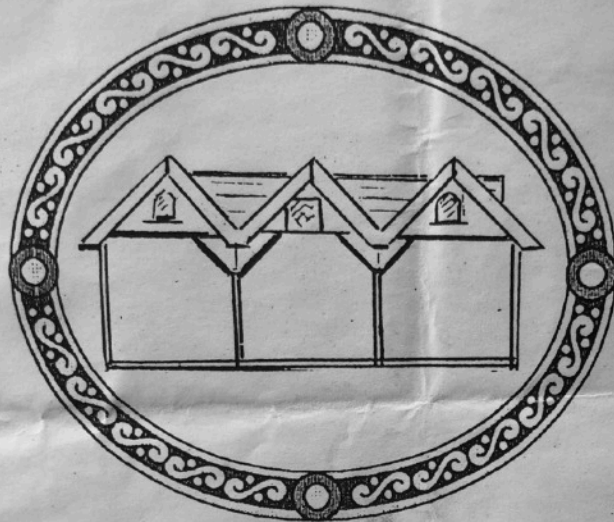


# HIGH TOR



*Let all who enter here  
Find hope and courage  
And friendliness.  
Let peace rest upon this house  
Garden and us  
And every guest.*

*Charmaine & Greg*

**"High Tor" 1938**





Australia's  
Open Garden Scheme

## HIGH TOR

Maleny is situated about 1 hour 15 minutes north of Brisbane. It is an area that enjoys 80-90 inch rainfall per year. It is situated 800 feet above sea level, and virtually overlooks the length and breath of the Sunshine Coast from Noosa down to Moreton Island. The area is known as the Hinterland, or to the locals, God's Own Country. It is a very special place for those who live here because of its green rolling hills, dairy farms and macadamia plantations scattered throughout.

The property called "High-Tor" is just off the main road to Montville from Maleny, and is a 54 acre rainforest lot which runs out on a spur to the edge of the escarpment. The rainforest of course is dense. In the middle of the rainforest is a 4 ac heart on which the grand old house and garden stands.

Originally built by an English gentleman by the name of Ethelbert Lawrence, I guess it shows all the strappings and traditions of this wonderful man. He fought in the Light Horse Brigade and was well known in the area as a romantic and an historian; some considered him to be quite eccentric because he left all the trees including Bunyas and cedars.

The body of the house was the original Eudlo post office, bought up the range in the 1920's by a bullock train. Ethelbert then had a Swiss Architect add three stately portals to the front of the house, each of the three rooves was painted a different color. Since then, there have been four other owners, all of whom have added to the back area of the house so that it finished up as a guest house come loggers rest, which Charmaine and I have lovingly restored.

Ethelbert Lawrence's brother was a botanist and used to send him rare orchids and plants from around the world, remembering that 50 years ago these could be transported freely. There was no quarantine or customs to impede the importation of foreign plants, thankfully many of these still survive today. The "High Tor" area consists of 4 acres of garden, lily ponds and parrot and finch aviaries. All of these are interlinked with walkways and interlope to the rainforest edge. The canopy of the garden itself is made up of 100 year old Bunya pines, kauri pines, sausage trees, elephant apples and cypress pines together with liquidambers and cotoneastas, with the occasional crab apple tree interspersed.

"High Tor" is a unique property. It is alive and breathing, it has been said too that the gardens are stand alone, they are magical and that they will last forever. The one word which sums up it's whole being is ambiance.

We have, over the past four years, thoughtfully developed the gardens so as to enhance the large canopy trees, whilst highlighting the thick under stories of azaleas, camellias, gardenias and the like. We mulch heavily with rainforest litter and sugar cane mulch, and spend a lot of our time deep watering. Our tank capacity is 60,000 gallons. Whilst the soil is magnificent red volcanic soil we believe over the years it has been leached to the ultimate, and it is only now, after copious quantities of feed lot manure from the local dairy and mulch, that the garden is really re-blossoming.

