com)  
Open every day from 29 March to 1 November  
Prices range from €18 to €32, drinks included

## **SEED, FLOWER, DECORATION AND GIFT SHOP**

A new floral-themed shop has opened and is located opposite the car park at Maison et Jardins Claude Monet - Giverny. Here, you can find an extensive range of gifts, flower seeds, decorative objects and tableware illustrating the range of colours, flowers and fragrances at Giverny.

Useful information: Open from 29 March to 1 November inclusive, seven days a week, 10 am to 6 pm.  
Tel.: +33 (0)2 32 51 28 21/ Email : [contact@claudemonetgiverny.fr](mailto:contact@claudemonetgiverny.fr)

## **ARTIST IN RESIDENCE**

For the past twenty years, *the Versailles Foundation Inc.* Claude Monet-Giverny has funded an annual 3-month residency for selected artists. *The Versailles Foundation Inc.* Claude Monet-Giverny pays for their return travel costs and provides a scholarship. Maison et Jardins Claude Monet - Giverny provides accommodation and a studio.

# VI/ IMAGES AVAILABLE

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# PRINT COLLECTION



Katsushika Hokusai, *Sous la vague au large de Kanagawa*



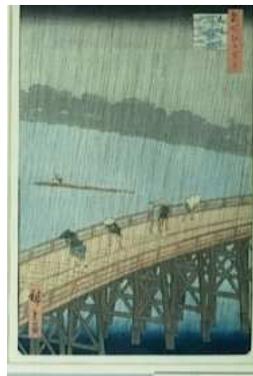
Kitagawa Utamaro, *Eon Hoshi*



Kitagawa Utamaro, *Hibou sur un tronc d'arbre et deux rouges-gorges*



Utagawa Hiroshige, *Vue des tourbillons de Naruto à Awa*



Utagawa Hiroshige, *Ohashi, averse soudaine à Atake*

# USEFUL INFORMATION

## MAISON ET JARDINS CLAUDE MONET - GIVERNY

84, rue Claude Monet - 27620 Giverny

Tel +33 (0)2 32 51 28 21 / Fax +33 (0)2 32 51 54 18

[www.claude-monet-giverny.fr](http://www.claude-monet-giverny.fr)

[contact@claudemonetgiverny.fr](mailto:contact@claudemonetgiverny.fr)



### Online store

[www.claude-monet-giverny.fr](http://www.claude-monet-giverny.fr)

### Register for the newsletter

[www.claude-monet-giverny.fr](http://www.claude-monet-giverny.fr)

## The house and gardens are open daily

from 29 March to 1 November 2024

(subject to government orders)

9.30 am to 6.00 pm (last admission 5.30 pm)

### Individuals: bookings recommended

Adults: €11

Children under 7 years free

Children over 7 years: €6.50

Students: €6.50

Disabled/PRM: €5.50

Skip the queue by purchasing at [www.claude-monet-giverny.fr](http://www.claude-monet-giverny.fr)

### Free parking

Individuals: reservation recommended

### Group price

Groups (minimum 20 people)

Bookings required

For information about group visits and bookings

**Contact: Agathe Vandebussche** / Tel.: +33 (0)2

32 51 90 31 - [reservation@claudemonetgiverny.fr](mailto:reservation@claudemonetgiverny.fr)

Child: €6.50 Students €6.50

Disabled/PRM: €5.50 Adults: €10

## MEDIA CONTACTS

Observatoire - [www.observatoire.fr](http://www.observatoire.fr)

Mobile: +33 (0)7 66 47 35 36

Margot Spanneut - [margot.observatoire.fr](http://margot.observatoire.fr)

Downloadable images from the website:

[www.observatoire.fr](http://www.observatoire.fr)

