

## **GARDEN OF THE JOHN BLAKE HOUSE**

**58 South Battery**

**2010**

**c. 1800**

**Residence of Mr. and Mrs. Mark Maresca**

Revolutionary War patriot and state Senator John Blake built this house on a lot he obtained from his father, Edward, who, with William Gibbes, Robert Mackenzie and George Kincaid, began filling the marshes in this neighborhood. Imprisoned by the British during the Revolution, John went on to become a factor and president of the Bank of the State of SC. He built this L-shaped house on a masonry foundation with cypress and heart pine framing. The kitchen building and rear portion of the lot were sold over time.

Over the past two centuries, this house and garden wall have survived fire, war, foreign occupancy, the largest earthquake on the east coast and many hurricanes. Water from Hurricane Hugo in 1989 rose to the level of the first floor, but stopped just short of flooding it. The wall was repointed in the late 1990s.

This restored garden is an outstanding example of period design and representative of many parterre gardens common in Charleston during the late 1700s and early 1800s.

Hugh and Mary Palmer Dargan, landscape architects formerly of Charleston, designed this garden in 1985. The early parterre garden had disappeared over time, but was found just under the soil surface during this renovation.

Parterres were recreated in their original location and design, using as many original brick as possible. Parterre gardens such as this were meant to be enjoyed from the height of the house, and guests may walk up onto the piazza for a better view.

The corner beds are balanced, repetitive plantings of Crape Myrtles, *Raphiolepis*, and Noisette Roses, which were hybridized in Charleston about 1811 by John Champneys, a plantation owner and rice planter near Ravenel, S.C. Champneys crossed *Rosa chinensis* and *Rosa moschata*, creating 'Champneys Pink Cluster.' He gave cuttings to French botanist Phillipe Noisette, who had a nursery in Charleston and soon grew the rose for commercial sale. He sent cuttings to his brother in France, who

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produced it commercially there. By 1820, 'Champneys Pink Cluster' was being widely grown in Europe. The Noisette brothers crossed this rose with others of the time to produce the class of antique roses known today as the Noisettes.

In the four elliptical beds, tree form roses center each planting of annuals that changes from year to year. The central diamond bed has four antique Roses with Tulips underneath. The English stone urn is early 18th century, older even than the house.

Past the formal patterned garden, you pass through a connecting arbor and come into the second, contrasting garden room suitable for informal use and entertaining. The American urns date from the 1850s. A unique, delightful combination garden structure and garage are to the right of the back garden.

### PLANT LISTING

Azalea  
Indian Azaleas  
Dwarf Box  
Camellia  
Cleyera  
Crape Myrtle  
Native Cassina  
Dogwood  
Herbs  
Hydrangea  
Mahonia  
Mahonia Fortunei  
Mutablis Rose  
Nandina  
Palmetto  
'Champneys Pink Cluster' Noisette Rose  
Lady Banksia Rose  
Tea Rose  
Raphiolepis  
Sasanqua  
Trumpet Vine  
Tulip  
Vinca  
Viola  
Yaupon holly