The entrance into "High Tor" is through a four hundred metre overhang of natives. The driveway winds around under this canopy and is bordered by agapanthus, hippeastrums, snowflakes etc. It arrives into an open carpark area, the central feature of which is the "gate to nowhere". From this point the main walkway winds through lilly and fish ponds, waterfalls and a grotto, as it leads up to "High Tor".



At the front of the house is a magnificent and very old stone wall, central rose garden. A stately, standard Crepuscule rose is the focal point. Whilst Maleny is not famous for its roses, (Ray Berg in the township grows exceptional roses) we believe that with all the care and attention that we give, they have responded magnificently.

From the central rose garden a fragrant walk, bounded both sided by jasmine, hibiscus, palms, rhododendrons and night jasmine leads down to a 50 year old stone lookout. The view is breathtaking. Interestingly enough most of the stone work on "High Tor" was built during World War 2 by five guest internees. They were master craftsmen. The foot of the lookout is steep and is crisscrossed by an environmentally vegetated area of natives grevilleas.

The sunken garden is adjacent to the lookout. It is a fern vista. The central lilly pond is surrounded by king ferns, giant crows nests, tree ferns, begonias, stags, elks and orchids. This is the cool centre of 'High Tor". On those rainy summer nights the sounds of the green tree frog in this particular enclave are deafening.

As you walk out of the sunken garden the path leads across a stone bridge into the bamboo forest. The main thoroughfare is banked by ancient crows nests, as it winds its way down to the edge of the rainforest proper. Interestingly enough, the bamboo which now covers several acres, was planted from four small clumps after the area had been devastated by a cyclone back in 1953. In certain spots the bamboo now competes with the rainforest. It is difficult to control, but we are persevering.

The rainforest walk at the back of the house is a relatively new area, deeply mulched and heavily manured to give us quick and lush growth. The area was overplanted with many varieties of palms, with a lower deck of double balsams in most colors. This butts on to the Tuscan courtyard complete with lilly pond, budgie aviary, toparies and paved walkways. It is an area we designed for meditation and relaxation. This is the quiet spot of "High Tor".

As you come around the side of "High Tor" and cross the wooden deck you find yourself in the middle of a beautifully designed herb garden. Most types of kitchen herbs thrive here: the pinnacle of each of the four areas are standard roses as companions. The whole area is protected and surrounded by a thicket of natives, which act as the ultimate wind break.

Down the far end of the property, are parrot aviaries and a chook house. We keep several types of chickens including Hamburgs and Faverols together with a group a layers. Surrounding this area we have pawpaws, bananas and passionfruit. This then leads on to a two kilometer walk through the rainforest where many interesting trees can be seen, including giant strangler figs (some totally hollow), blackbeans covered in native pothos and many stately bangalow palms. It is a totally natural area.

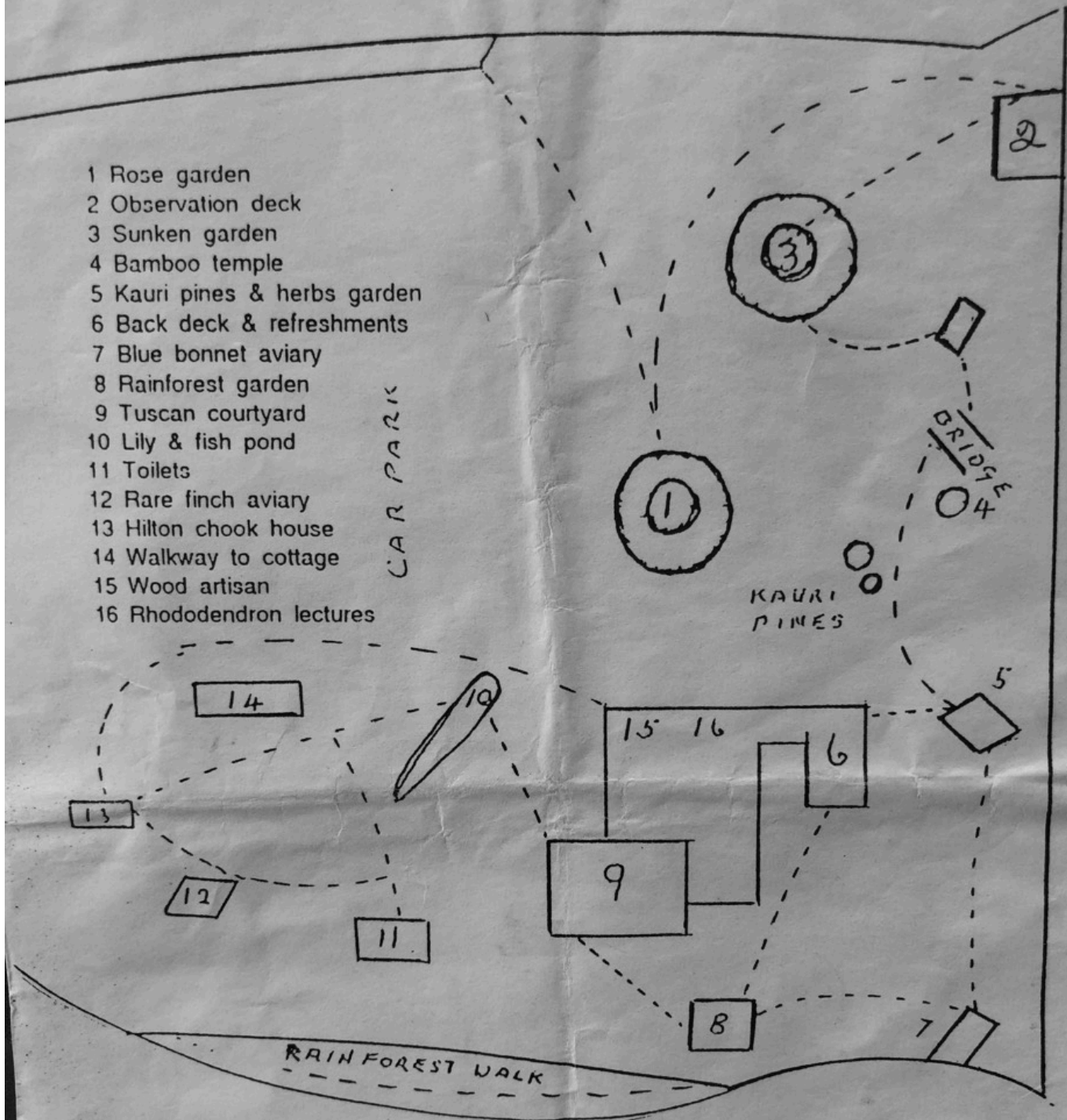
I guess as a summary of the "High Tor", property and garden, one can truthfully say, it is a garden with much love. Charmaine and I took a calculated business risk, inspired after listening to the author Bryce Courtney (Power of One), enabling us to purchase "High Tor" four years ago.

To restore the gardens to their original magnificence is a real challenge, but that challenge was really culminated once Charmaine decided to go into the open garden scheme. It gave us a goal, it gave us a time frame to work in. All gardens to us are beautiful. However, to compliment the gardens with aviaries and lilly ponds is to us, the perfect combination.

"High Tor" is to be enjoyed by all who come to visit, I am sure it is a garden you will never forget. We will make you most welcome.

**Charmaine Boucher & Greg Wightman**

- 1 Rose garden
- 2 Observation deck
- 3 Sunken garden
- 4 Bamboo temple
- 5 Kauri pines & herbs garden
- 6 Back deck & refreshments
- 7 Blue bonnet aviary
- 8 Rainforest garden
- 9 Tuscan courtyard
- 10 Lily & fish pond
- 11 Toilets
- 12 Rare finch aviary
- 13 Hilton chook house
- 14 Walkway to cottage
- 15 Wood artisan
- 16 Rhododendron lectures



Who has the will has the skill











